



Transfix Us with Love
DMA Recital III

Skylar Cameron, soprano
Dr. Trevor Chartrand, piano

May 23rd, 2024 at 4:00pm
Walter Hall

PROGRAM

Sei ariette selections: Vincenzo Bellini
(1801-1835)
Malinconia, Ninfa gentile
Per pietà, bell' idol mio
Ma rendi pur contento

Eccomi in lieta vesta... oh! quante volte (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*)

C'est des contrebandiers...Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante (*Carmen*) Georges Bizet
(1838-1875)

Absence (Vingt mélodies pour chant et piano, op. 21, No. 13)
Douce mer (Vingt mélodies pour chant et piano, op. 21, No. 14)
Ouvre ton coeur (Seize mélodies pour chant et piano, No. 2)

INTERMISSION

Drei lieder, Op. 22 Erich Wolfgang Korngold
(1897-1957)
Was du mir bist?
Mit dir zu schweigen
Welt ist stille eingeschlafen

Glück, das mir verblieb (*Die tote Stadt*)

Joan's Aria (*Empire of Wild*) Ian Cusson
(b. 1981)

Songs from the House of Death (2022)
3. The Creation Story
2. Dangerous Woman

*This recital is in partial fulfilment of the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance.
Skylar Cameron is a student of Prof. Lorna MacDonald.*

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Commended as a “persistent Elvira, successfully conveying a range of changing emotions in a demanding role” (Opera Canada), Nova Scotian soprano **Skylar Cameron** has performed opera, recital, and oratorio on two continents. Recent performances include *Cosmetician II* in the premiere of Norbert Palej’s *The Art of Love* (COSA Canada), Marchioness Violante Onesti in Mozart’s *La finta giardiniera* (UWO Opera), Webern’s Op. 4 in “Songs of Anton Webern” (a concert curated by John Hess), Donna Elvira in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* (Halifax Summer Opera Festival), and Erste Dame in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* (Halifax Summer Opera Festival). Skylar’s previous operatic roles include the title role in Viardot’s *Cendrillon* (Mount Allison Opera Workshop), Sister Dolcina in Puccini’s *Suor Angelica* (the Centre for Opera Studies in Italy), Venere in Cavalli’s *L’Egisto* (HSOF), and covering the role of Susanna in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* (UWO Opera).

Equally versatile in oratorio and masses, Skylar has been featured as the Widow and soprano soloist in Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, Bach’s *Magnificat in C*, and Haydn’s *Mass in B-flat* with Mount Allison University’s Choral Society and Elliott Chorale.

Skylar is currently pursuing their Doctor of Musical Arts in Vocal Performance with a Collaborative Specialization in Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto, under the tutelage of Prof. Lorna MacDonald. She is a member of The Centre for Global Disability Studies, a research centre dedicated to supporting anti-ableist, intersectional, and interdisciplinary social science and humanities disability studies research, at the University of Toronto Scarborough. Skylar is honoured to have received the Richard Bradshaw Graduate Fellowship in Opera, the Richard March Graduate Fellowship, the Greta Kraus Graduate Fellowship, the Eleanor and Copeland Graduate Fellowship, the Marilyn Cook Graduate Scholarship, and most recently the David Rayside Graduate Award from the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies.

Dr. Trevor Chartrand is an active collaborative pianist, and repetiteur in Toronto, Ontario. Being one of Canada’s most sought after pianists for both recitals performances and opera coaching, he has worked as a head coach/repetiteur for many opera companies across Canada and the United States including the Canadian Opera Company (COC), the Glenn Gould School, Opera5, Western University, the University of Michigan, OperaQ and Cowtown Opera.

Chartrand has performed numerous recitals across the country with both voice and instrumental partners. These performances have included venues such as the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre at the Four Seasons Centre, Koerner Hall, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, Roy Thompson Hall, the Meridian Arts Centre, and many universities across Canada and the United States. He has also been active overseas serving as music director in France at the Franco American Vocal Academy. In addition to his international work, Trevor has adjudicated for ORMTA (Ontario Registered Music Teachers’ Association) zone competitions, and contemporary showcase competitions for both voice and piano, across Ontario. He has also given public masterclasses as an alumnus at the Western University, and at the University of Manitoba.

