

In Full Bloom

Saturday, April 20, 2019 8 pm • Kresge Auditorium



William Cutter, conductor Yukiko Oba, pianist

Program

Tafellied, Op. 93b (1885)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Kleine Hochzeits-Kantate (1874)

Johannes Brahms

Liebeslieder Waltzer, Op. 52 (1868-1869)

Johannes Brahms

- 1. Rede, Mädchen
- 2. Am Gesteine rauscht die Flut
- 3. O die Frauen
- 4. Wie des Abends

Tommie Reerink, soprano; Cece Chu, mezzo-soprano

- 5. Die grüne Hopfenranke
- 6. Ein kleiner hübscher
- 7. Wohl schön bewandt

Allison Hamilos, soprano

- 8. Wenn so lind dein Auge mir
- 9. Am Donaustrande
- 10. O wie sanft
- 11. Nein, es ist nicht auszukommen
- 12. Schlosser auf
- 13. Vögelein durch rauscht die Luft
- 14. Sieh, wie ist die Welle klar
- 15. Nachtigall, sie singt so schön
- 16. Ein dunkeler Schacht
- 17. Nicht wandle

Srinivasan Raghuraman, tenor

18. Es bebet das Gesträuche

Brief Intermission

1. Omne vivum ex ovo

Tiancheng Yu, tenor

- 2. Lo, the earth awakes again
- 3. Song of the Sea Priestess

Arlene Godfreey-Igwe, mezzo-soprano

4. Omne vivum ex ovo

Srinivasan Raghuraman, tenor

- 5. A little Madness in the Spring
- 6. Love poem for Ostara

Henry Hu, baritone

7. Lo, the earth awakes again

Deutsche Volkslieder

Johannes Brahms

- 1. In stiller nacht
- 2. Die Wollust in den Maien

Program Notes

Throughout his twenties and thirties, Brahms held several positions with choral ensembles. In fact, at age 24 he was appointed conductor of the court choir in Detmold and at 26 founded a women's chorus in his hometown of Hamburg.

During this time Brahms composed a number of choral works including his most well-known works for orchestra and chorus – *Ein Deutsches Requiem* and *Schicksalslied*. The composer had also conducted many important choral works of Bach and Handel where he clearly was influenced by more Baroque contrapuntal devices such as fugue and canon.

Brahms vocal chamber music are among his most beloved and frequently performed pieces as they possess the appeal and charm of folk-like elements while challenging each vocal part with lines that are treated with equal importance and interest.

The tradition of amateur music making was centuries old in German-speaking Europe. The desire of the middle classes to emulate the leisure activities of the aristocracy had led to the founding of widespread establishment of singing ensembles.

The opening works for mixed chorus and piano as well as the *Liebeslieder Waltzes* are results of both the popularity of folk-like music as well as the outgrowth of social music making.

Tafellied, Op. 93b

Brahms composed *Tafellied* (table song) for six-part mixed chorus to a text by Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857) as a gift for his friends in the Krefeld Singing Society on the occasion of their 50th anniversary. Normally, he would not agree to write occasional pieces but made an exception to provide this delightful "table song."

Kleine Hochzeits-Kantate

Lasting a little over a minute, Brahms's delightful *Kleine Hochzeits-Kantate* (Little Wedding Cantata) is a light-hearted minuet.

Composed in July 1874, Brahms was asked to write a wedding song for the marriage of Sigmund Exner and Emelie von Winiwarter. The composer agreed, despite his lack of enthusiasm for the task (his pocked calendar noted the piece as a "wedding joke"). The text is a humorous parody of the closing lines of Goethe's Rinaldo.

With mock seriousness, the setting begins in the style of an 18th century minuet with a simple staccato left hand likely suggesting the "strolling couple; the lost-though-found hearts; and the ticking watch". But the parodic element becomes apparent in the coda-like setting of the third stanza when a stately trumpet figure accompanies the pronouncement of the stars, whose distances elicts a turn to the foreign sounding A-flat major.

