

78TH SEASON OF

CONCERTS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART | SEPTEMBER 29, 2019



PROGRAM



left Brenda Patterson, photo courtesy of the artist. **center** Carlton Ford, photo by Shannon Langman
right William Ferguson, photo courtesy of the artist

Victory Hall Opera

Brenda Patterson, mezzo-soprano

William Ferguson, tenor

Carlton Ford, baritone

Renate Rohlfing, piano

R. Timothy McReynolds, piano

Heartstrings: Music of the Victorian Parlor

September 29, 2019 | 3:30

West Building, West Garden Court

Stephen Foster (1826–1864)

“Beautiful Child of Song” (1860)

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Selections from *Kinderszenen* (1838)

Von fremden Ländern und Menschen

Ritter vom Steckenpferd

Träumerei

Stephen Foster

“Beautiful Dreamer” (1862)

Stephen Foster

“If You’ve Only Got a Moustache” (1864)

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Selections from *Liebeslieder* and *Neue Liebeslieder Walzer* (1869/70)

O die Frauen!

Nicht wandle, mein Licht

Wohl schön bewandt war es

Sieh, wie ist die Welle klar

Ihr schwarzen Augen

Amy Beach (1867–1944)

“Twilight” (1887)

Sarah F. Adams (1805–1848) and Lowell Mason (1792–1872)

“Nearer My God to Thee” (1841)

Carrie Jacobs-Bond (1862–1946)

Half-Minute Songs (pub. 1910, written earlier)

“Making the Best of It”

“First Ask Yourself”

“To Understand”

“How to Find Success”

“The Pleasure of Giving”

“Answer the First Rap”

“A Good Exercise”

“A Present from Yourself”

“Now and Then”

“When They Say the Unkind Things”

“Keep Awake”

“Doan’ Yo’ Lis’n”

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

Souvenirs de Bayreuth (1880)

Joseph Bryan Geoghegan (1816–1889)

“Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye” (1867)

George Frederick Root (1820–1895)

“The Vacant Chair” (1862)

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Nocturne in E-Flat Major, op. 9, no. 2 (1832)

African-American Spiritual (first notated in the 1860s)

Arr. Hall Johnson

“Ride On, King Jesus”

Stephen Foster

“Hard Times Come Again No More” (1854)

THE MUSICIANS

Victory Hall Opera

Described by the *Washington Post* as “breaking new ground and pushing the envelope,” Victory Hall Opera (VHO) is now in its fourth season of bringing cutting-edge, thrilling opera to Charlottesville, Virginia. Led by opera singers Miriam Gordon-Stewart (artistic director) and Brenda Patterson (director of music), VHO presents a new model for what an opera company can be: not an institution, but a troupe, in this case of twelve exceptional singers advancing the art form together. VHO presents contemporary productions of chamber opera and song in intimate, alternative venues, offering an up-close experience of the human instrument. With groundbreaking cross-genre collaborations, every performance must meet the ensemble’s three criteria and be “disarming, exquisite, and sincere.”

Brenda Patterson

Mezzo-soprano Brenda Patterson is recognized as much for her artistic bravery as for the beauty and warmth of her singular voice. A graduate of the Juilliard School and Barnard College, Patterson was at the Hamburg State Opera before continuing on at La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, and the Florida Grand Opera, among others. Patterson has premiered more than thirty vocal works and is also an official vocal consultant to the composers-in-residence at Opera Philadelphia. She is a cofounder of Victory Hall Opera and the only singer in America to hold the title “Director of Music” of an opera company. Patterson has twice been awarded Music Academy of the West’s prestigious Alumni Enterprise Award for projects in classical music that are “revolutionary, daring, and inspiring.”

William Ferguson

A native of Richmond, Virginia, tenor William Ferguson has always pushed the boundaries of opera performance through his exploration of new repertoire and through the commitment of his characterizations. He has sung with the Santa Fe Opera, Opera Australia, the New York City Opera, Festival Opéra de Québec, the Salzburg Festival, and the Metropolitan Opera, among others. His concert performances have included the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the American Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Carlton Ford

Baritone Carlton Ford is renowned for the dramatic vigor, precision, and natural beauty of his singing. Acclaimed by the *New York Times* as a “robust baritone with a vibrant stage presence,” Ford is a graduate of both the Juilliard School and Rice University and has performed with the Théâtre du Châtelet, the New York Philharmonic, Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Houston Grand Opera, the Aspen Music and Glimmerglass Festivals, and at Carnegie Hall. Ford is a winner of both First Place and Grand Prize in Chicago’s 2011 Bel Canto Foundation Competition.

