

inAppropriate Music for Countertenor

Mr. Ian Howell
Countertenor

Ms. Bonnie Wagner
Piano

.....●
A recital celebrating repertory written for the countertenor voice,
repertory generally thought inappropriate for the countertenor voice,
and the increasingly blurry line that divides the two.
.....●

An Evening Hymn

Mr. Henry Purcell (1659-95)

(from the Opera *A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

I know a bank

Benjamin Britten (1913-76)

(from the Oratorio *Hercules*)

He, who for Atlas propp'd the sky

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

(from the Opera *Giulio Cesare*)

Domerò la tua fierezza

Handel

Soon one mornin'

Mimaamaquim

Nana

Traditional Spiritual

Arthur Honegger (1892-1955)

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

Die Nacht

Chanson des quatre (as vocalise)

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Honegger

(from *Les nuit d'été*)

Le spectre de la rose

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

(from *Four Sonnets of John Keats*) *

III. Bright Star

Niccolo D. Athens (b.1988)

Fate makes a choice *

Zhou Juan (b.1982)

* These pieces were commissioned for Mr. Howell.

About the artists:



Praised by the New York Times for his “clear voice and attractive timbre,” San Francisco Classical Voice for the “heart at the core of his soulful sound,” and Classical Voice of North Carolina for his “lovely, supple, and crystal clear” voice, GRAMMY AWARD WINNER Ian Howell sings with a warm and seamless tone rarely heard from countertenors. In 2006, Mr. Howell won First Prize at The American Bach Soloists International Solo Competition with an acclaimed performance of Bach’s Cantata BWV 170, *Vergnügte Ruh*, and Third Prize at the Oratorio Society of New York’s Vocal Competition.

Ian Howell’s debut solo CD, *1685 and the Art of Ian Howell* with American Bach Soloists was released in March 2009 and features repertory by Domenico Scarlatti, J.S. Bach, and G.F. Handel.

He can also be heard with the all male chamber choir Chanticleer on one DVD and eight CDs, including the GRAMMY AWARD winning *Lamentations and Praises* and the GRAMMY nominated *Our American Journey*.

Equally at home on Opera and Concert stages, Mr. Howell’s upcoming season includes performances of *Messiah* with both American Bach Soloists and The Choir of St Thomas Fifth Ave (NYC), and Handel’s *Giulio Cesare (Tolomeo)* with Florentine Opera. Mr. Howell’s 2010-11 season included debut performances with Florentine Opera (Blow’s *Venus & Adonis – Cupid* and Purcell’s *Dido & Aeneas – Spirit*), Seattle Baroque (Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater*), and the New Mexico Symphony (Bach’s *Weinachts Oratorium*). He returned for engagements with Chatham Baroque (Bach’s *St. John Passion*), New York’s St. Ignatius Loyola (Handel’s *Jephtha – Hamor*), and the U.C. Davis Choirs (Bernstein’s *Missa Brevis* and *Chichester Psalms*, and in a new work by Pablo Ortiz).

In his 2009-2010 season, Mr. Howell debuted with Canada’s Orchestra London/Opera London as Tolomeo in Handel’s *Giulio Cesare*, for which critics called his portrayal “chilling,” “remarkable,” and “heart-rending,” and noted that he “handled the intricacies of Handel’s vocal writing with ease.” Mr. Howell also debuted as a featured soloist on

the Ravinia Festival’s Rising Stars Series (*Beginner’s Ear Recital*), with the St. Louis Symphony (P.D.Q.

Bach’s *Iphigenia in Brooklyn*), The Handel Choir of Baltimore (*Messiah*), The Hudson Valley Singers (Handel’s *Susanna – Joachim*), Chatham Baroque (Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* and J.C.

Bach’s *Lamento*), Musica Angelica (Bach’s *St. John Passion*), and in recital with the Columbus (Ohio) Guitar Society (*The New Music: 1602 – Present*). He returned to the Bay Area to reprise Handel’s *Messiah* for the second year in a row with American Bach Soloists.

In previous seasons, audiences have heard Ian Howell as a featured soloist with The Oratorio Society of New York, Musica Sacra (NYC), Rebel Orchestra with The Choir of Trinity Wall St (NYC), Concert Royále with The Choir of St Thomas Fifth Ave (NYC), The Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia, The Vancouver Chamber Choir, The Portland Baroque Orchestra, The Berkshire Choral Festival, The Princeton Glee Club, Tableau Baroque, and the Staunton (Virginia) and Whidbey Island (Washington State) Music Festivals.

Ian Howell holds a Master of Music Degree in Voice conferred jointly by the Yale Institute of Sacred Music and the Yale School of Music.



Bonnie Wagner is an active accompanist and chamber musician in the Philadelphia area. She is on faculty at the Curtis Institute of Music as Opera and Voice Coach, musical staff at the Opera Company of Philadelphia as rehearsal pianist and assistant conductor, and plays children’s concerts for the Philadelphia Orchestra program

Sound All Around. Bonnie also holds ties with West Chester University, Settlement Music School, and Westminster Choir College, where she has worked in the past. Originally from San Francisco, Bonnie received her Bachelors and Master of Music from the University of Michigan under the tutelage of Martin Katz. She has spent time in Germany studying lieder with Helmut Deutsch, and recently returned from working in Belle-Ile, France at an opera festival.