Trevor holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts (DMA) from the University of Michigan under the tutelage of Martin Katz. He has also obtained an undergraduate degree in solo piano performance, a Master’s degree in collaborative piano (both from Western University), as well as his ARCT from the Royal Conservatory of Music.

PROGRAM NOTES

Celebrated for his expressive bel canto style, Vincenzo Bellini's music is characterized by lyrical melodies (*cantilena*) and orchestration that is sensitive to text setting and vocal demands. Following the success of his opera *Il Pirata*, Bellini published *Composizioni da Camera*, a collection of fifteen pieces written for voice and piano between 1827 and 1835. Among these is *Sei ariette* (1829), a set of small-scale arias that display hallmarks of bel canto style including fluidly legato lines, embellishments, and modest cadenzas. While in Milan, Bellini befriended composer Francesco Pollini and his wife Marianna, to whom *Sei ariette* is dedicated. "**Malinconia, Ninfa gentile**," set to text by Count Carlo Pepoli, personifies the lamenting nymph through flowing arpeggios and delicate figurations in the accompaniment. Chromaticism and subtle harmonic shifts support the yearning, vocal intention. "**Per pietà, bell 'idol mio**," a cavatina originally included in *I puritani* (1835), portrays Elvira's deep love for Arturo through a typical *da capo aria* form. The dotted rhythms of the piano accompaniment provide an orchestra-like dramatic impulse and the varying phrase lengths and ranges are almost operatic. "**Ma rendi pur contento**," a *romanza* with text by Count Pepoli, pleads for happiness despite unrequited love. The *arietta* features a single extended vocal melody accompanied by arpeggios suggestive of a harp, gradually intensifying before tapering off into a gentle conclusion.

Bellini's opera *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (1830), inspired by Matteo Bandello's *Romeo and Juliet* tale and adapted by librettist Felice Romani, embodies the essence of the bel canto tradition. Much of the music in this opera originated from Bellini's earlier, less successful opera, *Zaira*. Giulietta's aria, "**Oh! quante volte**," set on her balcony in Verona, expresses her longing for Romeo through an accompanied recitative, a lyrical cantabile section, and a virtuosic cabaletta. Bellini employs text painting, portamenti, dynamic and articulatory contrasts, and unexpected chromatic lines that evoke Giulietta's anguish. When she sings of her broken heart, the music features descending chromatic lines with dissonant harmonies, musical devices which we first encounter in Bellini's *Sei ariette*.

The cultural climate of the Second French Empire (1852–1870), favoured traditional musical forms and styles, particularly in opera, the dominant art form in France. However, Georges Bizet's compositional style featured an eclecticism and dramatic flair that differed from his more diplomatic and conservative musical contemporaries. Bizet's ideals were characterized in a willingness to experiment with form.¹ Bizet's *Carmen* (1875) initially faced criticism due to its realistic portrayal of working-class characters and departure from conventional operatic norms, challenging the prevailing tastes for idealized and romanticized portrayals on the operatic stage. Nonetheless, after his death, *Carmen* became one of the world's most beloved and frequently performed operas. In the aria "**Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante**," Michaëla expresses her unwavering faith and courage as she searches for Don José. Her steadfastness is bolstered by a horn call motif, arpeggiated strings, and the warm sonorities of the bassoon and clarinet. As the aria progresses, the music builds in intensity through a higher vocal range, rhythmic variation, and expanding harmonies, all of which combine to portray Michaëla's resolve and fearless conviction.

