



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS®

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music

If I Cannot Fly

a graduate recital

Carrie Moscoe, soprano

Natalia Venegas Escobar, Piano

Jacquelin Tawil, mezzo soprano

MARCH 28, 2026 | 3:30 PM

HARRIS CONCERT HALL

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music
Jacob Allen, Interim Director
College of Communication and Fine Arts
Deb Burns, Dean

PROGRAM

Il Bacio Luigi Arditi
(1822-1903)

Standschen Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)

Morgen!

Kling!

Allerseelen

Chansons de Ronsard Darius Milhaud
A une Fontaine (1892-1974)
A Cupidon
Tais-toi babillarde

Intermission

Pie Jesu Gabriel Faure
from Requiem in D minor (1845-1924)

Pie Jesu Andrew Lloyd Weber
from Requiem (b. 1948)

Jacquelin Tawil, Mezzo Soprano

Try Me, Good King, The Last Words of the Libby Larsen
Wives of Henry VIII (b. 1950)

Catherine of Aragon
Anne Boleyn
Jane Seymour
Anne of Cleves
Catherine Howard

Green Finch and Linnet Bird Stephen Sondheim
from *Sweeney Todd* (1930-2021)

TRANSLATIONS

Il Bacio - The Kiss

Luigi Arditi
(1822-1903)

On your lips, if I could
A sweet kiss I would give you
All, all I would say to you
Those sweet nothings of love.

Always sitting close to you I'd be,
A thousand pretty words I'd tell you.
And I'd hear the beats
Of your heart answering mine.

I have no wish for gems and pearls,
I'm not looking for other affection.
Your very glance is my delight,
One of your kisses my treasure

Come! Oh, come! Do not delay!
Come here next to me,
In the rapture of an embrace
That I might live on love alone!

TRANSLATIONS

Standchen - Serenade

Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)

Open up, open up! but softly, my child,
So that no one's roused from slumber!
The brook hardly murmurs, the breeze hardly moves
A leaf on the bushes and hedges;
Gently, my love, so nothing shall stir,
Gently with your hand as you lift the latch!

With steps as light as the steps of elves,
As they hop their way over flowers,
Flit out into the moonlit night,
Slip out to me in the garden!
The flowers are fragrant in sleep
By the rippling brook, only love is awake.

Sit down! Dusk falls mysteriously here
Beneath the linden trees.
The nightingale above us
Shall dream of our kisses
And the rose, when it wakes at dawn,
Shall glow from our night's rapture.

Morgen! - Morning!

Strauss

And tomorrow the sun will shine again
And on the path, where I shall walk
It will again unite us, the happy ones
In the midst of this sun-breathing earth...
And to the wide, blue-waved shore,
We will quietly and slowly descend,
Mute, we will gaze into each other's eyes
And on us sinks the muted silence of happiness

TRANSLATIONS

Kling!- Ring!

Strauss

Ring!

My soul gives forth a pure sound.
And I imagined the poor thing
Already torn apart
By the furious outrages of frantic times.

Sing!

My soul the confessional song
Of exuberance reclaimed;
Lift the pall from your heart.
Hail to thee, chiming note within.

Ring!

Ring out your life,
Fresh, upwelling image.
Blossoming has taken place
Upon the withered field.

Allerseelen- All Souls's Day

Strauss

Put on the table the fragrant mignonettes,
Carry the last red Astors here,
And let us again talk of love,
Like once in May.
Give me your hand, that I may secretly press it,
And if anyone sees it, it makes no difference to me,
Give me only one of your sweet glances
Like once in May.
Today it blossoms and smells sweet on each grave
One day in the year indeed the dead are free,
Come to my heart, that I have you again,
Like once in May.

TRANSLATIONS

A une fontaine- To a fountain

Darius Milhaud
(1892-1974)

Listen to me, living fountain,
from whom I oft have drunk,
flat on my belly overlooking your bank,
lazy in the cool breeze
while the summer harvests
Ceres' unclad breast
and the air whimpers
beneath the beaten wheat.
So may you always be
a religion to all those
who drink from you or who pasture
their cattle on your green banks.
So may nymphs
forever dance
around you
in the moonlit midnights.

