


A Concert of Love Songs

Michele Byrd, soprano
Brice Gerlach, piano

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Program

According to the Miriam Webster dictionary, the definition of LOVE is, “strong affection for another (friendship), attraction based on desire (romantic), affection based on admiration (familial), benevolence (God) or common interests.” We have selected pieces from various eras and genres all reflecting different types of love. Since today is Valentine’s Day, we wanted to give you a gift – we hope you enjoy our concert of love songs.

LOVE OF....LOVE!

“If Music Be the Food of Love”

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)
Poet: Henry Heveningham (1651-1700)

Henry Purcell was an English composer of the Baroque period most remembered for his more than 100 songs. He used the poem of Heveningham as the lyrics for this beguiling piece. The opening line can also be found in William Shakespeare’s comedy, *Twelfth Night*.

If music be the food of love, Sing on till I am fill’d with joy; For then my list’ning soul you move, To pleasures that can never cloy. Your eyes, your mien, your tongue declare That you are music ev’rywhere. Pleasures invade both eye and ear, So fierce, the transports are, they wound, And all my senses feasted are; Tho’ yet the treat is only sound, Sure I must perish by your charms, Unless you save me in your arms.

LOVE OF....LIBERTY

“Lascia ch’io Pianga” from *Rinaldo*

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)
Poet: Giacomo Rossi (d. 1731)

Handel used the music for this piece in many of his earlier works. The third version of the music is found in his opera *Rinaldo* as a heartfelt plea for Almirena’s liberty. The opera, *Rinaldo*, was a triumph, and it is with this work that the aria is chiefly associated. Almirena is addressing the Saracen king of Jerusalem, Argante, who is holding her prisoner and has just disclosed his passion (at first sight) for her.

Lascia ch'io pianga mia cruda sorte, e che sospiri la libertà. Il duolo infranga queste ritorte, de' miei martiri sol per pietà.
Let me weep over my cruel fate, and let me sigh for liberty. May sorrow shatter these chains, for my torments just out of pity.

LOVE OF....MUSIC

“An die Musik”

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
Poet: Franz von Schober (1796-1882)

A Lied to the art of music, *An die Musik*, is one of the best-known songs by Schubert. Its greatness and popularity are generally attributed to its harmonic simplicity, sweeping melody, and a strong bass line that effectively underpins the vocal line. The poem was written by his close friend, Franz von Schober. This piece is very close to the hearts of many musicians.

Du holde Kunst, in wieviel grauen Stunden, Wo mich des Lebens wilder Kreis umstrickt, Hast du mein Herz zu warmer Lieb' entzunden, Hast mich in eine beßre Welt entrückt,! Oft hat ein Seufzer, deiner Harf' entflossen, Ein süßer, heiliger Akkord von dir, Den Himmel beßrer Zeiten mir erschlossen, Du holde Kunst, ich danke dir dafür, Du holde Kunst, ich danke dir!

You, noble Art, in how many grey hours, When life's mad tumult wraps around me, Have you kindled my heart to warm love, Have you transported me into a better world! Often has a sigh flowing out from your harp, A sweet, divine harmony from you Unlocked to me the heaven of better times, You, noble Art, I thank you for it, You, noble Art, I thank you!

LOVE OF....ONE’S TRUE LOVE IN HEAVEN

“Après un Rêve”

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)
Poet: Romain Bussine (1830-1899)

Fauré is regarded as one of the masters of the French art song. Ravel wrote in 1922 that Fauré had saved French music from the dominance of the German Lied. Samuel Langford wrote of Fauré, "More surely almost than any writer in the world he commanded the faculty to create a song all of a piece, and with a sustained intensity of mood which made it like a single thought".

Dans un sommeil que charmait ton image Je rêvais le bonheur, ardent mirage Tes yeux étaient plus doux, ta voix pure et sonore, Tu rayonnais comme un ciel éclairé par l'aurore; Tu m'appelais et je quittais la terre Pour m'enfuir avec toi vers la lumière, Les cieux pour nous entr'ouvraient leurs nues Splendeurs inconnues, lueurs divines entre vues Hélas! Hélas, triste réveil des songes Je t'appelle, ô nuit, rends moi tes mensonges, Reviens, reviens radieuse, Reviens, ô nuit mystérieuse!

In a slumber which held your image spellbound I dreamt of happiness, passionate mirage, Your eyes were softer, your voice pure and sonorous, You shone like a sky lit up by the dawn; You called me and I left the earth To run away with you towards the light, The skies opened their clouds for us, Unknown splendors, divine flashes glimpsed, Alas! Alas! sad awakening from dreams I call you, O night, give me back your lies, Return, return radiant, Return, O mysterious night.