While *Carmen* remains Bizet's primary claim to fame, he also composed fifty *mélodies* which offered him an escape from the constraints of commercial music-making and catering to Parisian tastes. Leveraging his skills as both an opera composer and proficient pianist, as praised by Franz Liszt at a dinner party², Bizet infused his art songs with colourfully rhythmic piano accompaniments. His *mélodie* "**Absence**" (1873) foreshadows the melodic innovation of *Carmen*, which premièred three years later. Through Théophile Gautier's poignant poetry, "**Absence**" describes feelings of longing and separation. The opening melody in the piano is suggestive of a cello solo and includes repeated triplet figures, much like an orchestral reduction. The voice begins descending lines off the beat, occasionally aligning with downbeats, highlighting the lovers' separation despite the call to reunite. The final vocal line rises against descending bass triplets, contrasting with the motifs at the song's outset and evoking Gautier's theme of longing. "**Douce Mer**" (1856) captures the serene beauty of calm waters and peaceful shores through tranquil melodies. The song's long-spanned harmonic structures reflect Bizet's expertise in building dramatic tension, reminiscent of his operatic compositions. A notable musical feature is the piano's tessitura change, crossing with the voice, possibly symbolizing surrender and trust in love. The limited dynamic range of "**Douce Mer**" is in contrast to the other songs and successfully portrays the calm of

¹ Roger Nichols, ed., "Georges Bizet: (Portraits et Souvenirs, Société d'édition Artistique, 1899, 124–127)," essay, in *Camille Saint-Saëns: On Music and Musicians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 124.

² Winton Dean, *Georges Bizet: His Life and Work* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1965), 45.

Alphonse de Lamartine's poetry. "**Ouvre ton cœur**" (1886), is a posthumously published barcarolle from Bizet's chorus and symphony *Vasco da Gama*. The piece was written for the character of a young officer who is urging their beloved to open their heart and reveal their feelings. It has the rhythm and style of a percussive Spanish bolero, similar to what is heard in *Carmen*, and greatly contrasting with the previous song.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897 - 1957) was a Jewish refugee and composer known for his opera, ballet, lieder, and film scores, which he called "*Opern ohne Singen*", operas without singing. His compositional style explores a freedom of form, post-Wagnerian tonal idiom, chromaticism, free dissonance, and melodic imagination with poetic interpretation. *Drei Lieder*, Op. 22 (1930), dedicated to Korngold's mother, marks a shift towards post-World War I modernism, although the songs are still rich with Romantic harmonies and expressive lyricism. "**Was Du mir bist?**" by little-known poet Eleonore van der Straaten, delves into expressions of love that are "schlicht und innig" (simple and heartfelt). The piano accompaniment provides quiet and richly harmonic textures. "**Mit Dir zu schweigen**" by musicologist Karl Kobald explores silent companionship and the depth of connection between two individuals, captured with flowing melodies and harmonic excursions beyond the tonic key. The piano accompaniment evokes a sense of closeness through the sonority of the chromatic inner line and the rising melody with repeated A#s at the end, providing a sense of never-ending tranquility. Lastly, Korngold's setting of Kobald's "**Welt ist stille eingeschlafen**" depicts a peaceful world depicted through ethereal harmonies, shimmering textures, and a sense of suspended time. The accompaniment theme, perhaps inspired by "Gottes Geige" (God's violin), appears at the beginning and returns in variations, passing the thematic material back and forth with the voice.

Die tote Stadt (1920), Korngold's breakthrough late-Romantic dreamscape opera, is based on a play of the same name by Belgian playwright Georges Rodenbach (1855-1898). It explores themes of grief, obsession, and the blurring of reality and fantasy. The opera tells the story of Paul, a man consumed by grief over the death of his wife, Marie. Paul becomes fixated on a dancer named Marietta who so resembles his late wife, he struggles psychologically between reality and fantasy. "**Glück, das mir verblieb**" known as "Marietta's Lied" occurs in Act I during a scene in which Marietta visits Paul's home and attempts to seduce him. Accompanying herself on the lute, Marietta sings a hauntingly beautiful melody that entices Paul with her sensuality, beauty, and carefree charm.

Inspired by Cherie Dimaline's³ national bestselling novel *Empire of Wild* (2019), Métis and French-Canadian composer Ian Cusson is adapting the story for an opera of the same name. A co-commission of the Canadian Opera Company and National Arts Centre, the opera will premiere during the COC's 2024-25 season. Dimaline and Cusson draw on the traditional Métis story of the Rogarou—a werewolf-like creature that haunts the roads and woods of Métis communities—to tell the story of Joan and Victor. Joan has been searching for her husband for almost a year when one morning she finds him preaching in a revival tent in a Walmart parking lot in a small town near Georgian Bay. Suffering from mental illness, Victor insists he is the Reverend Eugene Wolff, on the mission to bring Jesus to the people. In Act II, scene I of *Empire of Wild*, **Joan's Aria** depicts how she prays, guides, and pleads for her husband's return home to her.