Renate Rohlfing

Renate Rohlfing is fast becoming one of her generation’s most versatile and sought-after collaborative pianists. Winner of both the “Sonderpreis Klavier” at the 2016 International Wolf Song Competition in Stuttgart and the New Orleans International Concerto Competition, Rohlfing has performed with many of the world’s leading artists, including Anna Netrebko, Frederica von Stade, Alan Gilbert, and John Adams, and has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Ravinia Festival, London’s Royal Albert Hall, and the Lincoln Center. Singers have partnered with Rohlfing to win First Prize at the Naumburg Foundation Competition and the Young Concert Artists Competition, and she was a prizewinner at the Wigmore Hall Song Competition in 2015. Her critically acclaimed trio Longleash launched the Loretto Project, a music festival and composition workshop in Nerinx, Kentucky, and the trio performs throughout the world.

R. Timothy McReynolds

Enjoying a career that embraces art song, opera, chamber music, and cabaret, pianist R. Timothy McReynolds is a member of the voice and opera faculty of the University of Maryland and has participated as vocal coach and pianist for both the Washington National Opera’s Opera Institute and the Aspen Music Festival. He continues his close association with UrbanArias and Vocal Arts DC, located in Washington, DC. His recent concert venues have included the Kennedy Center’s Terrace Theater, the German Embassy, a Maryland state tour with the Annapolis Symphony, and the Egyptian Embassy Concert Series in Vienna, Austria.

PROGRAM NOTES

There is a voyeuristic appeal to really old photographs. Regardless of their subject matter, glimpsing a photographic image from the earliest decades of the camera’s invention gives us the thrill of being invisible time-travelers, miraculously witnessing things that shouldn’t—couldn’t!—be possible for us to see. Take for example something as simple as the interior of an 1870’s living room: we imagine ourselves breathing in the stuffy air, sinking into the upholstered chair, and looking around at the cluttered objects. We are there. And yet, at the same time, early photographs always appear ghostly, ungraspable—the stiff, sallow portraits; the hazy city streets with all life erased in the blur of a long exposure.

And what of the music of that time? What does it make us feel, or notice? Not the music of the concert hall or the opera house, necessarily, but the music of that parlor, the church hall, or the battlefield? The music that lived in people’s hearts and fingertips? Just as the camera democratized portraiture, the invention of upright and player pianos, as well as the proliferation and mass publication of popular tunes, fostered a democratized culture of music-making for the growing leisure class. The music of the Victorian parlor was not made to be *performed*; it was to be played, to be sung and re-sung, harmonized *together*, and not by professional musicians on the concert stage, but by everyone. This domestication of music also meant that women composers began to emerge and be published—if only for amateur, household consumption.

And so, both in style and subject matter, the music of this time (the 1840s–1880s) has a core simplicity to it, a sentimentality, a purity of spirit. It is tuneful, harmonizable, often poignantly nostalgic. The songs tell stories of children, of domesticity, of fallen soldiers, and of the grace of God. Sometimes the tunes are meant to be humorous, with moral dictums on grooming or etiquette, or they may feature winsome portraits of happy minstrels (less humorous today). One hears the strong influence of Appalachian and Southern-roots music, or in the case of European composers, Irish, English, or German folk music.

As you listen to today’s program, note the kinship between the musical worlds of such classical Romantic icons as Brahms, Chopin, Schumann, and Wagner, and the concurrent popular music of Stephen Foster, George F. Root, and Amy Beach. Listen closely and you will detect the same types of simple, spun melodies, the same dreamy nostalgia (as well as a shared spirit of fun in music-making: four-hand piano is something like a Victorian game of Twister). Richard Wagner’s operas today are considered

almost impenetrably complex or grandiose to mainstream listeners; but go to any used music bookstore and you will find more nineteenth-century Wagner scores filling the shelves than those by any other opera composer. Everyone played Wagner at home! His stories of heroic soldiers and water nymphs, princess brides and sleeping spells, fed the Victorian taste for pre-Raphaelite fantasy.

This program was inspired by the National Gallery of Art's current exhibition, *The Eye of the Sun: Nineteenth-Century Photographs from the National Gallery of Art*, and is a collective musical portrait of an age. Not a portrait gallery of kings and queens, but an assemblage of framed family photos arranged on the living-room piano. Each song is a snapshot, a remembrance, a shared record of life as it was lived and felt by our not-too-distant ancestors. When you hear these songs today, may the strings of your own heart vibrate with the same tunes that Americans have carried within themselves for 150 years.

Program notes by Brenda Patterson

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

“Beautiful Child of Song”

(Stephen Foster)

Come, I came longing to hear thee,
Beautiful child of song,
Come though the hearts that are near thee,
Around thee devotedly throng.

Come, I am longing to hear thee,
Beautiful child of song,
Beautiful child of song,
I'm longing to hear thee carol thy lay,
sweet child of song.

Come, for the spell of a fairy
Dwells in thy magical voice,
And at thy step light and airy,
E'en cold hearts enraptured rejoice.

