Introducing Krisztina Szabó

Krisztina Szabó mezzo-soprano
with Leslie Dala piano

5 Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme
(Wesendonck Lieder)
1. Der Engel (G major)
2. Stehe still! (C minor)
3. Im Treibhaus (D minor)
4. Schmerzen (E-flat major)
5. Träume (A-flat major)

Miss Carr in Seven Scenes
Oh, These Mountains!
A Glimpse of God
Rhythm and Space
Letters
1. Reams of Horrid Letters
2. Mr. Hatch Wrote
3. Compliments, Hanna Lund
A Movement Floating Up
I’m Just Whizzy!
Uncovered

Richard Wagner
(1813-1883)
Text by Mathilde Wesendonck
(1828-1902)

Jeffrey Ryan
(b. 1962)
Text by Emily Carr
(1871-1945)

We acknowledge that the University of British Columbia is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people.
**BIOGRAPHIES**

**Krisztina Szabó mezzo-soprano**

Hungarian-Canadian mezzo-soprano Krisztina Szabó is highly sought after in both North America and Europe as an artist of supreme musicianship and stagecraft, and has become known for her promotion and performance of contemporary Canadian works. She exemplifies today’s modern singer: vocally versatile, paints vivid character portraits on both the opera and concert stages, and a stellar interpreter of new music.

Among her many laudatory reviews, Opera Canada declared her to be an “exceptional talent” after her performance of the title role of Dido in Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*, and after a performance with Tapestry Opera, the music blog, Schmopera wrote that “her instrument is one-of-a-kind and she has cemented herself as a darling of Canadian experimental music and opera... her sensibility and sensitivity to the material is truly inspiring.” In her hometown of Toronto, Canada, she has been nominated twice for a Dora Award for Outstanding Female Performance.

Szabó was recently appointed Assistant Professor of Voice at the UBC School of Music. For her, the move follows many seasons of participation in Vancouver’s music scene. Her first big performance here was in Vancouver Opera’s 2011 production of Mozart’s little-known *La Clemenza di Tito*. Subsequently she’s often sung for Early Music Vancouver and, last fall, for the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra in Mozart’s *Requiem*.

**Leslie Dala piano**

Conductor Leslie Dala enjoys a multifaceted career spanning the genres of opera, symphonic music, choral and contemporary works. On the podium, he is known for his passionate, dynamic, and charismatic approach to music making. Named one of the top ten artistic leaders by the Vancouver Sun, Dala’s national profile has grown steadily with guest conducting appearances with Pacific Opera Victoria, Edmonton Opera, Saskatoon Opera, Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, Kamloops Symphony, Thirteen Strings of Ottawa, the COSI Festival in Sulmona, Italy, the Goh Ballet, University of Toronto Opera Department and the Glenn Gould School Opera Program.

Dala began his professional career as a pianist and repetiteur, which led to his appointment as Chorus Director with Vancouver Opera. Since then, his role at Vancouver Opera has expanded to include the title of Associate Conductor and Program Director of the Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program. He has worked on more than 70 Vancouver Opera main stage productions. Operas he has music directed and conducted include *Le Nozze Di Figaro* in the inaugural Vancouver Opera Festival, *Madama Butterfly*, the World Premiere of *Stickboy* by Neil Weisensel and Shane Koyczan, *Albert Herring*, *The Magic Flute*, *La Boheme*, *Rigoletto*, *West Side Story* and the *Threepenny Opera*. 
**Miss Carr in Seven Scenes by Jeffrey Ryan**

Many years ago, at a used bookshop in Cleveland, I discovered *Hundreds and Thousands*, the published journals of the iconic Canadian painter Emily Carr (1871-1945). Carr wrote about her struggles to be an artist, both creatively and practically: to develop her own voice, to adequately convey what she saw to the canvas, to discover the intersection of art and spirit, to deal with self-doubts and frustrations, to find an audience, to sell her paintings, to make ends meet. As I was just finishing my doctoral studies and about to embark on my freelance career, her words resonated deeply with me. The challenges she wrote about were much like the ones I was about to face, and indeed every artist faces.