Songs From the House of Death (2022) was commissioned by the Vancouver Symphony and Victoria Symphony and premiered by mezzo-soprano Krisztina Szabó. The work draws inspiration from American Indigenous poet Joy Harjo's collection, *How We Became Human*. The cycle weaves together three poems that narrate the end of a relationship from a feminist perspective. Referencing Leoš Janáček's *From the House of the Dead*, the piece delves into emotional and spiritual realms with an underlying theme of oppression. "**The Creation Story**," a tonal, lyrical song, depicts a re-emergence from pain and fear to an unbridled acceptance of the love that lives within each of us. Ultimately, it is about the beauty of being able to hold both grief and joy at the same time. "**I Am a Dangerous Woman**" is rich with imagery, juxtaposing the oppressive materiality of the airport with the spiritual nature of the Sandia mountains (ex: guncatcher vs suncatcher and sharp ridges vs dancing edges). The music mirrors this tension with sweeping gestures and machine-like repeated chords. The chant-like repetition of "I am a dangerous woman" signifies empowerment and resistance against oppression that culminates in the clicking of the gun "inside my head."

³ Cherie Dimaline, "Who I Am," Cherie Dimaline, accessed April 22, 2024, <https://www.cheriedimaline.com/who-i-am>.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

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Eccomi in lieta vesta...Oh! quante volte

Eccomi in lieta vesta...
Eccomi adorna come vittima all'ara.
Oh! Almen potessi qual vittima
cader dell'ara al piede!
O nuziali tede, abborrite così fatali,
siate, ah, siate per me faci ferali.
Ardo... una vampa,
una foco tutta mi strugge.
Un refrigerio ai venti io chiedo invano.
Ove sei tu, Romeo? In qual terra t'aggiri?
Dove, inviarti, dove i miei sospiri?

Oh, quante volte, oh quante
ti chiedo al ciel piangendo!
Con quale ardor t'attendo,
e inganno il mio desir!
Raggio del tuo sembiante
ah! parmi il brillar del giorno:
ah! l'aura che spira intorno
mi sembra un tuo sospir.
Text by Felice Romani (1788-1865)

Sei ariette

Malinconia, Ninfa gentile,
la vita mia consacro a te;
i tuoi piaceri chi tiene a vile,
ai piacer veri nato non è.

Fonti e colline chiesi agli Dei;
m'udiro alfine, pago io vivrò,
né mai quell fonte co' desir miei,
né mai quell monte trapasserò.
Text by Ippolito Pindemonte (1753-1828)

Per pietà, bell'idol mio,
non mi dir ch'io sono ingrato;
infelice e sventurato
abbastanza il Ciel mi fa.

Se fedele a te son io,
se mi struggo ai tuoi bei lumi,
sallo amor, lo sanno i Numi
il mio core, il tuo lo sa.
Text by Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782)

Here I am...Oh! how often

Here I am, in joyous garments...
Here I am, adorned like a victim at the altar.
Oh, if only I could fall victim
at the foot of the altar!
Oh nuptial torches so abhorrent,
so dire, you are fateful flames for me.
I am burning up...
a flame, a fire consumes me.
A soothing coolness of the winds I ask in vain. Where are you
Romeo? In what land are you wandering?
Where shall I send you my sighs?

Oh, how often here
I wept to heaven for you!
With what ardor I await
you and deceive my desire!
A ray of your countenance
ah, seems to me the light of day:
Ah! The air that wafts around me
seems to me one of your sighs.
English translation by Nico Castel

Melancholy, gentle nymph,
I dedicate my life to you;
he who holds your pleasures as worthless, is not born to true
pleasures – can never know what true pleasure is.