“Beautiful Dreamer”

(Stephen Foster)

Beautiful dreamer, wake unto me
Starlight and dewdrops are waiting for thee;
Sounds of the rude world heard in the day
Lull'd by the moonlight have all pass'd away!
Beautiful dreamer, queen of my song
List while I woo thee with soft melody;
Gone are the cares of life's busy throng
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!

Beautiful dreamer, out on the sea
Mermaids are chanting the wild lorelei;
Over the streamlet vapors are borne
Waiting to fade at the bright coming morn
Beautiful dreamer, beam on my heart
E'en as the morn on the streamlet and sea;
Then will all clouds of sorrow depart
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!

“If You've Only Got a Moustache”

(Stephen Foster)

Oh! all of you poor single men,
Don't ever give up in despair,
For there's always a chance while there's life
To capture the hearts of the fair,
No matter what may be your age,
You always may cut a fine dash,
You will suit all the girls to a hair
If you've only got a moustache,
If you've only got a moustache.

No matter for manners or style,
No matter for birth or for fame,
All these used to have something to do
With young ladies changing their name,
There's no reason now to despond,
Or go and do anything rash,
For you'll do though you can't raise a cent,
If you'll only raise a moustache!
If you'll only raise a moustache.

Your head may be thick as a block,
And empty as any foot-ball,
Oh! your eyes may be green as the grass
Your heart just as hard as a wall.
Yet take the advice that I give,
You'll soon gain affection and cash,
And will be all the rage with the girls,
If you'll only get a moustache,
If you'll only get a moustache.

I once was in sorrow and tears
Because I was jilted you know,
So right down to the river I ran
To quickly dispose of my woe,
A good friend he gave me advice
And timely prevented the splash,
Now at home I've a wife and ten heirs,
And all through a handsome moustache,
And all through a handsome moustache.

**From Liebeslieder and
Neue Liebeslieder Walzer**

(Johannes Brahms; texts by G.F. Daumer)

O die Frauen!

Oh women, oh women,
how they give delight!
I would have become a monk long ago
were it not for women!

Nicht wandle, mein Licht

Don't wander, my light, over there in the fields!
Your dainty feet would become too wet, too soft.
All the roads are flooded there, all your paths—
So profuse were the tears that flowed from
my eyes.

Wohl schön bewandt war es

How very pleasant it used to be,
both with my life and with my love;
through a wall, even through ten walls,
my friend's eye noticed me.
Yet now, alas, even if I stand
right in front of the cold one's eye,
his eye, his heart notice me not.

Sieh, wie ist die Welle klar

See how clear are the waves
when the moon gazes down!
You who are my love,
love me again!

Ihr schwarzen Augen

You black eyes, you need only beckon,
and palaces fall and cities sink.
How should then my heart withstand
such strife, inside its weak house of cards?

“Twilight”

(Amy Beach; text by Dr. Henry H.A. Beach)

No sun to warm
The darkening cloud of mist,
But everywhere
The steamy earth sends up
A veil of gray and damp
To kiss the green and tender leaves
And leave its cool imprint
In limpid pearls of dew.
The blackened trunks and boughs
In ghostly silhouette
Mark grimly in the coming eve
The shadows of the past.
All sounds are stilled,
The birds have hushed themselves to rest
And night comes fast, to drop her pall
Till morn brings life to all.

“Nearer My God to Thee”

(Lowell Mason and Sarah F. Adams)

Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me.
Still all my song shall be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

Though like the wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

There let the way appear,
Steps unto heav'n;
All that thou sendest me,
In mercy giv'n;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

Half-Minute Songs

(Carrie Jacobs-Bond)

“Making the Best of It”
What you can't help,
what you can't help,
what you cant help,
Forget!

“First Ask Yourself”
Before you have said it about them,
Ask yourself if you'd like them
to know you said it.

“To Understand”
To understand a sorrow,
You must have one all your own.

“How to Find Success”
The man who finds success
looks sometimes when he's tired,
when he's tired, when he's tired,
looks sometimes when he's tired.

“The Pleasure of Giving”
I'd rather say “You're welcome” once,
than “Thank you” a thousand times.

“Answer the First Rap”
Opportunity may knock often
but it's better to answer the first rap!

“A Good Exercise”
With evil things you'll always find,
It's best to be deaf, dumb, and blind.

“A Present from Yourself”
A friend is a present you give yourself.

“Now and Then”

The “lucky” fellow gets up at five (a.m.),
and gen'rally works till ten (p.m.);
But the other fellow, not quite so “lucky;”
works hard just now and then!

“When They Say the Unkind Things”
Ain't it gay that what “they say”
Can't hurt you unless it's true?

“Keep Awake”
Success never comes to the sleeping.

