



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF MUSIC

**Ian Gillis, Bass-Baritone**

Third Year Recital

**Suzanne Yeo, Piano**

This recital is in partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Music Degree in Performance.  
Ian Gillis is a student of Frédérique Vézina.

Saturday, April 27, 2024 at 4:30 pm | Herman Geiger-Torel Room, 80 Queen's Park

**PROGRAM**

Nebbie, P 64 (1906)

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Airs chantés, FP 46 (1928)

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

No.1. Air romantique

6 Sorrow Songs, Op. 57 (1906)\*\*

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

No. 2. When I Am Dead, My Dearest  
No. 3. Oh, Roses for the Flush of Youth  
No. 4. She Sat and Sang Alway  
No. 6. Too Late for Love

Épitaphe, FP 55 (1930)

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

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*We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.*

As part of the Faculty's commitment to improving Indigenous inclusion, we call upon all members of our community to start/continue their personal journeys towards understanding and acknowledging Indigenous peoples' histories, truths and cultures. Visit [indigenous.utoronto.ca](http://indigenous.utoronto.ca) to learn more.

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Quattro liriche, P 125 (1920)

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

No. 1. Un Sogno

Winterreise (1828)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

No. 4. Erstarrung

No. 5. Der Lindenbaum

No. 11. Frühlingstraum

No. 15. Die Krähe

Biblické písně, Op. 99 (1894)

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

No. 6. Psalm 61, Psalm 63, Slyš, ó Bože, volání mé

No. 8. Psalm 25, Popatřiž na mne a smiluj se nade mnou

*\*\* Fulfills the BIPOC/Underrepresented Composers Repertoire Requirement.*

## PROGRAM NOTES

In late April of 2023, I sat alone upon a hospital bed, wondering if I would ever sing again. The prospect of a return to music-making seemed now so very far away. And yet, in that moment of silent submission, my thoughts were turned to two songs which had not long before intended to conclude my second year: “Nebbie,” by Ottorino Respighi and, “Slyš, ó Bože, volání mé,” by Antonín Dvořák. Truthfully, one month earlier, these pieces had constituted nothing more to me than two tragic texts set to a pair of equally haunted melodies. But now, in this place of quiet desperation, their stirring lines took on some new form. In the place of idle, feigned emotional expression, seemed they more a force of divine congruence — two sides of the very same story.

A man stumbles, alone and dejected through the shrouded moors. Above him soar the shrieking crows, awaiting their succulent reward for his bitter demise. The trees themselves, in grief at his despair, extend their naked branches into the sky as if to call out to heaven for his salvation. Then, through the mists and darkened valleys, an unseen voice extends a hand of twisted grace toward him:

*“Oh sad, oh unloved one, come to me!”*

It is in such a dark and hopeless world that “Nebbie” places us, setting first a horrific question in our minds before swiftly abandoning us without an answer.

*Did he give in?*

*Would I?*

It was a question perhaps too close to my heart, now bereft of all with which I had once identified; no voice with which to sing, no body left to stand. But, in this same moment of desperation did the music of Dvořák turn to heaven, a plea in response to this offering of death with a promise made in return...

It is not too grand a statement to admit that the arrangement of this program felt guided by some mysterious hand of providence. As one by one these pieces revealed themselves, their remarkable internal consistency was a wonder to me. Their selections felt less like the purposeful arrangement of some new story to be told and more like the methodical excavation of an ancient one which had already been set before me; a story so distinctly personal and relevant to that sacred time and place. The ordering of these selections sets the unresolved climax of “Nebbie” first in the program, thence traveling back in time to witness the progression of this story from the very beginning. This guides our understanding of the character and his experiences, enabling a more intimate empathy for his ultimate decision, as exposed in “Slyš, ó Bože. . . .”

In a world where so often the importance of art and the role of the artist are devalued, I have often determined that the divine mandate of the singer is to inspire, such that the Inspired may change the world. Feeling the weight of something far beyond myself, my responsibility had been made clear in this task which now lay set before me. Yet, in my state of vulnerability, there was no means by which to complete it; responsibility an impossible canyon with no bridge to the other side.

