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2022-23 Season



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Faculty Tuesdays

Love's Labor

Andrew Cooperstock, piano; Andrew Garland, baritone;
Jennifer Hayghe, piano; Veda Hingert-McDonald, violin;
Abigail Nims, mezzo soprano; Alexandra Nguyen, piano;
Jeffrey Nytch, composer + director; Annika Socolofsky, composer

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2023

Grusin Music Hall

Program

Loves don't / go

Annika Socolofsky (b. 1990)

Poem by Molly Moses

Abigail Nims, mezzo soprano

Alexandra Nguyen, piano

As Adam Early in the Morning

Ned Rorem (1923-2022)

Poem by Walt Whitman

Andrew Cooperstock, piano

Andrew Garland, baritone

A Glimpse

Ned Rorem

Poem by Walt Whitman

Andrew Cooperstock, piano

Andrew Garland, baritone

Went Missing

Nils Frahm (b. 1982)

Jennifer Hayghe, piano

Three Songs, Op. 10

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

Poems by James Joyce

1. Rain has Fallen
2. Sleep Now
3. I Hear an Army

Andrew Cooperstock, piano

Andrew Garland, baritone

Re

Nils Frahm (b. 1982)

Jennifer Hayghe, piano

Love's Labor

Jeffrey Nytch (b. 1964)

1. Save Only Love (Willa Cather)
2. I So Liked Spring (Charlotte Mew)
3. No Obligation (Vita Sackville-West)
4. Nightmare (C.E. Cooper)
5. Love Should Grow Up (Susan Griffin)
6. Rise Up, My Love (Song of Solomon)

Andrew Cooperstock, piano

Andrew Garland, baritone

Some

Nils Frahm (b. 1982)

Jennifer Hayghe, piano

Who am I to say? (who should I marry)

Annika Socolofsky

Traditional poem arranged by the composer

Abigail Nims, mezzo soprano

Veda Hingert-McDonald, violin

Program notes

Love's Labor explores the subtle and nuanced aspects of relationships: the struggles and contradictions; forgiveness and redemption; doubts and uncertainties. In curating the songs for this program, I wanted to go beyond the typical "love song" notions we most commonly see: "I love you and I'm so happy," "I love you but you don't love me back," or, "We've broken up and I'm miserable." Of course, actual love relationships are almost always more complex than this, and it's these complexities that I wished to explore. In the two songs by Ned Rorem, we experience the longing of forbidden love in settings of two homoerotic poems by Walt Whitman. Samuel Barber's three songs of James Joyce are filled with underlying, shifting tensions and uncertainties; here is a relationship undergoing a morass of issues that don't appear to be headed towards a resolution.

The songs that make up my cycle, *Love's Labor*, come from a variety of sources. "Save Only Love," "No Obligation," and "Rise Up, My Love" were initially choral songs; their arc was one of blissful love, frustration, and reconciliation. To this I added a previously-written solo song, "Love should grow up," which captures the conflicting nature of all relationships: messy, often difficult, and all the more beautiful for being so. These previous pieces felt like an incomplete group, however, so as I was arranging them for my friends Andrew Garland and Andrew Cooperstock I realized I needed two additional songs. "I So Liked Spring," remembers a love now gone (or at least on hiatus), and "Nightmare" is a searing depiction of betrayal and rejection. Taken together, these six songs trace a relationship that goes through a number of phases and struggles, comes close to the breaking point, but in the end is redeemed by healing forgiveness and grace.

Framing all of this are two songs by Annika Socolofsky. Setting the stage for our journey is *Love's don't / go*, which makes a simple yet profound statement: "Loves don't go away, they just disappear under new loves." And the concert's closing thought, *Who am I to say (who I should marry)*, encourages us to challenge our assumptions about love and relationships. Socolofsky writes, "The text for this song is derived from the English nursery rhyme "Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor," which invites young girls to fantasize about what occupation

their future husbands might have. As a child, I was told by nursery rhymes, by songs, by books, by stories, by the radio, by friends and by society that my worth in life would be measured by the worth of my future husband. This message pours a foundation of endlessly conditioned heteronormativity so deep within us that even the most liberal and queer among us hold shame in a death grip close to our heart. It is that shame that perpetually haunts me with doubt, and makes me wonder, who am I to say who I should marry? Millions have been robbed of their agency, truth, and self-worth, and it is a long road to reclaim it.” As befitting a program about contradiction and uncertainty, we end with a challenge and a question: Who am I to say ...?

In a performance filled with so many words and emotions, I felt it was important to provide some sort of non-text space for reflection and emotional processing. Thanks to a brilliant suggestion from Socolofsky, I found exactly what I needed in the solo piano music of Nils Frahm, a Berlin-based composer and performer who uses modified pianos and electronics to create vivid sound worlds. Frahm’s music is hard to classify: it’s not “concert music” in the traditional sense, but I also don’t see it as “new age,” “meditation” or any other label. What I do know is that this is music crafted with great intention, music that invites the listener to press into oneself and listen to the “still, small voice” within.

I am eternally grateful to all of the amazing artists on tonight’s program. They are cherished colleagues and dear friends, and making music together is a tremendous joy and privilege. Thanks, too, to Ted Mulcahey, who prepared the “una corda” piano for the Frahm selections. Lastly, I want to thank my husband, Jeffrey Kash, who always supports me, who helped me refine my vision for the staging of the show and who didn’t mind emptying our living room of its furniture for tonight’s program.

—*Program note by Jeffrey Nytch*

Personnel

Text that is bold and underlined is a hyperlink and can be clicked or tapped for more information.

Andrew Cooperstock, piano

Andrew Garland, baritone

Jennifer Hayghe, piano

Abigail Nims, mezzo soprano

Alexandra Nguyen, piano

Jeffrey Nytch, composer + director

Annika Socolofsky, composer

Veda Hingert-McDonald, violin

Veda Hingert-McDonald (she/her) is a Canadian violinist and composer currently pursuing a master's at University of Colorado Boulder where she studies with Takács Quartet violinists Harumi Rhodes and Edward Dusingberre. Drawn to story just as much as sound, Hingert-McDonald's performance of both new and standard repertoire aims to balance personal connection with tradition, and her compositions often draw on narrative and programmatic elements to explore themes of nature and questions she has about the world around her.

Outside of her musical life Hingert-McDonald is active in environmental and food justice work including training in permaculture design, founding a zero waste concert series, and creating an Indigenous food justice garden. She sees both chamber music and permaculture as opportunities to build and model the kind of interconnectedness and empathy she wishes to see in the world.

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