Liebeslieder Waltzer, Op. 52

The composer edited a number of Schubert's unpublished compositions around the same time as his *Liebeslieder*. To each he quickly responded with a cycle of his own making—the Op. 39 *Waltzes* in January 1865 and the Op. 52 *Liebeslieder* (marked, tellingly, "Im Ländler-Tempo") in August 1869. Two years later Brahms considered editing a third group of Schubert dances. Although this project came to nothing, the composer's imagination was once more sparked, and by 1874, the *Neue Liebeslieder*—some of which date back to the time of Op. 52—had been completed.

For all their Schubertian background, however, the two sets of vocal waltzes also reflect a more contemporary source of influence. From time to time Brahms drew inspiration from the Waltz King himself, Johann Strauss Jr.. Thus, "Am Donaustrande, da steht ein Haus," Op. 52, No. 9, seems indebted to the beloved "Blue Danube" Waltz, not only for its essential imagery, but perhaps for certain musical details as well.

In view of the large number of dances contained within the original Op. 52 set, it is not surprising that Brahms struggled over matters of order and arrangement. Most adjoining dances are in closely related keys, and some waltzes share significant harmonic and motivic material. Brahms's arrangements thus yield continuity between adjacent dances, coherence within larger units, and closure for each complete cycle.

The texts of the *Liebeslieder* are East European folk poems in translations by Georg Friedrich Daumer. As we might expect, Brahms's settings are hardly the "trifles" described by their self-effacing composer in a note to Simrock. True, the first piece ("Rede, Mädchen") begins simply, with "oom-pah-pah" vamping, but the music rapidly becomes more sophisticated, as Brahms eschews literal repetition—a hallmark of popular Music—in favor of continual variation. Most striking, perhaps, is the return of the original tune in free inversion twice later in the piece, with corresponding changes in the counterpoint of the accompaniment. The first waltz thus contains within itself a striking contrast between popular and art music, and throughout the rest of the work these opposing forces are played out with a sure hand.

Spring Rituals

Pagans have long held the egg as an emblem of life and fertility, an allegory for rebirth, even believing that the egg had special powers. Eggs were placed under the foundations of buildings to ward off evil; pregnant Roman women carried an egg as a talisman in the hope that it would reveal to them the sex of their unborn child; and there are worldwide myths saying that the universe was created out of an egg. The opening tenor recitative, a setting of the ancient proverb *Omne vivum ex ovo* (all life comes from an egg) "hatches" musical material which is developed in the succeeding movements.

Pagan celebrations often featured communal circle dancing accompanied by chant-like singing. Movement two, "Lo, the earth awakes again" is an exuberant choral hymn featuring multiple dance-like cross rhythms with strong declamatory vocal lines.

Violet Mary Firth Evans (1890-1946), better known as Dion Fortune, was an occultist who participated in the modern revival of the magical arts. From 1919, Fortune began writing novels and short stories which explored various aspects of magic and mysticism. One such novel, "The Sea Priestess" became influential within the religion of Wicca.

Thought by some to be the most evocative of Dion Fortune's novels, "The Sea Priestess" introduces her most powerful and archetypal female character, the adept Vivien Le Fay Morgan, the reincarnation of an Atlantean sea priestess, who meets the ineffectual Wilfred Maxwell, hen-pecked by his mother and sister, who is in the throes of a midlife crisis. After literally enchanting him, she engages him in the construction of a magical temple upon a spit of land that juts out into the Atlantic where they undertake a series of magical workings under the direction of an inner plane presence known as the Priest of the Moon. Morgan eventually departs to take up work elsewhere, leaving a renewed and rejuvenated Maxwell, who casts off the domestic family shackles, marries Molly, a young girl from his office, and they embark on life together as two initiates in the world, devotees of the goddess.

Ms. Fortune's poem was selected for "Spring Rituals" for its connection to the idea of transformation - tides of the sea are meant to illuminate the tides which surge within every human psyche. The ritual of washing away of debris is seen as a required spiritual crisis before a pure product can emerge, dripping yet cleansed, on the other side, not unlike the transformation of the earth as it emerges from winter. The tides are musically depicted with multiple slowly undulating melodic patterns which overlap, interact, and collide in the choral parts. The mezzo-soprano solo eventually emerges from within the choral texture as the two elements then rise to a climax revealing the reborn priestess.

