



School of Music
University of Missouri

2023-2024 Series | Faculty Recital

Dr. Alexandra Schoeny, soprano
Dr. Rachel AuBuchon, piano

February 28, 2025 | 7:30pm
Whitmore Recital Hall

Program

Perduta ho la pace **Giuseppe Verdi**
Deh, pietoso, O Addolorata (1813-1901)
L'abandonée

L'invitation au voyage **Henri Duparc**
Au pays ou se fait la guerre (1848-1933)
La vie antérieure

Hermit Songs, Op. 29 **Samuel Barber**
(1910-1981)

- I. At Saint Patrick's Purgatory
- II. Church Bell at Night
- III. St. Ita's Vision
- IV. The Heavenly Banquet
- V. The Crucifixion
- VI. Sea-Snatch
- VII. Promiscuity
- VIII. The Monk and His Cat
- IX. The Praises of God
- X. The Desire for the Hermitage

Program Notes

Thank you so much for being here this evening. Sharing this music with my new community is a great joy.

The central idea of this program is solitude – particularly the solitude one experiences when leaving a home for a strange or new place. There is a special alone-ness that occurs when one is a stranger; so much of what is easy in our own terroir is unfamiliar in a new place.

Several times in my life I have started over in a new culture, first in England, then the Netherlands, and then back to the United States after ten years in Europe. Most recently, I left my birthplace for Columbia to begin my journey here at the University of Missouri, and those previous experiences have infused and informed my transition to this new home.

The songs I will sing tonight weave this theme together in several ways. The Verdi songs all place the composer in foreign territory. The first two songs are settings from Goethe's *Faust* in Italian, the famous "Gretchen am Spinnrade" and "Ach, neige, du Schmerzenreiche." Translated by Luigi Balestra, these settings add an Italianate effusion to the height of Teutonic tragedy. The final song, "L'abandonnée," is a Verdian rarity, a setting of French text in an *étude* composed for his future wife, Giuseppina Strepponi. Following the 1848 premiere of Verdi's *Nabucco*, Strepponi, who sang the role of Abigail, experienced a vocal collapse and it is thought that this *étude* was composed as a form of rehabilitation. One only can imagine her formidable skills, if this piece is an indication of the vocal gymnastics she could perform during recuperation. The text, a memory of a lost love, reflects the sentiments caused by distance from a happy time.

The French of "L'abandonnée" links into the music of Henri Duparc. These three songs explore distance from different angles. "L'invitation au voyage," one of Duparc's most famous works, invites the listener to come away to a beautiful land of calm and pleasure. With its description of sleeping boats on the canals, the poem evinces the watery charm of the Netherlands. "Au pays où se fait la guerre" explores the emotions of a forced separation from a beloved, a vacillation between hope, memory, and despair. "La vie antérieure" is a memory of a life lived away from the 19th-century Western churn. Distance allowed the speaker to feel understood in a way impossible in their native land.

The bells of the vast porticos in "La vie antérieure" echo in the final set, Samuel Barber's

Hermit Songs. Our lives are filled with so much noise, “A Desire for the Hermitage” sometimes seems the only sensible wish. With texts excerpted from medieval fragments from the British Isles, these songs lift up the experience of voluntary separation from the world. Like in the first set, a life of the spirit is a refuge from a life in the world. Whether through pilgrimage, life in the cloister, or the life of a scholar, the characters in this opus are open to the emotions that solitude can uncover. A contemplative, solitary life – perhaps with a cat – certainly has its appeals.

Many thanks to Dr. Jared Rawlings, Prof. Steven Tharp, and Prof. Christina Ray, and my wonderful students for all their support as I joined the Voice Area at Mizzou. Gratitude also to Dr. Peter Miyamoto for his mentorship. Much love to Harry and Angus, who will be glad that Mom won't be executing Verdi flourishes during playtime. Finally, Dr. Rachel AuBuchon is a monumental collaborator with whom I am humbled and grateful to perform.

Biographies

In repertoire spanning Monteverdi to Gregory Spears, Cincinnati native **Alexandra Schoeny** is known for her versatility and engaging stage presence. With a voice hailed as "hauntingly beautiful" by Opera News, she is equally praised for her convincing character portrayals as she "embodies melodrama with flair," (*Broadway World*).

Alexandra has performed with ensembles including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and May Festival Chorus, Cincinnati Opera, Cincinnati Ballet, Het Residentie-Orkest (The Hague), het Nederlands Jeugd-Orkest, the Omaha Symphony, the Reno Philharmonic, the Eugene Symphony, and in venues including Het Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Das Konzerthaus (Berlin), the Palace of Versailles, the Kimmel Center, and the Mann Center.

Along with her colleague, conductor Trevor Kroeger, Alexandra founded Breath Collective, a production company, to create immersive and relevant musical experiences that bring artists and communities together. In her role as Founder and Co-President, Alexandra is deeply involved in the creative process for the organization's innovative programming. She also is the director of the Lincoln Chapman Young Artists' Preparatory Program, a one-of-a-kind operatic training program for high school singers.

Alexandra attended the College-Conservatory of Music where she received her DMA in voice with a cognate in stage direction, the Royal Conservatoire of the Hague (M. Opera), the Royal Academy of Music (M.Mus, DipRAM), and Northwestern University (B.M).

She is an alumna of Aspen Music Festival, English National Opera OperaWorks, the Britten-Pears Programme, and the Lincoln Chapman Young Artists' Preparatory Program.

Pianist Rachel AuBuchon has the heart of a collaborator. Whether assisting choirs in her youth, playing numerous recitals of chamber music, being part of creative opera production, elevating new composers' voices in performance, or simply spending hours in rehearsal, her passion for creating with others abides.

Rachel's recent engagements include a series of virtual recitals with Lauren Auge, soprano, a production of *Il Trovatore* with KC Festival Opera, and Landlocked Opera's production of *The Magic Flute*. Her love of vocal literature led her to participate in the CoOPERAtive program and serve as a staff accompanist for the national NATS conference for multiple years. She also participated in the inaugural year for collaborative pianists at the NATS intern program under the mentorship of Warren Jones. Other notable performances include the North American Saxophone Conference with Trio Chymera, and the World Saxophone Congress with Leo Saguiguit. An avid supporter of new music, Dr. AuBuchon participated in the International Composers Festival in Columbia Missouri, served as a rehearsal pianist for the first UMKC Sounding Board event, and brought to life performances of students' opera works at UNCG's Opera at the Carolina.

Rachel served on the faculty of Stephens College, Truman State University, and UMKC, and now makes a return to the University of Missouri at Columbia. She holds degrees from Truman State University, University of Missouri at Columbia, and University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her journey in learning and musical artistry includes study with David McKamie, Janice Wenger, Natalia Bolshakova, Paul Crabb, James Douglass, and countless talented musicians with whom she has had the privilege to collaborate.