And so, we built one.

I would like to thank especially Frédérique Vézina, Suzanne Yeo, and Kari Crisolago for their invaluable contributions to me on this journey, without whom this program would have been impossible. Through their support, I am humbled to share this music with you (by the same guiding hand of providence) on April 27th, 2024; the one-year anniversary of my hospitalization.

## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

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### **Nebbie:**

Ada Negri (1870-1945)

#### **Soffro, lontan lontano**

*I suffer, far, far away*

#### **Le nebbie sonnolente**

*The sleepy mists*

#### **Salgono dal tacente piano.**

*Rise from the silent plain.*

#### **Alto gracchiando, i corvi,**

*Croaking shrilly, the crows,*

#### **Fidati all'ali nere,**

*Putting faith in their black wings,*

#### **Traversan le brughiere Torvi.**

*traverse the grim moors.*

#### **Dell'aere ai morsi crudi**

*To the raw biting of the air,*

#### **Gli addolorati tronchi**

*The grieving tree trunks*

#### **Offron, pregando, i bronchi Nudi.**

*Offer up their naked branches in prayer.*

#### **Come ho freddo!... Son sola;**

*How cold I am! I am alone;*

#### **Pel grigio ciel sospinto**

*Driven through the grey heaven*

#### **Un gemito destinato Vola;**

*The moan of destiny flies;*

**E mi ripete: “Vieni,**

*And repeats to me: “Come,*

**È buia la vallata.**

*The valley is dark.*

**O triste, o disamata, Vieni!”**

*Oh sad, oh unloved one, come to me!”*

**Air romantique:**

Jean Moréas (1856-1910)

**J’allais dans la campagne avec le vent d’orage,**

*I was going through the countryside with the stormy wind,*

**Sous le pâle matin, sous les nuages bas,**

*Beneath the pale morning, beneath the low clouds,*

**Un corbeau ténébreux escortait mon voyage**

*A dark crow escorted my journey*

**Et dans les flaques d’eau retentissaient mes pas.**

*And in the puddles of water, my footsteps resounded.*

**La foudre à l’horizon faisait courir sa flamme**

*The lightning on the horizon let his flames run*

**Et l’Aquilon doublait ses longs gémissements;**

*And the North Wind doubled his long moans;*

**Mais la tempête était trop faible pour mon âme,**

*But the storm was too feeble for my soul,*

**Qui couvrait le tonnerre avec ses battements.**

*Which blocked out the thunder with its pounding.*

**De la dépouille d’or du frêne et de l’érable**

*From the golden remnants of ash and maple*

**L’Automne composait son éclatant butin,**

*The Autumn composed her brilliant spoils,*

**Et le corbeau toujours, d’un vol inexorable,**

*And the crow always, in its inexorable flight,*

**M'accompagnait sans rien changer à mon destin.**

*Accompanied me without changing anything of my destiny.*

**When I Am Dead, My Dearest:**

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

When I am dead, my dearest,  
Sing no sad songs for me;  
Plant thou no roses at my head,  
Nor shady cypress tree:  
Be the green grass above me  
With showers and dewdrops wet;  
And if thou wilt, remember,  
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,  
I shall not feel the rain;  
I shall not hear the nightingale  
Sing on, as if in pain:  
And dreaming through the twilight  
That doth not rise nor set,  
Haply I may remember,  
And haply may forget.

**Oh, Roses for the Flush of Youth:**

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

O roses for the flush of youth,  
And laurel for the perfect prime;  
But pluck an ivy branch for me  
Grown old before my time.

O violets for the grave of youth,  
And bay for those dead in their prime;  
Give me the withered leaves I chose  
Before in the old time.

### **She Sat and Sang Alway**

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

She sat and sang alway  
By the green margin of a stream,  
Watching the fishes leap and play  
Beneath the glad sunbeam.

