

Tales And Landscapes

Sara Perez, Soprano

DMA Recital

January 27th, 2015

Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Same as We (1990)

Michael Finnissy

Five Eliot Landscapes (1990)

Thomas Adès

New Hampshire

Virginia

Usk

Rannoch, by Glencoe

Cape Ann

Todd Moellenberg, piano

******Intermission******

Három Weöres-dal (1946-7)

György Ligeti

Táncol a hold fehér ingben

Gyümölcs-fürt

Kalmár jött nagy madarakkal

Todd Moellenberg, piano

Lotófagos I (2006)

Beat Furrer

Matt Kline, bass

From the Grammar of Dreams (1988)

Kaija Saariaho

Kirsten Wiest, soprano

Texts and Translations:

Five Eliot Landscapes

I New Hampshire

Children's voices in the orchard
Between the blossom and the fruit-time:
Golden head, crimson head,
Between the green tip and the root.
Black wing, brown wing, hover over;
Twenty years and the spring is over;
Today grieves, tomorrow grieves,
Cover me over, light-in-leaves;
Golden head, black wing,
Cling, swing
Spring, sing,
Swing up into the apple-tree.

II Virginia

Red river, red river,
Slow flow heat is silence
No will is still as a river
Still. Will heat move
Only through the mocking-bird
Heard once? Still hills
Wait. Gates wait. Purple trees,
White trees, wait, wait,
Delay, decay. Living, living,
Never moving. Ever moving
Iron thoughts came with me
And go with me:
Red river, river, river

III Usk

Do not suddenly break the branch, or
Hope to find
The white hart behind the white well.
Glance aside, not for lance, do not spell
Old enchantments. Let them sleep.
'Gently dip, but not too deep'.
Lift your eyes
Where the roads dip and where the roads rise

Seek only there
Where the grey light meets the green air
The hermit's chapel, the pilgrim's prayer.

IV Rannoch, by Glencoe

Here the crow starves, here the patient stag
Breeds for the rifle. Between the soft moor
And the soft sky, scarcely room
To leap or soar. Substance crumbles, in the thin air
Moon cold or moon hot. The road winds in
Listlessness of ancient war,
Languor of broken steel,
Clamour of confused wrong, apt
In silence. Memory is strong
Beyond the bone. Pride snapped,
Shadow of pride is long, in the long pass
No concurrence of bone.

V Cape Ann

O quick quick quick, hear the song-sparrow,
Swamp-sparrow, fox-sparrow, vesper-sparrow
At dawn and dusk. Follow the dance
Of the goldfinch at noon. Leave to chance
The Blackburnian warbler, the shy one. Hail
With shrill whistle the note of the quail, the bob-white
Dodging by bay-bush. Follow the feet
Of the walker, the water-thrush. Follow the flight
Of the dancing arrow, the purple martin. Greet
In silence the bullbat. All are delectable. Sweet sweet sweet
But resign this land at the end, resign it
To its true owner, the tough one, the seagull.

The palaver is finished.

Három Weöres-dal

Táncol a hold fehér ingben,
kékes fényben fürdik minden.
Jár az óra: tik-tak, tik-tak.
Ne szólj ablak, hogyha nyitlak,
ne szólj lány, ha megcsókollak,
fehér inge van a Holdnak.

The moon is dancing in a white robe,
everything is bathed in bluish light.
The clock is going tick tock, tick tock.
Don't speak, window, when I open you,
don't speak, maiden, when I kiss you,
the moon has a white shirt.

Gyümölcs-fürt, ingatja a szél.
Ágon libeg, duzzadtan a fénytől.
Gyümölcs-fürt kelő melegben.
Puha lomb közt a szél.
Gyümölcs-fürt, hozzuk le.
Add nekünk, boldog ág.
Gyümölcs-fürt, ingatja a szél.

A cluster of fruit, rocked by the wind.
Bulging with light, it hangs from a branch.
A cluster of fruit in burgeoning warmth,
the wind rocks you in soft foliage.
We'll fetch it down, the cluster of fruit,
give it to us, happy branch.
A cluster of fruit, rocked by the wind.

Kalmár jött nagy madarakkal,
a hercegisasszony meg ne lássa,
örizzétek a hercegisasszonyt!

A merchant has come with giant birds,
the princess should not see them,
guard the princess!

Kalmár jött nagy madarakkal,
a gyerekek kiabálnak,
a hercegisasszony meg ne hallja!

A merchant has come with giant birds,
the children are shrieking,
the princess should not hear them!

A hercegisasszony sápadt, sose szól,
szívében sok nagy madár rikácsol,
örizzétek a hercegisasszonyt!

The princess is pale, she does not speak,
In her heart many giants birds screeching,
guard the princess!