TRANSLATIONS

A cupidon- To Cupid

Milhaud

Day pushes night before it
And somber night
Pushes day, Which glows
With a dark shadow.

Autumn follows Summer
And the winds' bitter rage
Never existed,
once the storm is over.

But the fever of love
Which torments me
Remains in me always
And never lets up.

It wasn't me, God,
who needed to be stung;
Your arrow
should have hit someplace else.
Pursue the lazy
And amuse them,
But not me, not those
Who love the muse.

TRANSLATIONS

Tais-toi babillarde- Quiet, chattering swallow

Milhaud

Quiet, chattering swallow,
or if I get my hands on you
I'll tear the feathers from your wing
or cut out your tongue.
In the morning, your endless cackling
makes my head turn.

You can sing all day,
all evening, all night
in my chimney if you want,
but in the morning don't wake me up
when I'm dozing
with my Cassandra in my arms.

Pie Jesu - Pious Jesus

Gabriel Faure
(1845-1924)

Pious Lord Jesus
Give them rest.

Pious Lord Jesus,
Give them everlasting rest.

Pie Jesu - Pious Jesus

Andrew Lloyd Weber
(b. 1948)

Pious Jesus
Who lifted the world's sins,
Grant them rest.
God's Lamb,
Who lifted the world's sins,
Grant them rest,
Everlasting rest.

TRANSLATIONS

Tais-toi babillarde- Quiet, chattering swallow

Milhaud

Quiet, chattering swallow,
or if I get my hands on you
I'll tear the feathers from your wing
or cut out your tongue.
In the morning, your endless cackling
makes my head turn.

You can sing all day,
all evening, all night
in my chimney if you want,
but in the morning don't wake me up
when I'm dozing
with my Cassandra in my arms.

Pie Jesu - Pious Jesus

Gabriel Faure
(1845-1924)

Pious Lord Jesus
Give them rest.

Pious Lord Jesus,
Give them everlasting rest.

Pie Jesu - Pious Jesus

Andrew Lloyd Weber
(b. 1948)

Pious Jesus
Who lifted the world's sins,
Grant them rest.
God's Lamb,
Who lifted the world's sins,
Grant them rest,
Everlasting rest.

PROGRAM NOTES

'Il Bacio' opens us with an art song that feels a lot like an aria. Considered a favorite among coloratura sopranos, providing an opportunity for a more virtuoso performance to show off their runs. Which fits in with this joyous, romantic waltz.

With 'Standchen' we hear a set of dreamy high notes in a 6/8 set that set up a more mystical, fantastical scene with descriptions of flowers and elves. It is not only a romantic night, but a magical one with elements of the supernatural. It only matches the love of the serenade as the couple portrayed in the song are given an opportunity to sneak out and have their embraces only be witnessed by nature. Morgen was a part of Op. 27 which Strauss presented as a gift to his wife Pauline de Ahna on their wedding day. According to Shirmer, "the voice enters gently into the texture of the accompaniment and seems to float across it throughout." The poetry is among the more romantic set by Strauss, a perfect choice for a wedding song to his wife as it describes a couple taking a walk in the early morning with only themselves to witness the beauty of nature and their love for each other. Kling is more fantastic and about the surreal rapture of the soul. It is a more spiritual song with ambiguous poetry. Is it a love song? A song about religion? That is completely up to interpretation. But the high range and dramatic outbursts set up for a scene of pure bliss and freedom. Allerseelen is more somber, as it depicts a scene on All Soul's Day wherein the narrator uses the holiday to suggest to their ex-lover to revive their dead relationship. According to Shirmer since the poet was dead when Strauss was born, the heaviness of the music seems to recall a past era, making recalling the past seem more happy, more distant, and more unattainable. The vocal line is itself not doubled in the piano but supported by the rich harmonies Strauss created.