For me an art song is a little opera scene, with character and back story, and, like the orchestra in an opera, the piano never merely accompanies. I knew immediately that Carr’s journal entries, personal yet universal, could bridge song and theatre in a kind of monodrama of an artist’s life—though it was not easy to condense the texts from a 300-page book! These resulting seven scenes provide a series of snapshots chronicling Carr’s parallel journeys of capturing the mountain to her canvas and conquering the mountain to artistic success and validation.

*Miss Carr in Seven Scenes* was commissioned by Canadian Art Song Project for mezzo-soprano Krisztina Szabó and pianist Steven Philcox.
**STEHE STILL!**

Sausendes, brausendes Rad der Zeit,
Messer du der Ewigkeit;
Leuchtende Sphären im weiten All,
Die ihr umringt den Weltenball;
Denn, wo bang ein Herz in Sorgen
Schmachtet vor der Welt verborgen,
Daß, wo still es will verbluten,
Und vergeht in Tränenfluten,
Daß, wo brünstig sein Gebet
Einzig um Erlösung fleht,
Da der Engel niederschwebt,
Und es sanft gen Himmel hebt.
Ja, es stieg auch mir ein Engel nieder,
Und auf leuchtendem Gefieder
Führt er, ferne jedem Schmerz,
Meinen Geist nun himmelwärts!

**STAND STILL!**

Rushing, roaring wheel of time,
You that measure eternity;
Gleaming spheres in the vast universe,
You that surround our earthly sphere;
Eternaal creation - cease:
Enough of becoming, let me be!
Hold yourselves back, generative powers,
Primal Thought that always creates!
Stop your breath, still your urge,
Be silent for a single moment!
Swelling pulses, restrain your beating;
Eternal day of the Will - end!
That in blessed, sweet oblivion
I might measure all my bliss!

When eye gazes blissfully into eye,
When soul drowns utterly in soul;
When being finds itself in being,
And the goal of every hope is near,
When lips are mute in silent wonder,
When the soul wishes for nothing more:
Then man perceives Eternity’s footprint,
And solves your riddle, holy Nature!

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**DER ENGEL**

Mathilde Wesendonck

In der Kindheit frühen Tagen
Hört ich oft von Engeln sagen,
Die des Himmels hehre Wonne
Tauschen mit der Erdensonne,

Daß, wo bang ein Herz in Sorgen
Schmachtet vor der Welt verborgen,
Daß, wo still es will verbluten,
Und vergeht in Tränenfluten,

Daß, wo brünstig sein Gebet
Einzig um Erlösung fleht,
Da der Engel niederschwebt,
Und es sanft gen Himmel hebt.

Ja, es stieg auch mir ein Engel nieder,
Und auf leuchtendem Gefieder
Führt er, ferne jedem Schmerz,
Meinen Geist nun himmelwärts!

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**THE ANGEL**

Mathilde Wesendonck

In the early days of childhood
I often heard tell of angels
Who exchange heaven’s pure bliss
For the sun of earth,

So that, when a sorrowful heart
Hides its yearning from the world
And would silently bleed away
And dissolve in streams of tears,

And when its fervent prayer
Begs only for deliverance,
That angel will fly down
And gently raise the heart to heaven.

And to me too an angel descended,
And now on shining wings
Bear my spirit, free from all pain,
Towards heaven!

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**5 Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme (Wesendonck Lieder)**
Im Treibhaus
Hochgewölbte Blätterkronen,
Baldachine von Smaragd,
Kinder ihr aus fernen Zonen,
Saget mir, warum ihr klagt?

Schweigend neiget ihr die Zweige,
Malet Zeichen in die Luft,
Und der Leiden stummer Zeuge
Steiget aufwärts, süßer Duft.

Weit in sehndem Verlangen
Breitet ihr die Arme aus
Und umschlinget wahnbefangen
Öder Leere nicht’gen Graus.

Wohl ich weiß es, arme Pflanze:
Ein Geschicke teilen wir,
Ob umstrahlt von Licht und Glanze,
Unsre Heimat is nicht hier!

Und wie froh die Sonne scheidet
Von des Tages leerem Schein,
Hüllet der, der wahrhaft leidet,
Sich in Schweigens Dunkel ein.