LOVE OF.....YOUNG LOVE

“O Mio Babbino Caro” from *Gianni Schicchi*

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)
Libretto: Giovacchino Forzano (1884-1970)

O mio babbino caro comes in the middle of the opera where Lauretta sings to her father, after tensions rise between him and the family of the boy that she loves. The aria provides a breath of fresh air after the atmosphere has become tense with jealousy and anger between different characters. Puccini's word-painting is subtle yet very effective throughout the whole aria, with emphasis on the line “I love him, I love him!”, where the soprano jumps an octave, creating a sense of drama and emotion. At the end of the aria, Lauretta begs her father to let her marry her love.

O mio babbino caro, mi piace, è bello, Vo'andare in Porta Rossa a comperar l'anello! Sì, ci voglio andare! E se l'amassi indarno, andrei sul Ponte Vecchio, ma per buttarmi in Arno! Mi struggo e mi tormento! O Dio, vorrei morir! Babbo, pietà!

Oh my dear papa, I love him, he is handsome, I want to go to Porta Rossa To buy the ring! Yes, I want to go there! And if I loved him in vain, I would go to the Ponte Vecchio, And throw myself in the Arno! I am anguished and tormented! Oh God, I'd want to die! Papa, have pity!

LOVE OF.....LASTING LOVE

“When I Have Sung My Songs”

Ernest Charles (1895-1984)

Charles composed around 45 songs for voice and piano in the years between 1930 and 1950. The songs are known for their rubato, sweeping vocal lines, sumptuous melodies, and ingenuous charm. Two of his songs are popular encores: the Viennese Waltz *Let My Song Fill Your Heart*, and *When I Have Sung My Songs*, to which Charles wrote both the lyrics and the music.

When I have sung my songs to you I'll sing no more. T'would be a sacrilege to sing at another door. We've worked so hard to hold our dreams just you and I. I could not share them all again I'd rather die With just the thought that I had loved so well so true That I could never sing again except to you!

LOVE OF.....MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS

“Ave Maria”

Franz Schubert (1787-1828)
Text: Roman Catholic Prayer

This piece was originally composed based on Walter Scott's popular narrative poem *The Lady of the Lake*, and has a different text in German titled, “Ellens dritter Gesang”. The opening words and refrain of Ellen's song, namely "Ave Maria", may have led to the idea of adapting Schubert's melody as a setting for the full text of the traditional Roman Catholic prayer "Ave Maria". The Latin version of the "Ave Maria" is now so frequently used with Schubert's melody that it has led to the misconception that he originally wrote the melody as a setting for the "Ave Maria".

Ave Maria, gratia plena. Ave, Dominus tecum. Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus, fructus ventris, Jesus.

Hail Mary, full of grace, The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

LOVE OF.....THE DIVINE

“The Gift of Love”

English Folk Tune, arr. Hal Hopson (b. 1933)
Text: Hal Hopson, based on 1 Corinthians 13

This piece is often used for services where "love" is the theme and is especially useful for weddings. The familiar words are a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13 and the haunting tune is based on the traditional English melody, O WALY WALY.

Though I may speak with bravest fire, and have the gift to all inspire, and have not love; my words are vain; as sounding brass, and hopeless gain. Though I may give all I possess, and striving so my love profess, but not be giv'n by love within, the profit soon turns strangely thin. Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control, our spirits long to be made whole. Let inward love guide every deed; by this we worship, and are freed.

LOVE OF.....PEACE

“Prayer of St. Francis”

Allen Pote (b. 1945)
Text: St. Francis of Assisi

The text from the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi is perhaps one of the most gorgeous and thought-provoking ever written. This version is a beautiful setting that is a plea for peace and unity. Pote is an American composer and arranger who was born in Kansas, studied in Texas, Belgium, and New York City and currently resides in Pensacola.

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, thy pardon Lord; where there is doubt, let me sow faith; where there's despair, let me bring hope; where there is darkness, let there be light; where there is sadness, let there be joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, and it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life. Amen.

LOVE OF.....JESUS

“Precious Jesus”

Jay Althouse (b. 1951)

Jay Althouse wrote both the words and music to this anthem of reverent praise. It has a beautiful solo line and a richly lyrical accompaniment including a closing reference to “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”.

All that I am and all that I can be, all that I know and all that I can see; these are the things my Jesus gave to me, Jesus, my Lord and friend. Once I was alone and day seemed dark as night. Once I was blind, but I've been given sight. Jesus, my redeemer, led me to the light, Jesus, my Lord and friend. Precious Jesus, blessed Jesus, You're my life, my joy, my friend. Precious Jesus, Your love is a love without end. Now, like a shepherd, he guides me on my way. Now I will follow; I cannot go astray. Jesus, keep me near You; this I humbly pray.

LOVE OF.....A SPOUSE

“One Hand, One Heart” from *West Side Story*

Leonard Bernstein (1943-1990)

Stephen Sondheim (b. 1930)

In the famous musical and movie, *West Side Story*, Maria and Tony sing this song while they have a make-believe wedding. Here Tony and Maria perform a symbolic marriage because an actual ceremony is a 'social' impossibility. This reinforces their relationship as being 'above' their social reality, accented by the whole notion of them with their heads 'up in the clouds'.