PROGRAM NOTES

Milhaud initially created the 'Chansons de Ronsard,' or 'Songs of Ronsard' to be sung by Lily Pons. This shows in the high range, unusual leaps in the melisma's, and lighter, brighter quality of the composition. *A une fontaine* describes a magical fountain beloved by all who drink and dance among its waters. The three four rhythm gives it a dancing quality, and the imagery of Greek Myths make it feel magical. Milhaud continues with Ronsard's setting of poetry inspired by Greek Mythology with *A Cupidon*. In this song, the narrator is more tormented. Through the odd intervals in the runs and tension in the piano line, the narrator begs the god Cupid to remove the pain of being in love and to focus his attentions somewhere else. *Tais-toi babillarde* is not about any mythology but plays two sides. One is the bird, gleefully singing into the air with chipper joy. The other is a patter song by the narrator complaining about the bird waking them up early in the morning and interrupting time with their lover. The contrast adds to the playfulness as we go from the bird to the frustrated protagonist, suggesting, along with its more violent text, a battle of wits between one grown adult and one tiny, feathered creature.

The 'Pie Jesu' from Faure's 'Requiem in D Minor' is a more comforting piece. It's lighter quality when most requiems seem to focus on the heaviness of the reality of death serves as a much-needed balm amidst the despair of grief. It then grows quieter, as if more shy, more unsure, and then climaxes into a grand forte where the singer confidently assures the listener that there will be a peaceful rest. The 'Pie Jesu' from Andrew Lloyd Weber's 'Requiem' offers similar consolation. It is higher in range and was known to be sung by Webber's now ex-wife Sarah Brightman. This appears to be written for her voice as it soars up high and offers many dramatic moments of pausing to show the voice in a display of beauty.

PROGRAM NOTES

Libby Larsen's song cycle, "Try Me Good King, or The Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII" takes the letters and execution speeches from Henry the VIII's wives and sets them to a modern, dramatic, powerful setting. Curiously, she leaves out the last wife, Catherine Parr, the one who "survived." Larsen says she did this because the other five have more opportunities for high drama.

We open with Catherine of Aragon. Initially, she and Henry had a rare marriage of love among royalties. But her failure to provide a surviving male heir left Henry to decide their union was cursed by God and to seek another wife elsewhere. Although she remained faithful to him and was utterly devoted to him, Henry battled with the church to annul the marriage. He ended up creating his own faith, The Church of England, to declare the marriage null and void, and exiled Catherine, separating her forever from their daughter, Mary. Catherine throughout this time never let go of the title of Queen and always insisted that she was the king's one true wife. The text of the song comes from Catherine as she is dying of cancer. We see this reflected in the music as Catherine soberly and plainly calls Henry her "lord, king, and husband." There is an air of tenderness in the music, Catherine forgiving him and still loving him despite all he had done to her. It is a mix of both powerful and pitiful.

PROGRAM NOTES

Anne Boleyn was formerly Catherine of Aragon's lady in waiting, but her wit and intelligence caught the king's interest. He exchanged numerous love letters to her and eventually married her in secret, until Catherine of Aragon's marriage was annulled and she was set up as the less popular queen. However, Anne was far less obedient and submissive than Catherine was, not tolerating Henry's indiscretions and being more outspoken than was expected of a wife. The fact that she only had one daughter and no surviving male children only left her more vulnerable. Historians believe Anne Boleyn was truly innocent of the charges laid against her. He just needed any excuse to get rid of her. What happened was that Henry's allies and those who opposed Anne recorded many of her words and actions, blew them up out of context, and then laid them as charges for her for treason, adultery, and incest. She was sent to the tower of London and eventually executed on those false charges, the event being the first public execution of an English queen. We hear in her first high octave of "try me, good king," with the fast piano and desperate rhythms of her insisting on her innocence and demanding a fair trial where she could prove herself. The piece wanders briefly into the love poetry sent from Henry to Anne, where it reaches a far happier memory as the tonality and rhythm shifts. It then reaches stark back as we hear again of her battling with Henry for her innocence. After it rises and rises, the music sobers down as we hear her execution speech. Anne was recorded by witnesses of the time to have faced her death with pious dignity, which moved several of the people watching to tears.

PROGRAM NOTES

Jane Seymour was announced as betrothed to Henry on the day of Anne Boleyn's execution. She had a reputation for being the sweeter and milder of the wives, serving as a contrast to her fiery predecessor. According to historians, she even attempted to advise Henry on his politics, but he silenced her, warning her of what happened to his last wife. She might be the "boring ingenue" wife, but she had to be. One can imagine the immense pressure and fear she must have felt internally keeping all of this in mind. When she finally has a son, the voice and music rise in a relieved triumph of accomplishing what the two other wives failed to do. It then calms down and pauses as she reflects on the universal joy of new motherhood. We then get an anonymous poem as the music references "Lo, how a rose e'er blooming" drawing a parallel between the Virgin Mary and her Child to Jane and her child. Though she will tragically die of illness two weeks after the son's birth, the music gives her time to sing a lullaby to her little boy as it rises in joy and quiets down into a joyful, motherly hum.