Lotófagos I

Estábamos en un desierto confrontados con nuestra propia imagen que no reconocíamos. Perdimos la memoria. En la noche se tiende una ala sin pasado. Desconocemos la melancolía y la fidelidad y la muerte. Nada parece llegar hasta nosotros. Máscaras necias con las cuencas vacías. Nada seríamos capaces de engendrar. Un leve viento cálido viene todavía desde el lejano sur. ¿Era eso el recuerdo?

We were in a desert confronted by our own image that we were not to recognize. We lost our memory. At night a wing without a past extends. We do not know melancholy nor fidelity nor death. Nothing seems to reach us. Stubborn masks with empty eye sockets. We would be able to beget nothing. A slight warm wind still comes from the far south. Was that the memory?

From the Grammar of Dreams

Paralytic

It happens. Will it go on?
My mind a rock,
No fingers to grip, no tongue,

My god the iron lung

That loves me, pumps
My two
Dust bags in and out,
Will not

Let me relapse
While the day outside glides by like ticker tape.
The night brings violets,
Tapestries of eyes,

Lights,
The soft anonymous
Talkers: You all right?
The starched, inaccessible breast.

Dead egg, I lie
Whole
On a whole world I cannot touch,
At the white, tight

Drum of my sleeping couch
Photographs visit me –
My wife, dead and flat, in 1920 furs,
Mouth full of pearls.

Two girls
As flat as she, who whisper 'We're your daughters.'
The still waters
Wrap my lips,

Eyes, nose and ears,
A clear
Cellophane I cannot crack.
On my bare back.

I smile, a Buddha, all
Wants, desire
Falling from me like rings
Hugging their lights.

The claw
Of the magnolia,
Drunk on its own scents,
Asks nothing of life.

The Bell Jar

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A bad dream.

I remembered everything.

I remembered the cadavers and Doreen and the story of the fig tree and Marco's diamond and the sailor on the Common and Doctor Gordon's wall-eyed nurse and the broken thermometers and the Negro with his two kinds of beans and the twenty pounds I gained on insulin and the rock that bulged between sky and sea like a gray skull.

Maybe forgetfulness, like a kind of snow, should number and cover them.

But they were part of me. They were my landscape.

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I thought I would swim out until I was too tired to swim back. As I paddled on, my heartbeat boomed like a dull motor in my ears.

I am I am I am.

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I took a deep breath and listened to the old brag of my heart.

I am I am I am.

Program Notes:

Same As We – Michael Finnissy

Written for soprano and tape, this piece draws from Alfred Lord Tennyson's *The Promise of May*. Although the composer distinctly states that the text should not be taken literally or directly from the source, this piece has a clear progression of storyline. The play harbors a despondency and resentment for morals and politics in Tennyson's time period (19th century). Likewise, the text excerpts create an image with a distinct anger that appears and continues through to the end. The voice and tape interact back and forth, the tape acting as a younger voice of the more developed live version. Additionally, it gives insight into images and occurrences that the live voice reacts to and continues.

Five Eliot Landscapes – Thomas Adès

The earliest opus by Thomas Adès, this work draws from listening to his grandmother's cassette tape of Alec Guinness reading Eliot. Rather than being fascinated with the poetry itself, Adès was drawn by the recitation of the poetry. Likewise, his approach with the voice and piano are scenic, creating impressions of the poetry that do not prioritize a constant literal meaning. Oftentimes, the voice describes the piano rather than emphasizing its own line.

Három Weöres-dal – György Ligeti

This song cycle by Ligeti marks a turning point in Ligeti's political stance. Said to mark his anti-Nazi, young leftist intellectual era, the period of his life from which this composition hails was abruptly cut off by the establishment of Communism in Hungary in 1949. Ligeti became interested in Sandor Weöres' poetry for its humor and unique forms. Ligeti compliments these poems with an equal sense of comedy and beauty, setting each of these songs in a folk-like image.

Lotófagos I – Beat Furrer

Dealing with the state of amnesia, Furrer references the lotus-eaters from the story of Odysseus. Set in a desert, this piece deals with dark themes of oblivion and death and a lack of understanding or consciousness. By using the image of being lost in an empty desert without sight, there are immediate references to a sense of desolation and a search for survival. In this way, the piece is a constant search for knowledge in which the characters deal with different levels of frustration, never fully being able to grasp onto their senses.

From the Grammar of Dreams – Kaija Saariaho

Saariaho states that: “this text for *From the Grammar of Dreams* comes from Sylvia Plath, but the title comes from the idea that our thoughts, which when we are awake and when we verbalize them, the sentences are always linear and the logic is within a sentence. But in our dreams, the sentence is scattered, and it doesn't always advance in this linear-logic way. “ Saariaho’s use of two texts, *The Bell Jar* and *Paralytic* places an undeniable dichotomy between Plath’s older and younger self. The dreams in each of the five movements ignite a conversation between the two voices, sometimes battling and sometimes together. Finally, in the last movement, the voices join together in tumultuous excitement.