Emily Dickinson's delightful "A little Madness in the Spring" (written c.1875) is treated as a light-hearted scherzo with a theme and variations form in reverse, meaning that the theme is gradually revealed at the conclusion of this brief movement for women's chorus.

"Oestar" (from the Scandanavian "Ostra" and the Teutonic "Ostern" or "Eastre"), the pagan goddess of spring and renewal, honors the vernal or Spring equinox (day and night are approximately equal in length). Set for baritone soloist with some brief interruptions by the men's chorus, this movement is the most neo-Romantic in it's tonal language, with long lyric vocal lines for the baritone.

Dianne Sylvan's sensuous "Love poem for Ostara" was written in March of 2007. Ms. Sylvan is the author of "The Circle Within: Creating a Wiccan Spiritual Tradition" and "The Body Sacred".

Text and Translations

Tafellied (Chorus of Homage)

The women: Just as the echo of happy songs must give a happy answer, so we also approach and return the gallant greeting with thanks.

The men: Oh, you kind and charming ones! For the fair flight of the echo. Take from the joyful musicians the homage that is offered!

The women: Ah, but we perceive that you pay homage to other Gods as well. Red and gold we see it twinkling, Tell us how should we take that?

The men: Dear ones! Daintily with three fingers, more securely with the entire hand - And so the glass is filled from those not halfway, but to the rim.

The women: Now we see that you are masters. But we are liberal today. Hopefully, as handsome spirits you can be led to some ideal.

The men: Each one sips and thinks of his own lady and he who doesn't have one in particular - now, he drinks in general renewed praise to all beautiful ones!

All: That is right! All around clink toasts and returned toasts! Where singers and women are united, there will be a bright sound!

Hochzeitz Kantata (Little Wedding Cantata)

Two lovers, devotedly paired, stroll through the world, each of them has lost his heart, but the other one has found it. Each bears the light burden as the watch attaches to the chain. Thus it goes on paths and byways quietly onward with identical beats. "Look, they can do it!" speak in the distance the stars on the heights of heaven. "Who are they?" immediately we call out: Sigmund and Emilia!

Liebeslieder Waltzer, Op. 52

- 1. Speak, maiden, whom I love all too much, who hurled into my once aloof heart, with only one glance, these wild, ardent feelings! Will you not soften your heart? Do you wish to be chaste and remain without sweet bliss, or do you want me to come to you? To remain without sweet bliss I would never make such a bitter penance. So come, dark-eyes, come when the stars greet you.
- 2. Against the stones the stream rushes, powerfully driven: Those who do not know to sigh there, will learn it when they fall in love.
- 3. O women, O women, how they melt one with bliss! I would have become a monk long ago if it were not for women!

- 4. Like the evening's lovely red, would I, a poor maiden, like to glow, to please one, one boy and to then radiate bliss forever.
- 5. The green hops vine, it winds along the ground. The young, fair maiden so mournful are her thoughts! You listen, green vine! Why do you not raise yourself heavenwards? You listen, fair maiden! Why is your heart so heavy? How can the vine raise itself when no support lends it strength? How can the maiden be merry when her sweetheart is far away?
- 6. A small, pretty bird took flight into the garden there was fruit enough there. If I were a pretty, small bird, I would not hesitate I would do just as he did. Malicious lime-twigs lurked in that place; the poor bird could not escape. If I were a pretty, small bird, I would have hesitated, I would not have done that. The bird came into a pretty girl's hand, and it caused him no pain, the lucky thing. If I were a pretty, small bird, I would not hesitate I would do just as he did
- 7. Quite fair and contented was I previously with my life and with my sweetheart; through a wall, yes, through ten walls, did my friend's gaze recognize me; But now, oh woe, if I am with that cold boy, no matter how close I stand before his eyes, neither his eyes nor his heart notices.
- 8. When your eyes look at me so gently and lovingly, you chase away every last anxiety that troubles my life. The lovely glow of this love do not let it disappear! No one else will ever love you as faithfully as I.
- 9. On the banks of the Danube, there stands a house, and looking out of it is a pink-cheeked maiden. The maiden is very well-protected: Ten iron bolts have been placed on the door. But ten iron bolts are but a joke; I will snap them as if they were only glass.
- 10. O how gently the stream winds through the meadow! O how lovely it is when Love finds Love!
- 11. No, there's just no getting along with people; they always make such poisonous interpretations of everything. If I'm merry, they say I cherish loose urges; if I'm quiet, they say I am crazed with love.
- 12. Locksmith get up and make your locks, locks without number; for I want to lock up all the evil mouths.
- 13. The little bird rushes through the air, searching for a branch; and my heart desires a heart, a heart on which it can blessedly rest.
- 14. See how clear the waves are when the moon gazes down! You who are my love, you love me back!