I sat and wept alway  
Beneath the moon's most shadowy beam,  
Watching the blossoms of the May  
Weep leaves into the stream.

I wept for memory;  
She sang for hope that is so fair:  
My tears were swallowed by the sea;  
Her songs died on the air.

### **Too Late for Love:**

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Too late for love, too late for joy,  
Too late, too late!  
You loitered on the way too long,  
You trifled at the gate:  
The enchanted dove upon her branch  
Died without a mate;  
The enchanted princess in her tower  
Slept, died, behind the grate;  
Her heart was starving all this while  
You made it wait.

“Ten years ago, five years ago,  
One year ago,  
Even then you had arrived in time,  
Though somewhat slow;  
Then you had known her living face  
Which now you cannot know:  
The frozen fountain would have leaped,

The buds gone on to blow,  
The warm south wind would have awaked  
To melt the snow.

“You should have wept her yesterday,  
Wasting upon her bed:  
But wherefore should you weep to-day  
That she is dead?  
Lo, we who love weep not to-day,  
But crown her royal head.  
Let be these poppies that we strew,  
Your roses are too red:  
Let be these poppies, not for you  
Cut down and spread.”

**Épitaphe:**

François de Malherbe (1555-1628)

**Belle âme qui fus mon flambeau,**  
*Beautiful soul that was my torch,*  
**Reçois l'honneur qu'en ce tombeau**  
*Receive the honour that, in this tomb,*  
**Le devoir m'oblige à te rendre;**  
*Duty obliges me to render to you;*  
**Ce que je fais te sert de peu**  
*This that I do serves you little,*  
**Mais au moins tu vois en la cendre**  
*But, at least you see in the ashes*  
**Que j'en aime encore le feu.**  
*That I love still their fire.*

**Un sogno:**

Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863 - 1938)

**Io non odo i miei passi nel viale muto**  
*I don't hear my steps in the silent avenue,*  
**Per ove il Sogno mi conduce**  
*For, where the dream leads me*



**È l'ora del silenzio e della luce.**

*Is the hour of silence and of light.*

**Un velario di perle è il cielo, eguale.**

*The sky is a sail of pearls, equal.*

**Attingono i cipressi con le oscure punte quel cielo:**

*The cypresses paint the sky with their dark points:*

**Immoti, senza pianto; ma sono tristi,**

*Motionless, without crying; but I am sad,*

**Ma non sono tanto tristi i cipressi**

*But not so sad as the cypresses*

**De la sepolture.**

*Of the tombs.*

**Il paese d'intorno è sconosciuto, quasi informe,**

*The village around is unknown, almost shapeless,*

**Abitato da un mistero antichissimo,**

*Inhabited by an ancient mystery,*

**Dove il mio pensiero si perde**

*Where my thoughts are lost*

**Andando pel viale muto.**

*Going along the silent avenue.*

**Io non odo i miei passi,**

*I don't hear my steps,*

**Io sono come un'ombra;**

*I am like a shadow;*

**Il mio dolore è come un'ombra;**

*My grief is like a shadow;*

**È tutta la mia vita come un'ombra vaga,**

*My whole life is like a vague shadow,*

**Incerta, indistinta, senza nome.**

*Uncertain, indistinct, without a name.*

**Erstarrung:**

Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827)

**Ich such' im Schnee vergebens**

*I search in the snow in vain*

**nach ihrer Tritte Spur,**

*Following her footsteps,*

**wo sie an meinem Arme**  
*Where she was at my arms*  
**durchstrich die grüne Flur.**  
*As we crossed the green meadow.*

**Ich will den Boden küssen,**  
*I want to kiss the ground,*  
**durchdringen Eis und Schnee**  
*Penetrating ice and snow*  
**mit meinen heißen Tränen,**  
*With my hot tears,*  
**Bis ich die Erde seh'.**  
*Until I see the earth.*