PROGRAM NOTES

Anne of Cleves hailed from Germany, and it is said that the king initially saw a portrait of her that was so beautiful, he insisted on the marriage taking place. When Anne arrived in England, the king dressed in a costume, as he would like to do, and surprised her. Anne, unfamiliar with the practices of English courtship, was not immediately charmed or in love with him. Many people claim that Henry thought she wasn't as pretty as in her portrait, but it had more to do with their disastrous first meeting (Anne was considered pretty by at least German standards). Because their marriage was left unconsummated, it was annulled and Anne was decreed to be the king's adopted sister. He gave her wealth (likely it was "hush" money, he couldn't upset his German allies) and granted her castles and a revered place at court. Larsen's music leans into the more popular interpretation of Anne of Cleves' situation being a triumph among the wives. The jaunty tune and fast rhythms along with the inner directions of the singer "outfoxing" the council shows Anne as unbothered by these trials and ecstatic about her divorce. Complete with slides up to touch an octave almost like laughter as she happily runs off to her castle.

PROGRAM NOTES

Catherine Howard could have been as young as seventeen when she was made queen to Henry, who was old enough to be her grandfather. During her time, she became obsessed with another man who worked in the palace named Thomas Culpepper who had a disreputable past (he may have sexually assaulted a woman). Despite this, Catherine Howard fell deeper in infatuation with him and soon sent him letters. An anonymous tip off to the king suggested that a) she wasn't a virgin when she married him, and Henry expected all of his brides to be chaste and b) she was having an affair (we have no evidence that Catherine and Thomas ever consummated their relationship). If she had informed the king beforehand, she was not a virgin or engaged to another man in the past, she would have been spared execution. Which we'll never know why Catherine did not disclose, perhaps to save her pride. Henry was furious and soon Catherine was stripped of her titles, her past of sleeping with her grandmother's secretary Henry Manno arrived (which we do have evidence from witnesses it happened), and Henry Manno, Thomas Culpepper, and Catherine Howard were all executed. Some modern historians have leaned into the interpretation that Catherine Howard was a victim of sexual abuse all along. That she was an underage girl who was constantly taken advantage of by older, more powerful men and ultimately victim blamed and killed for it. Larsen leans into the more romantic interpretation that Catherine did consent to these (though her young age in our modern eyes does leave this consent as dubious at best). Her chromatic pleadings and her piano whisperings of "brothers" has us feeling for this frightened teenage girl awaiting her death in mere moments. We then get a disjointed, high cries before it quiets down, letting her have her moments of terror and outbursts. But then she finally accepts her fate with dignity claiming (inaccurately, Catherine was not really recorded to say this) that she would rather die as Culpepper's wife right before musically the axe falls, and her head tumbles down as portrayed in the piano.

PROGRAM NOTES

In 'Sweeney Todd,' the character of Johanna Barker is unique amongst traditional "ingenué" roles. She has a deep longing for agency, a tendency for anxiety, and a more cynical outlook on the world. She is more aware of the fact that she is suppressed and over "protected" by her adoptive father and is miserable in it. She longs for freedom. In her song, "Green Finch and Linnet Bird" she comes across birds in cages and asks them how they can be happy while knowing they are trapped. The song is her desiring autonomy, something that especially as a young woman in Victorian England will be denied to her. The half steps amidst the chords played in the music create a sense of unease and tension, mirroring her discomfort with her sheltered life. Her voice seems to be a bird like, mimicking the chattering of the birds she is singing to. It then goes into glorious high bursts, giving her metaphorical wings. She wonders what type of things the birds are saying, how they cannot long for "the stars", and if she is just a person who cannot adapt to new situations. She then sings a trill, an attempt to be birdlike herself. The song then concludes with Johanna asking the birds to teach her how to be happy in their less-than-ideal circumstances. Concluding that "if I cannot fly, let me sing."