I will ask of the gods for fountains and hills;
they have heard me at last, I will live a satisfied life, and I, with
my desires, neither to that fountain nor to that mountain will ever
go. No, never.
English translation by Bard Suverkrop

Have mercy, my beloved
and do not tell me that I am ungrateful;
unhappy and unfortunate enough
has Heaven made me.

That I am faithful to you,
that I burn under the gaze of your beautiful eyes,
knows Cupid, the gods,
my heart and your heart.
English translation by Bard Suverkrop

Ma rendi pur contento
della mia bella il core,
e ti perdono, amore,
se lieto il mio non è.

Gli affanni suoi pavento
più degli affanni miei,
perché più vivo in lei
di quel ch'io vivo in me.
Text by Pietro Metastasio

Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante

C'est de contrebandiers le refuge ordinaire.
Il est ici; je le verrai.
Et le devoir que m'imposa sa mère—
Sans trembler je l'accomplirai.

Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante,
Je dis hélas que je répons de moi,
Mais j'ai beau faire la vaillante,
Au fond du cour, je meurs d'effroi

Seule, en ce lieu sauvage
Toute seule, j'ai peur,
Mais j'ai tort d'avoir peur,
Vous me donnerez du courage,
Vous me protégerez, Seigneur .

Je vais voir de près cette femme
Dont les artifices maudits
Ont fini par faire un infâme
De celui que j'aimais jadis;
Elle est dangereuse, elle est belle,
Mais je ne veux pas avoir peur,
Non, non je ne veux pas avoir peur!
Je parlerai haut devant elle,
Ah! Seigneur ... Vous me protégerez.
Ah! Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante, etc.

Protégez-moi! O Seigneur!
Donnez-moi du courage!
Protégez-moi! O Seigneur!
Text by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

Only make happy
The heart of my beautiful (lady)
And I will forgive you, cupid,
If my own [heart] is not happy

Her troubles I fear
More than my own troubles,
Because I live more in her
Than I live in myself.
English translation by Barbra Miller

I say that nothing frightens me

This is the usual hideout of the smugglers.
He is here; I will see him!
And the task which his mother entrusted me—
Without trembling, I will accomplish it.

I say that nothing frightens me,
I say alas that I answer for myself,
But no matter how brave I am,
At the bottom of my heart, I'm dying of terror

Alone, in this wild place
Alone, I'm afraid,
But I'm wrong to be afraid,
You will give me courage,
You will protect me, Lord.

I'm going to see this woman up close
Whose evil tricks
Have endured by making a criminal
Of the one I once loved;
She is dangerous, she is beautiful,
But I do not want to be afraid,
No, no, I do not want to be afraid!
I will raise my voice to her,
Ah! Lord ... you will protect me.
Ah! I say nothing frightens me, etc.

Protect me! O Lord!
Give me courage!
Protect me! O Lord
English translation by Martha Gerhart

Absence

Reviens, reviens, ma bien-aimée!
Comme une fleur loin du soleil,
La fleur de ma vie est fermée,
Loin de ton sourire vermeil.

Entre nos cœurs tant de distance;
Tant d'espace entre nos baisers.
Ô sort amer ! ô dure absence !
Ô grands désirs inapaisés !

Le corps ne suit pas la pensée;
Pour moi, mon âme, va tout droit,
Comme une colombe blessée,
T'abattre au rebord de son toit.

Descends dans sa gorge divine,
Blonde et fauve comme de l'or,
Douce comme un duvet d'hermine,
Sa gorge, mon royal trésor ;

Et dis, mon âme, à cette belle:
[« Tu sais bien qu'il compte les jours !
Ô ma colombe ! à tire d'aile,
Retourne au nid de nos amours. »]
Text Théophile Gautier (1811-1972)

Douce Mer

Murmure autour de ma nacelle,
Douce mer dont les flots chéris,
Ainsi qu'une amante fidèle,
Jettent une plainte éternelle
Sur ces poétiques débris.

Que j'aime à flotter sur ton onde,
A l'heure où du haut du rocher
L'oranger, la vigne féconde,
Versent sur ta vague profonde
Une ombre propice au nocher!