- 15. The nightingale, it sings so beautifully, when the stars are twinkling. Love me, my beloved heart, kiss me in the dark!
- 16. Love is a dark shaft, a very dangerous well; and I, poor man, fell in. I can neither hear nor see, I can only think about my bliss, I can only moan in my woe.
- 17. Do not wander, my light, out there in the field! Your feet, your tender feet, would get too wet, too soft. All flooded are the paths there, and the bridges, so amply there did my eyes weep.
- 18. The bushes are trembling; they were brushed by a little bird in flight. In the same way, my soul trembles, overcome by love, pleasure and sorrow, as it thinks of you.

Spring Rituals

I. Omne vivum ex ovo (Old Latin Proverb)

All life comes from an egg.

II. Lo, the earth awakes again (Anonymous)

Lo, the earth awakes again from the winter's bond and pain. Bring we leaf and flow'r and spray to adorn this happy day. Once again the word comes true.

All the earth shall be made new.

Now the dark, cold days are o'er.

Spring and gladness are before.

Change, then mourning into praise.

And for dirges anthems raise.

How our spirits soar and sing.

How our hearts leap with the Spring!

III. Song of the Sea Priestess (Dion Fortune)

Sink down, sink down, sink deeper and more deep Into eternal and primordial sleep.
Sink down, be still, forget and draw apart,
Sink into the inner earth's most secret heart.
Drink of the waters of Persephone,
The secret well beside the sacred tree.
Waters of life and strength and inner light –
Eternal joy drawn from the depths of night.
Then rise, made strong, with life and hope renewed,
Reborn from darkness and from solitude...

V. A little madness in the Spring (Emily Dickinson)

A little Madness in the Spring
Is wholesome even for the King,
But God be with the Clown –
Who ponders this tremendous scene –
This whole Experiment of Green –
As if it were his own!

VI. Love poem for Ostara (Dianne Sylvan)

O my Love, my Love, Today I could fall back onto your greening skin and explode into a thousand flowers I could dissolve into the grey, grey rain to grow back into the moss of your hair I could kiss your pollen-dusted lips and nest a hive of honeybees in my heart I could draw back your bluebonnet cloak to find, delighted, the soil damp and wriggling I could fall asleep in your swinging branches and lay my head upon the breast of the hill I could shatter this pane of glass between us to meet you barefoot where you meet the sky And O my love, my love, when I, come five at last, win free of this airless place I shall cast aside this artificial gloom and run, run, run Into the bright warmth of your embrace.

VII. Lo, the earth awakes again (Reprise)

Deutsche Volkslieder

1. In Stiller Nacht

In silent night, at first watch,
A voice begins to lament.
The night wind has sweetly and gently
Carried the sound to me.
With bitter pain and sorrow
My heart is melted.
With simple tears and flowers
I have watered all of them.

The lovely moon will now set,
For sorrow it doesn't want to shine,
The stars stop their gleaming,
They want to weep with me.
No birdsong nor joyous sounds
Can be heard in the air.
Even the wild beasts grieve with me
In rocks and ravines.

2. Die Wollust in den Maien

Pleasure in springtime, this time of year has brought joy, the diverse little blossoms, each according to its own kind, there are red rosebuds, the violet, the green clover; parting from my love [in springtime] pains me.

The little birds' singing, this time of year has brought joy, her love has conquered me, she spoke to me in a friendly way: "Should, my handsome darling, I ask you something, answer me truthfully." "Be gracious to me, beautiful lady," I responded.

After many heavy sighs, I will return to you, after enduring anguish and sorrow I'll see your clear eyes. I beg you, my intended, place under your protection this true, young heart, this heart of mine.