Stille wird’s, ein säuselnd Weben
Füllet bang den dunklen Raum:
Schwere Tropfen seh’ ich schweben
An der Blätter grünen Saum.

In the greenhouse
High-arching leafy crowns,
Canopies of emerald,
You children who dwell in distant climes,
Tell me, why do you lament?

Silently you bend your branches,
Inscribe your symbols on the air,
And a sweet fragrance rises,
As silent witness to you sorrows.

With longing and desire
You open wide your arms,
And embrace in your delusion
Desolation’s awful void.

I am well aware, poor plant;
We both share a single fate,
Though bathed in gleaming light,
Our homeland is not here!

And just as the sun is glad to leave
The empty gleam of day,
The true sufferer veils himself
In the darkness of silence.

It grows quiet, a whirring whisper
Fills the dark room uneasily:
I see heavy droplets hanging
From the green edge of the leaves.

Schmerzen
Sonne, weinest jeden Abend
Dir die Schönren Augen rot,
Wenn im Meeresspiegel badend
Dich erreicht der frühe Tod;

Doch erstehst in alter Pracht,
Glorie der düstren Welt,
Du am Morgen, neu erwacht,
Wie ein stolzer Siegesheld!

Ach, wie sollte ich da klagen,
Wie, mein Herz, so schwer dich seh’n,
Muß die Sonne selbst verzagen,
Muß die Sonne untergehn?

Und gebieret Tod nur Leben,
Geben Schmerzen Wonnen nur:
O wie dank’ich daß gegeben
Solche Schmerzen mir Natur.

Agonies
Every evening, sun, you redden
Your lovely eyes with weeping,
When, bathing in the sea,
You die an early death;

Yet you rise in your old splendour,
The glory of the dark world,
When you wake in the morning
As a proud and conquering hero!

Ah, why should I complain,
Why should I see you, my heart, so depressed,
If the sun itself must despair,
If the sun itself must set?

If only death gives birth to life,
If only agony brings bliss:
O how I give thanks to Nature
For giving me such agony!
Oh, These Mountains!

Oh, these mountains! They won’t bulk up.

Something has spoken to the very soul of me, wonderful, mighty, not of this world. Chords way down in my being have been touched. Dumb notes have struck chords of wonderful tone. Something has called out of somewhere. Something in me is trying to answer. It is surging through my whole being, the wonder of it all, like a great river rushing on, dark and turbulent, and rushing and irresistible, carrying me away. Where, where? I long to hear and yet I’m half afraid.

Oh, you mountains, I am at your feet—humble, pleading! Speak to me in your wordless words!
A Glimpse of God

Emily Carr, born Dec. 13, 1871 at Victoria, B.C., 4 a.m. in a deep snow storm, tomorrow will be sixty-two. It is not all bad, this getting old, ripening.

Do not forget life, artist. A picture is not a collection of portrayed objects nor is it a certain effect of light and shade nor is it a souvenir of a place nor a sentimental reminder, nor is it a show of colour nor a magnificence of form, nor yet is it anything seeable or sayable. It is a glimpse of God interpreted by the soul.

A few minutes more and the New Year will come. The present moment, that’s all we have. This looking forward and looking back is unprofitable. I have done? I will do? No, I AM DOING.

Rhythm and Space

Rhythm and space, space and rhythm, how can I learn more about these?

I woke with this idea. Try using positive and negative colours in juxtaposition. Try working in complementaries; run some reds into your greens, some yellow into your purples. Red-green, blue-orange, yellow-purple.

The arrangement, the design, colour, shape, depth, light, space, mood, movement, balance, not one or all of these fills the bill. There is something additional, a breath that draws your breath into its breathing, a heartbeat that pounds on yours, a recognition of the oneness of all things.

Form is fine, and colour and design and subject matter but that which does not speak to the heart is worthless.

Oh, that mountain! I’m dead beat tonight with struggling.

Letters

i. Reams of Horrid Letters

I’ve written reams of horrid letters to picture galleries that won’t return my exhibits. National Gallery had three for three years, Toronto Watercolour had three for two years. Why should one have to beg and beg to get their own belongings? I wrote Brown straight from the shoulder. He’ll ignore it like always, as if I did not exist, weren’t worth a glance even from his eye.
ii. Mr. Hatch Wrote

Mr. Hatch wrote acknowledging the two paper sketches I sent him. He found their vigour and profoundness appealing. Said few people understand them. Now I can’t see what there is to be understood. Perhaps folk would like a numbered bit on the back:

1. a tree,
2. a root,
3. a grass,
4. a fool looking.

iii. Compliments, Hanna Lund

Yesterday I got this letter.