“Doan' Yo' Lis'n”
No mattah w'at dey said,
Keep awalkin straight ahaid,
W'y dey'll praise yo' when yo' daid,
But doan yo' lis'n.

“Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye”

(Joseph Bryan Geoghegan)

When goin' the road to sweet athy,
hurroo, hurroo
A stick in me hand and a drop in me eye
A doleful damsel I heard cry
Johnny, I hardly knew ye

CHORUS:

With your drums and guns and guns and drums,
hurroo, hurroo
The enemy nearly slew ye
Oh darling dear, ye look so queer
Johnny, I hardly knew ye

Where are the eyes that looked so mild,
hurroo, hurroo
When my poor heart you first beguiled
Why did ye run from me and the child
Johnny, I hardly knew ye

Where are the legs with which you run,
hurroo, hurroo
When first you went to carry a gun
Indeed your dancing days are done
Johnny, I hardly knew ye

Ye haven't an arm, ye haven't a leg,
hurroo, hurroo
Ye're an armless, boneless, chickenless egg
You'll have to be left with a bowl out to beg
Johnny, I hardly knew ye

I'm happy for to see ye home, hurroo, hurroo
All from the island of Ceylon
So low in flesh, so high in bone
Johnny, I hardly knew ye

“The Vacant Chair”

(George Frederick Root; text by Henry
Stevenson Washburn; a Civil War song)

CHORUS:

We shall meet, but we shall miss him
There will be one vacant chair
We shall linger to caress him
While we breathe our evening prayer;

When a year ago we gathered
Joy was in his mild blue eye,
But a golden chord is severed
And our hopes in ruin lie.

At our fireside, sad and lonely,
Often will the bosom swell,
At remembrance of the story
How our noble Willie fell;
How he strove to bear our banner
Through the thickest of the fight,
And uphold our country's honor
In the strength of manhood's night.

True, they tell us wreaths of glory
Ever more will deck his brow,
But this soothes the anguish only
Sweeping o'er our heartstrings now.
Sleep today, Oh early fallen,
In thy green and narrow bed,
Dirges from the pine and cypress,
Mingle with the tears we shed.

“Ride On, King Jesus”

(Arr. Hall Johnson)

Ride on, King Jesus!
No man can a-hinder me.
For He is King of kings,
He is Lord of lords,
Jesus Christ, the first and last,
No man works like Him.

King Jesus rides a milk-white horse,
No man works like Him.
The River of Jordan He did cross,
No man works like Him.
King Jesus rides in the middle o' the air,
Oh! He calls the saints from ev'rywhere.
Ah! Ride on, King Jesus!
No man can a-hinder me.

He is the King, He is the Lord, Ha!
Jesus Christ, the first an' last,
No man works like Him!
Ride on, ride on, ride on, Jesus!

“Hard Times Come Again No More”

(Stephen Foster)

Let us pause in life's pleasures and count
its many tears,
While we all sup sorrow with the poor;
There's a song that will linger forever in our ears;
Oh hard times come again no more.

CHORUS:

'Tis the song, the sigh of the weary,
Hard times, hard times, come again no more
Many days you have lingered around my
cabin door;
Oh hard times come again no more.

While we seek mirth and beauty and music
light and gay,
There are frail forms fainting at the door;
Though their voices are silent, their pleading
looks will say
Oh hard times come again no more.

There's a pale drooping maiden who toils
her life away,
With a worn heart whose better days are o'er:
Though her voice would be merry, 'tis sighing
all the day,
Oh hard times come again no more.

'Tis a sigh that is wafted across the
troubled wave,
'Tis a wail that is heard upon the shore
'Tis a dirge that is murmured around the
lowly grave
Oh hard times come again no more.



Edmond Lebel, *Still Life of Musical Instruments*, c. 1863, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Robert B. Menschel Fund

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Eighth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, concerts are held in the West Building, West Garden Court.

Rachel Barton Pine, violin
Jory Vinikour, harpsichord

J.S. Bach Masterpieces for Violin and Harpsichord

This concert is first in a series of performances by female violinists, showcasing the brilliance and stylistic versatility of the instrument.

October 6, 3:30

Brandon Ridenour with Cuatrombon and Cordeone

Vamos Juntos

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of John Lennon's 1969 song "Come Together" with a diversified program of newly arranged music.

October 13, 3:30

Ran Dank and Soyeon Kate Lee, pianists

Piano solo and duo works, featuring music by Bach, Liszt, Enrique Granados, and Nikolai Kapustin, and a world premiere by composer Marc-André Hamelin.

October 20, 3:30

General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

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Concerts are made possible in part through the generosity of donors to the National Gallery of Art through The Circle. Reserved seating is available in recognition of their support. Please contact the development office at (202) 842-6450 or circle@nga.gov for more information.

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