Biographies

Cece Chu is a sophomore studying Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. This is her third semester singing with the MIT Concert Choir.

Arlene Godfreey-Igwe is a freshman majoring in 18C. This is their first semester singing in the Concert Choir. A native of Texas, they have been singing in various choirs since junior high. In addition to their interests in singing, they also play the cello.

Allison Hamilos, soprano, is an MD-PhD student in the Harvard-MIT Program in Health Science and Technology. She received bachelors degrees from MIT in chemistry and biology in 2012. Allison performed with the MIT Concert and Chamber Choirs from 2011-2012 and rejoined the Concert Choir as a soloist for its 2018 fall season. She directed, arranged and performed as a soloist with Harvard Medical School Heartbeats A Cappella from 2012-2013. She has also performed in theater productions of *Amahl* and *The Night Visitors* (2011, Shepherdess), *FABRIC* (2013, Lady Gaga), *Legally Blonde The Musical* (2014, Chutney), Lucky Stiff (2015, Dominique du Monaco), and, most recently, joined the workshop cast of *Judith*, a new Opera, for its premiere at MIT (2019, Tamar). Allison is thrilled to join the MIT Concert Choir for In Full Bloom!

Henry Hu is a sophomore studying Course 6-3 (Computer Science) at MIT. He has sung with the MIT Concert Choir for 4 semesters and this is his first solo with the group.

Tenor Srinivasan Raghuraman is a fourth-year graduate student in computer science at CSAIL. He has been singing with the Concert Choir at MIT for six semesters and the Chamber Chorus for four, performing as a soloist in Bach's G minor mass, Bach's Cantata 191, Vaughan William's Serenade to Music, Britten's Choirmaster's Burial (Winter Words) and more. He is also an Emerson Voice Scholar since the Fall of 2017 and is pursuing training in western classical voice under Kerry Deal. Outside of MIT, he has sung in the chorus for the Odyssey Opera's production of Maid of Orleans (Tchaikovsky) in September 2017 and Queen of Sheba (Gounod) in September 2018, Boston Pops and the VCI program at the Boston Conservatory in the summer of 2017. Srini is a professional Carnatic vocalist (a form of classical music in India) for the past decade and a half. He also plays the Veena (an Indian stringed instrument) and the piano, and enjoys composing music in his spare time.

Tommie Reerink, soprano, has been a member of Chamber Chorus and Concert Choir for one semester. Tommie participated in Chamber Chorus' production of Candide and performed Vivaldi's duet 'Laudamus Te' in the fall of 2018. During her time in high school, she was a member of her school's Concert Choir as a soprano I for three years before joining Women's Choir and Chamber Chorus senior year. Tommie is a freshman planning to major in pure mathematics and minor in music.

Tiancheng Yu, tenor, is a first-year PhD student in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS). He has been singing in concert choir as a tenor since 2018. This is his first solo performance in MIT. Before coming to MIT, he received his B.E from Tsinghua University, China, major in Electronic Engineering and statistics, where he also began to sing in a choir and fell in love with vocal music.

Pianist and assistant conductor Yukiko Oba has performed extensively as an accompanist for recitals, choruses, master classes, and composers' projects. Ms. Oba is a graduate of Kunitachi College of Music in Tokyo. She began playing piano at the age of six in her native Japan. She has been a member of the accompanying staff at Boston Conservatory at Berklee since 1996 and has performed with many acclaimed Boston area singers. As a professional accompanist, she has been the pianist and assistant conductor of the MIT concert choir since the fall of 2016. She has worked with the Worcester Schubertiad and has worked with the Metropolitan Opera Guild for several years. Most recently, she performed Nico Muhly's pieces for countertenor with the Beth Morrison Project at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Ms. Oba resides in Weymouth, MA with her daughter and husband whom she frequently plays piano for four hand pieces.

Dr. William Cutter is Director of Choral Programs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he conducts the MIT Concert Choir and Chamber Chorus. He currently teaches harmony and ear training at Boston Conservatory and is Artistic Director of the Boston Conservatory Summer Vocal/Choral Intensive. He has previousl held academic posts at the Boston University School for the Arts, the University of Lowell, the Walnut Hill School for the Arts, and the North Carolina Summer Institute of Choral Art. He is in demand as a guest conductor and adjudicator throughout the United States and Canada.