Dear Madame Emily Carr:

Just a few words to express my great admiration for your beautiful picture, “Peace.” To me this picture represents Divinity and I have often been sitting in front of it this last week.

Compliments,

Hanna Lund

When I read it I cried hard.

A Movement Floating Up

I am sixty-three tomorrow and have not yet known real success.

I am painting a sky. The subject is sky, starting lavender beneath the trees and rising into a smoother hollow air space, greenish in tone, merging into laced clouds and then into deep, bottomless blue, not flat and smooth like the centre part of the sky, but loose, coming forward. There is to be one sweeping movement through the whole air, an ascending movement, high and fathomless. The movement must connect with each part, taking great care with the articulation. A movement floating up. It is a study in movement, designed movement. A movement floating up.
I’m Just Whizzy!

I’m just whizzy! Sold four pictures.

Received $120 for picture “Shoreline.” Gallery took $30 commission from $150 sale price to Mrs. de Pencier. Also got $75 for three sketches from Miss de Pencier. What a help to finances!

Mr. Band has bought “Nirvana” for $200, Mr. Southam “Haida Village” for $150, and Lawren Harris another for $200. A number of others are over in the East being sat on and considered.

Toronto Art Gallery has purchased “Western Forest,” “Movement in the Woods” and “Kispiax Village” for $1,075. I was stunned when I opened the letter. It is wonderful.

Ottawa has bought two canvases, a paper sketch, “Blunden Harbour,” a Haida village and “Sky” for $750. Madame Stokowski, wife of the composer and conductor, bought a small canvas for $75. Mr. Southam bought a small Skidigate sketch in oils for $150 and Mrs. Douglas a French cottage for $15. An old Vancouver pupil took a Pemberton sketch, also for $15. How lucky I am, or rather, how well taken care of!

$1005 Goodness!

Uncovered

Perhaps what brought it home was the last two lines of a crit in a Toronto paper: “Miss Carr is essentially Canadian, not by reason of her subject matter alone, but by her approach to it.” I am glad of that. I am also glad that I am showing these men that women can hold up their end. So I have decided to stop squirming, to throw any honour in with Canada and women. It is wonderful to feel the grandness of Canada in the raw, not because she is Canada but because she’s something sublime that you were born into, some great rugged power that you are a part of.

I have uncovered “The Mountain.”

I think that one’s art is a growth inside one. I do not think one can explain growth. It is silent and subtle. One does not keep digging up a plant to see how it grew. Who could explain its blossom? It can only explain itself in smell and colour and form. It touches you with these and the thing is said. These critics with their rules and words and theories and influences make me very tired. It is listening; it is hunting with the heart. How can one explain these things?
UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us for our online concert streams at music.ubc.ca/streaming!

Wed Nov 18

**Wednesday Noon Hours — Cris Derksen, cello and electronics**

*Cris Derksen*  *cello and electronics*

This performance is a collaboration between the UBC School of Music, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and Chan Centre for the Performing Arts as part of Soundings: An Exhibition in Five Parts

12:00 noon, streaming of prerecorded concert

Sun Nov 22

**Opera Excerpts Online**

UBC Opera students present two online concerts of your favourite opera gems.

2:00 pm - Cast A
7:00 pm - Cast B

Streaming live from the Chan Centre

Wed Jan 20

**Wednesday Noon Hours — Roger Cole, oboe and Terence Dawson, piano**

*Roger Cole*  *oboe*

*Terence Dawson*  *piano*

Poulenc *Oboe Sonata, Op. 185*

Ravel *Piece en forme de Habanera*

Hindemith *Sonata for Oboe and Piano*

12:00 noon, streaming live from the Chan Centre

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For further details and a complete list of events, please visit: music.ubc.ca/calendar or call 604.822.5574.

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Presented by the UBC School of Music and the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts
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