**Wo find' ich eine Blüte,**  
*Where to find a blossom?*  
**wo find' ich grünes Gras?**  
*Where to find green grass?*  
**Die Blumen sind erstorben**  
*The flowers have died*  
**der Rasen sieht so blaß.**  
*The grass seems so pale.*

**Soll denn kein Angedenken**  
*Should then no keepsake*  
**ich nehmen mit von hier?**  
*Be taken with me from here?*  
**Wenn meine Schmerzen schweigen,**  
*If my pains fall silent,*  
**wer sagt mir dann von ihr?**  
*What will remind me of her?*

**Mein Herz ist wie erfroren,**  
*My heart is as if frozen,*  
**kalt starrt ihr Bild darin:**  
*Coldly stares her picture therein:*  
**Schmilzt je das Herz mir wieder**  
*If my heart ever melts again*

**fließt auch ihr Bild dahin.**

*Her picture there will also melt.*

**Der Lindenbaum:**

Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827)

**Am Brunnen vor dem Tore,**

*At the fountain by the gates,*

**da steht ein Lindenbaum:**

*There stands a linden tree:*

**Ich träumt in seinem Schatten**

*I dreamed in his shadow*

**so manchen süßen Traum.**

*So many sweet dreams.*

**Ich schnitt in seine Rinde**

*I cut into his bark*

**so manches liebe Wort;**

*So many words of love;*

**es zog in Freud' und Leide**

*He drew me, in joy and love,*

**zu ihm mich immer fort.**

*Always to him.*

**Ich mußst' auch heute wandern**

*I must again wander today*

**vorbei in tiefer Nacht,**

*Through the dead of night,*

**da hab' ich noch im Dunkel**

*But, even in the dark, I still have*

**die Augen zugemacht.**

*My eyes closed.*

**Und seine Zweige rauschten,**

*And his branches rustled,*

**als riefen sie mir zu:**

*As if calling out to me:*

**Komm her zu mir, Geselle,**

*“Come here to me, Wanderer,*

**hier find'st du deine Ruh'!**  
*Here you can find your rest!"*

**Die kalten Winde bliesen**  
*The cold wind blew*  
**mir grad ins Angesicht;**  
*Right in my face;*  
**der Hut flog mir vom Kopfe,**  
*The hat flew off my head*  
**ich wendete mich nicht.**  
*But I was not deterred.*

**Nun bin ich manche Stunde**  
*I am now many hours*  
**entfernt von jenem Ort,**  
*Removed from that place,*  
**und immer hör' ich's rauschen:**  
*And I always hear its rustling:*  
**Du fändest Ruhe dort!**  
*"You would have found rest there!"*

**Frühlingstraum:**

Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827)

**Ich träumte von bunten Blumen,**  
*I dreamed of colourful flowers,*  
**So wie sie wohl blühen im Mai;**  
*Just like the ones that bloom in May;*  
**Ich träumte von grünen Wiesen,**  
*I dreamed green grasslands,*  
**Von lustigem Vogelgeschrei.**  
*Of the funny cries of birds.*

**Und als die Hähne krächten,**  
*And as the rooster crowed,*  
**Da ward mein Auge wach;**  
*There were my eyes awake;*  
**Da war es kalt und finster,**  
*There was it cold and dark,*

**Es schrieen die Raben vom Dach.**  
*As the raven screamed from the roof.*

**Doch an den Fensterscheiben,**  
*But, at the window panes,*  
**Wer malte die Blätter da?**  
*Who painted the leaves there?*  
**Ihr lacht wohl über den Träumer,**  
*Do you laugh well above the dreamer,*  
**Der Blumen im Winter sah?**  
*That saw flowers in the winter?*

**Ich träumte von Lieb' um Liebe,**  
*I dreamed of love for love,*  
**Von einer schönen Maid,**  
*Of a beautiful maiden,*  
**Von Herzen und von Küssen,**  
*Of embraces and of kisses,*  
**Von Wonn' und Seligkeit.**  
*Of bliss and of happiness.*