He has served as music director and conductor of the Brookline Chorus, Chorus Master and Associate Conductor of the Boston Lyric Opera Company from 2002-2007, conductor of the Boston University Young Artists Chorus of the Tanglewood Institute, music director and conductor of the Opera Laboratory Theater Company, as well as founder and music director of the vocal chamber ensemble CANTO. As assistant to Maestro John Oliver for the Tanglewood Festival Chorus from 1993 to 2017, Cutter served as rehearsal conductor or chorus master for various programs of both the Boston Symphony and the Boston Pops. He has served as chorus master for productions by the Boston Symphony, Tanglewood Festival Chorus, Odessey Opera, the Boston Pops, and the Montreal Symphony Chorus.

Other guest conducting appearances include The Walnut Hill School for the Arts (2016-2017); Massachusetts Intercollegiate Choral Festival (2015, 2016), North Carolina Summer Institute of Choral Art (2014), New England Conservatory Chamber Singers (2007), Chorus Pro Musica in Boston (2010), and the Boston Choral Ensemble (2011).

With advanced degrees in composition, Cutter maintains an active career as a composer. Recent premieres include Ocean Blues for chorus and alto saxophone (2018) by the Mansfield University Chamber Singers, "Sing Noel" (2015) with The Boston Pops. He has had other commissions and premieres by The Chatham Chorale, the Illinois State University School of Music Orchestra, Cantata Singers, PALS Children's Chorus, Monmouth Civic Chorus, the New Jersey Gay Men's Chorus, the New World Chorale in Boston, Melodious Accord of New York City, and Opera Omaha. His primary composition teachers included Pulitzer Prize winning composers David del Tredici and Bernard Rands.

As a professional tenor, he has sung with the premiere vocal ensembles in Boston, including the Handel and Haydn Society, Cantata Singers, Boston Baroque, Emmanuel Music, and the Harvard Glee Club. He has been a featured soloist on the Cantata Singers Recital Series and the MIT faculty recital series.

MIT Concert Choir

SOPRANOS

Alkisti Mavroeidi
Allison Hamilos
Arlene Godfreey-Igwe
Christina Warren
Christina Wettersten
Claire Walsh
Julia Arnold
Misha Jamy
Ruijiao Sun
Sabrina Mazer
Stacey Terman
Tommie Reerink
YiYu Zhang

TENORS

Abdurrahman Akkas
Brandon Avila
Brian Chen
Hung-Hsun Yu
Ignacio Perez Bedoya
Jake Whitton
Jini Gabbidon
Jitrapon Lertprasertpong
Justin Mazzola Paluska
Mariah Avila
Ryan Koeppen
Srinivasan Raghuraman
Tiancheng Yu

ALTOS

Zahra Rasouli

Arinola Lampejo
Carissa Skye
Cece Chu
Daniela Ganelin
Julia Netter
Kimberly Villalobos
Lani Lee
Lauren TenCate
Pooja Reddy

BASSES

Anders Olsen
Bryan Lopez
Christopher Hillenbrand
Henry Hu
Ian Hokaj
Jan Eichstädt
Manuel Montesino
Max Williamson
Rokas Veitas
Simon Grosse-Holz

Orchestra

Violin 1

Brooks Berg Xiaofan Liu Peter Jarvis* Alexandra Stoica Nikole Stoica

Violin 2

Kariia Gorkun Carlo Mauricio** Kenneth Mok Tony Morales Jesus Saenz

Viola

Maureen Hefflinger Rebecca Hallowell Bryan Tyler** Laura Rose Williamson

Cello

Maggie Madsen Thomas Rodman** Lisa Yasui

Bass

Justin Cheesman John DeMartino

Oboe

Alessandro Cirafici

Bassoon

Nathaniel Edison

French Horn Katie Mason

Harp Hope Wilk

Percussion

Ted Babcock Alex Garde Charley Gillette Parker Olson Richie Smith

Piano Yukiko Oba

*Concertmaster
**Principal