Souvent, dans ma barque sans rame,
Me confiant à ton amour,
Comme pour assoupir mon âme,
Je ferme au branle de ta lame,
Mes regards fatigués du jour.
Text by Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869)

Absence

Return, return, my beloved!
Like a flower far from the sun,
The flower of my life is shut,
Far from your rosy smile!

Between our hearts such distance!
Such space between our kisses!
O bitter destiny! O harsh absence!
O great, unappeasable desires!

The body does not obey the thought;
For me, my soul goes straight ahead
And, like a wounded dove,
Collapses upon the edge of her roof.

Lower yourself onto that divine bosom,
As lovely and burnished as gold,
As soft as an ermine duvet,
Her bosom, my royal treasure;

And say, my soul, to this beauty:
"You know well that he is counting the days!
O my dove! Take flight
And return to the nest of our loves."
Translation by Emily Ezust

Gentle Sea

Murmur around my boat,
tranquil sea whose dear waves,
like a faithful lover,
throw an eternal plaint
over her poetic debris.

How I like to float upon your swell,
at the hour when, from the top of the rock
the orange tree, the bountiful vine,
pour upon your deep wave
an opportune shadow for the helmsman!

Often, in my skiff without oars,
trusting in your love,
as if to assuage my soul,
I close my weary day-time gaze
to the din of your breakers.
English Translation by Christopher Goldsack

Ouvre ton coeur

La marguerite a fermé sa corolle,
L'ombre a fermé les yeux du jour.
Belle, me tiendras-tu parole?
Ouvre ton cœur à mon amour.

Ouvre ton cœur, ô jeune ange, à ma flamme,
Qu'un rêve charme ton sommeil.
Je veux reprendre mon âme,
Comme une fleur s'ouvre au soleil!
Text by Louis Delâtre (1815-1893)

Glück, das mir verblieb (Marietta's Lied)

Glück, das mir verblieb,
rück zu mir, mein treues Lieb.
Abend sinkt im Hag
bist mir Licht und Tag.
Bange pochet Herz an Herz
Hoffnung schwingt sich himmelwärts.

Wie wahr, ein traurig Lied.
Das Lied vom treuen Lieb,
das sterben muss.
Ich kenne das Lied.
Ich hört es oft in jungen,
in schöneren Tagen.
Es hat noch eine Strophe --
weiß ich sie noch?

Naht auch Sorge trüb,
rück zu mir, mein treues Lieb.
Neig dein blaß Gesicht
Sterben trennt uns nicht.
Mußt du einmal von mir gehn,
glaub, es gibt ein Auferstehn.
Text by Paul Scott (1860 - 1945)

Open your heart

The daisy has closed its petals,
The shadow has closed its eyes for the day.
Beauty, will you speak with me?
Open your heart to my love.

Open your heart, o young angel, to my flame,
so that a dream may enchant your sleep
I wish to reclaim my soul,
As a flower turns to the sun!
English translation from *A French Song Companion*

Happiness that has stayed with me (Marietta's Song)

Happiness that has stayed with me,
move up close beside me, my true love.
In the grove evening is waning,
yet you are my light and day.
One heart beats uneasily against the other,
[while] hope soars heavenward.

How true, a mournful song.
The song of the true love
bound to die.
I know this song.
I often heard it sung
in happier days of yore.
There is yet another stanza -
have I still got it in mind?

Though dismal sorrow is drawing nigh,
move up close beside me, my true love.
Turn your wan face to me
death will not part us.
When the hour of death comes one day,
believe that you will rise again.
English translation by Bertram Kottmann

Drei Lieder, Op. 22

Was du mir bist?

Was du mir bist?
Der Ausblick in ein schönes Land,
Wo fruchtbeladene Bäume ragen,
Blumen blühen am Quellenrand.
Was du mir bist?
Der Stern funkelt, das Genvolk durchbricht,
Der ferne Lichtstrahl, der im Dunkeln spricht:
O Wand'rer verzage nicht!
Und war mein Leben auch entsagen,
Glänze mir kein frohes Geschick
Was du mir bist kannst du noch fragen?
Was du mir bist: mein Glaube an das Glück.