Make of our hands one hand, Make of our hearts one heart, Make of our vows one last vow: Only death will part us now. Make of our lives one life, Day after day, one life. Now it begins, now we start One hand, one heart; Even death won't part us now.

LOVE OF.....ONE'S LOVE

“So in Love” from *Kiss Me, Kate*

Cole Porter (1891-1964)

This popular song is from Porter's musical *Kiss Me, Kate*, which was based on Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. Porter composed the music and wrote the lyrics. It was popularized by Patti Page in 1949 and also recorded by Dinah Shore, Peggy Lee, and Ella Fitzgerald.

Strange dear, but true dear, When I'm close to you, dear, The stars fill the sky, So in love with you am I. Even without you, My arms fold about you, You know darling why, So in love with you am I. In love with the night mysterious, The night when you first were there, In love with my joy delirious, When I knew that you could care. So taunt me, and hurt me, Deceive me, desert me, I'm yours, till I die... So in love with you, my love... am I...

LOVE OF.....ROMANCE

“The Man I Love” from *An American in Paris*

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Text: Ira Gershwin (1896-1983)

"The Man I Love" is a popular standard with music by George Gershwin and lyrics by his brother Ira. It was first used in the musical, *Strike Up the Band*. As with many standards of the era, it has become more famous as an independent popular song than as one from a Broadway musical. The song was included in the 2015 Broadway musical *An American in Paris* based on the Gene Kelly, Leslie Caron film of the same name.

When the mellow moon begins to beam, Ev'ry night I dream a little dream, And of course Prince Charming is the theme, The he for me. Although I realize as well as you It is seldom that a dream comes true, To me it's clear That he'll appear. Some day he'll come along, The man I love And he'll be big and strong, The man I love. And when he comes my way I'll do my best to make him stay. He'll look at me and smile I'll understand; And in a little while, He'll take my hand; And though it seems absurd, I know we both won't say a word. Maybe I shall meet him Sunday. Maybe Monday, maybe not; Still I'm sure to meet him one day. Maybe Tuesday will be my good news day. He'll build a little home Just meant for two, From which I'll never roam, Who would - would you? And so all else above I'm waiting for the man I love.

LOVE OF.....TRUE LOVE

“Till There Was You” from *The Music Man*

Meredith Willson (1902-1984)

This is a show tune written in 1950 by Meredith Willson (both music and lyrics), originally entitled "Till I Met You." It was recorded by Meredith Willson & his Orchestra. The song was retitled and used in his musical play *The Music Man* and also was used in the movie version. It is sung by librarian Marian Paroo to "Professor" Harold Hill.

There were bells on a hill. But I never heard them ringing. No, I never heard them at all. Till there was you. There were birds in the sky. But I never saw them winging. No, I never saw them at all. Till there was you And there was music and wonderful roses. They tell me in sweet fragrant meadows Of dawn and dew. There was love all around. But I never heard it singing. No, I never heard it at all. Till there was you!

LOVE OF.....THE EARTH.....THE WORLD

“What a Wonderful World”

George David Weiss (1921-2010) &
Bob Thiele (1922-1996)

George Weiss wrote this song specifically for Louis Armstrong. He was inspired by Armstrong's ability to bring people of different races together. It was released in 1967 as a single, which topped the pop charts in the United Kingdom. After appearing in the film *Good Morning, Vietnam*, the song was re-released as a single in 1988. Armstrong's recording was inducted in the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1999.

I see trees of green, red roses too I see them bloom for me and you. And I think to myself what a wonderful world. I see skies of blue and clouds of white. The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night. And I think to myself what a wonderful world. The colors of the rainbow so pretty in the sky Are also on the faces of people going by. I see friends shaking hands saying how do you do. They're really saying I love you. I hear babies cry, I watch them grow. They'll learn much more than I'll ever know. And I think to myself what a wonderful world. Yes I think to myself what a wonderful world.

Thank you for listening and Happy Valentine's Day.

About the Artists

Michele Byrd, is best known for her work in oratorio and as a recitalist. She has been the soprano soloist at the Classical Music Festival in Eisenstadt and Vienna, Austria for nine years. Byrd has performed under the direction of many conductors, notably, Sir David Willcocks, Christopher Seaman, Paul Leddington-Wright, Richard Zielinski, Erich Kunzel, Keith Lockhart, Radu Paponiu, and James Cochran. Byrd is a graduate of the Indiana University School of Music. Byrd is the soprano soloist at Trinity-by-the-Cove Episcopal Church.

Brice Gerlach received his Bachelor and Master degrees in Organ Performance from Eastman School of Music and Indiana University, respectively. Gerlach was also awarded the Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music. He completed his doctorate in Choral Conducting from Indiana University. Brice is Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church of Naples and Artist in Residence in organ and conducting at Ave Maria University where he also conducts the Chamber Choir.