**Und als die Hähne kräten,**  
*And, as the roosters crowed,*  
**Da ward mein Herze wach;**  
*There was my heart awake;*  
**Nun sitz ich hier alleine**  
*Now sit I here alone*  
**Und denke dem Traume nach.**  
*Thinking on about the dream.*

**Die Augen schließ' ich wieder,**  
*My eyes close again,*  
**Noch schlägt das Herz so warm.**  
*Still beats my heart so warm.*  
**Wann grünt ihr Blätter am Fenster?**  
*When will you leaves be green at my window?*  
**Wann halt' ich mein Liebchen im Arm?**  
*When will I hold my sweetheart in my arms?*

### **Eine Krähe:**

Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827)

#### **Eine Krähe war mit mir**

*A crow was with me*

#### **Aus der Stadt gezogen,**

*Coming out of the town,*

#### **Ist bis heute für und für**

*And is still today, around and around*

#### **Um mein Haupt geflogen.**

*Flying about my head.*

#### **Krähe, wunderliches Tier,**

*Oh, crow, you curious creature,*

#### **Willst mich nicht verlassen?**

*Do you not want to leave me?*

#### **Meinst wohl bald als Beute hier**

*Do you believe soon, as prey here,*

#### **Meinen Leib zu fassen?**

*To take my body?*

#### **Nun, es wird nicht weit mehr gehen**

*Well, I don't have much farther to go now*

#### **An dem Wanderstabe.**

*With my walking stick.*

#### **Krähe, lass mich endlich sehn**

*Crow, let me finally see*

#### **Treue bis zum Grabe!**

*Loyalty unto the grave!*

### **Popatříž na mne:**

Psalm 25: 16-18, 20

#### **Popatříž na mne a smiluj se nade mnou;**

*Look at me and have mercy upon me;*

#### **Neboť jsem opuštěný a ztrápený.**

*Because I am deserted and distressed.*

**Soužení srdce mého rozmnožují se,**  
*The tribulations of my heart are multiplying,*  
**Z úzkostí mých vyved' mne.**  
*From my anxiety, deliver me.*  
**Smiluj se nade mnou!**  
*Have mercy upon me!*  
**Viz trápení mé a bídu mou**  
*See my torment and my woe*  
**A odpust' všechny hříchy mé.**  
*And forgive all of my sins.*  
**Ostříhej duše mé a vytrhni mne**  
*Cut my soul and tear me out.*  
**At' nejsem zahanben,**  
*For, I am not ashamed*  
**Nebot' v Tebe doufám.**  
*Because I trust in you.*

**Slyš, ó Bože, volání mé**

Psalm 61:1, 3-4, Psalm 63:1, 4-15

**Slyš, o Bože, volání mé,**  
*Hear, oh God, my call,*  
**Pozoruj modlitby mé!**  
*Observe my prayers!*  
**Nebo jsi býval útočiště mé**  
*For, you used to be a refuge to me*  
**A pevná věže před tváří nepřítele.**  
*And a firm tower before the faces of my enemy.*

**Budut bydleti v stánku Tvém na věky,**  
*Let me live in your tabernacle through the ages,*  
**Schráním se v skrýši křídel Tvých.**  
*Safe within the hiding place of your wings.*  
**Bože! Bůh silný můj Ty jsi,**  
*God! You are my strong God.*  
**Tebe t' hned v jitře hledám,**  
*Tomorrow I will seek you.*

**Tebe žízní duše má,**

*My soul longs for you,*

**Po Tobě touží tělo mé,**

*My whole body longs after you,*

**V zemi žíznivé a vyprahlé,**

*In this land that is hot and dry,*

**V níž není vody;**

*Where there is no water;*

**A tak, abych Tobě dobrořečil**

*And so, I will bless you*

**A s radostným rtů prozpěvováním**

*And, with joyful lips sing,*

**Chválila by Tě ústa má.**

*Praising you with my mouth.*

**The Pledge:**

“Let me live and I will sing for you.”