Text by Eleonore van der Straaten (1876 - 1960)

What are you to me?

What are you to me?
The view in a beautiful country,
Where fruit-laden trees tower,
Flower's bloom on the fountain's edge.
What are you to me?
The star's sparkle, piercing through the clouds,
The distant beam of light, that speaks in the darkness:
O wanderer do not despair!
And were my life also to be relinquished
Shine for me no happy fate.
What do you mean to me, can you still ask?
What are you to me: my hope for happiness.
English translation by Randel R. Wagner

Mit dir zu schweigen

Mit dir zu schweigen still im Dunkel,
Die Seele an der Traume Schoss gelehnt
Ist Lauschen ew'gen Melodien,
Ist Liebe ohne End'...

Mit dir zu schweigen in der Dämmerzeit,
Ist Schweben nach der Welten grossen fühle,
Ist Wachsen weit in die Unendlichkeit,
Entrückt in ew'ge Stille.

Text by Karl Kobald (1876 – 1957)

To be with you without speaking

To be with you without speaking in the still darkness
with the soul resting in the bosom of dreams
is the hiding place of never-ending melodies,
is love without end...

To be with you without speaking in the twilight time
is to float near the greatest feeling in the world,
is to extend far into infinity,
entranced in endless tranquility.

English translation by Randel R. Wagner

Welt ist stille eingeschlafen

Welt ist stille eingeschlafen,
Ruht im Mondenschein.
Offnen sich im Himmelshafen
Augen, golden, rein
Gottes Geige singt jetzt leis'
Liebste, denk' an dich.
Wie im Traumboot geht die Reise,
Such in Sternen dich.
Strahlen sel'ger Lieb' erhellen
Meines Herzens Raum.
Zwiesprach' halten uns're Seelen,
Küssen sich im Traum.

Text by Karl Kobald

The world is silently asleep

The world is silently asleep,
Resting in the moonlight.
Eyes open in the heavenly harbor,
Golden and precious.
God's violin sings gently now,
Beloved, think of me.
As in the dream boat goes the Journey
I seek for you in the stars.
Happy love radiates
And lights up the room of my heart.
Our souls hold a heart to heart talk
and kiss in the dream.
English translation by Randel R. Wagner

Joan's Aria

My prayer is small
As small as these crickets
Rubbing music into the corners
Of this night

My prayer is large
As large as their song
Pushed into the curves
Of this night

My prayer is whispered
With old words from new days
Bursting from ceremony
Into this night

My prayer is shouting
With old medicine
Stories of women and the men
They lost at night

If I can't bring you home
I'll get you to the road
If I can't bring you home
I'll guide you with this map

(Joan opens her cloak, she is wearing a gorgeous tight gown underneath, covered in beadwork)

This is your home
I am your home

This is the road
I am your road

This is the map
I am your map

And on that star,
Marked in red
We'll be together
Text by Cherie Dimaline (b. 1975)

Songs from the House of Dead

3. The Creation Story

I'm not afraid of love
or its consequence of light.

It's not easy to say this
or anything when my entrails
dangle between paradise
and fear.

I am ashamed
I never had the words
to carry a friend from her death
to the stars
correctly.

Or the words to keep
my people safe
from drought
or gunshot.
The stars who were created by words
are circling over this house
formed of calcium, of blood

this house
in danger of being torn apart
by stones of fear.

If these words can do anything
if these songs can do anything
I say bless this house
with stars.
Transfix us with love
Text by Joy Harjo

2. I Am a Dangerous Woman

The sharp ridges of the clear blue windows
motion to me
from the airport's second floor.
Edges dance in the foothills of the Sandias
behind security guards
who wave me into their guncatcher machine.

I am a dangerous woman.

When the machine buzzes they say
to take off my belt,
and I remove it so easy
that it catches the glance
of a man standing nearby.
(Maybe that is the deadly weapon
that has the machine singing.)

I am a dangerous woman,

but the weapon is not visible.
Security will never find it.
They can't hear the clicking
of the gun inside my head.
Text by Joy Harjo (b. 1951)

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