Texts and Translations:

An evening hymn

text by Bishop William Fuller (1608-1675)

Now that the sun hath veil'd his light,
and bid the world good night,
to the soft bed my body I dispose;
but where shall my soul repose?
Dear God, even in thy arms:
And can there be any so sweet security?
Then to thy rest, O my Soul!
And singing, praise the mercy that prolongs thy
days. Hallelujah!

I know a bank

text by William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Welcome, wanderer! Hast thou the flower there?
*(Puck gives Oberon the flower and lies at his
feet.)*

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where Oxlips and the nodding Violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious Woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with Eglantine;

There sleeps Tytania, sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers, with dance and delight:
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a Fairy in.

And with the Juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.

(To Puck)

Take thou some of it, and seek through this
grove;

A sweet Athenian Lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes,
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the Lady. Thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.

He, who for Atlas propp'd the sky,

text by Thomas Broughton (1704–1774)

He, who for Atlas propp'd the sky,
Now sees the sphere beneath him lie,
In bright abodes of kindred gods,
A new-admitted guest, with purple lips
Brisk nectar sips, and shares th'ambrosial feast.

Domerò la tua fierezza

text by Nicola Francesco Haym (1678–1729)

Costei, che per germana aborro e sdegno,

This one, whom as sibling I loathe and scorn,
Si conduca alla Reggia;

Bring to the royal palace;
Io cola voglio che, ad onta del suo ardire,
There I wish to shame her impudence,
Genuflessa m'adori a piè del soglio.
And make her kneel in adoration at my feet.

Domerò la tua fierezza

I will tame your pride
Ch'il mio trono aborre e sprezza,
That loathes and despises my throne,
E umiliata ti vedrò.

I will humiliate you.

Tu qual Icaro rubelle sormontar brami le stelle,

You, like Icarus, want to surmount the stars,
Ma quell'ali io tarperò.

But I will clip your wings.

Soon one morning

text is Traditional

Soon one morning, death comes a creepin' in
your room
Crying oh my Lord, what shall I do?

You may call on your mother,
but your mother won't do you no good.

Hush, somebody's calling my name!

Mimaamaquim

text is transliterated Hebrew from Psalm 130

Mimaamaquim queratikha

Out of the depths have I cried

Adonai!

O God!

Nana

text is Traditional

Duérmete niño, duerme

Go to sleep child, sleep,

Duerme, mi alma,

sleep, my soul,

Duérmete, lucerito

sleep little star

De la mañana

of the morning.

Naninta, nana,

Lulla-lullaby,

Die Nacht

text by Hermann von Gilm (1812-64)

Aus dem Walde tritt die Nacht,

Out of the woods steps the night,

Aus den Bäumen schleicht sie leise,

Out of the trees it quietly sneaks,

Schaut sich um im weitem Kreise,

One takes it all in,

Nun gib acht.

Now beware!

Alle Lichter dieser Welt,

All lights of this world,

Alle Blumen, alle Farben löscht sie aus

All the flowers, all the colors it extinguishes

Und stiehlt die Garben weg vom Feld.

And steals the (wheat) sheaves from the field

Alles nimmt sie, was nur hold,

It takes all that we hold dear,

Nimmt das Silber weg des Stromes,

Takes the silver from the stream,

Nimmt vom Kupferdach des Domes

From the cathedral's copper dome

Weg das Gold.

It takes away the gold.

Ausgeplündert steht der Strauch,

The bushes stand plundered,

Rücke näher, Seel an Seele;

Draw nearer, soul to soul;

O die Nacht, mir bangt,

Oh the night, I fear

Sie stehle dich mir auch.

Will steal you from me as well.

Le spectre de la rose

text by Pierre-Jules-Théophile Gautier
(1811-1872), ed. H. Berlioz

Soulève ta paupière close

Open your closed eyelid

Qu'effleure un songe virginal;

Which is gently brushed by a virginal dream!

Je suis le spectre d'une rose

I am the ghost of the rose

Que tu portais hier au bal.

That you wore last night at the ball.

Tu me pris encore emperlée

You took me when I was still sprinkled with
pearls

Des pleurs d'argent de l'arrosoir,

Of silvery tears from the watering-can,

Et, parmi la fête étoilée,

And, among the sparkling festivities,

Tu me promenas tout le soir.

You carried me the entire night.

Ô toi qui de ma mort fus cause,

O you, who caused my death:

Sans que tu puisses le chasser,

Without the power to chase it away,

Toutes les nuits mon spectre rose

You will be visited every night by my ghost,

À ton chevet viendra danser.

Which will dance at your bedside.

Mais ne crains rien, je ne réclame

But fear nothing; I demand

Ni messe ni De Profundis;

Neither Mass nor De Profundis;

Ce léger parfum est mon âme,

This mild perfume is my soul,

Et j'arrive du paradis.

And I've come from Paradise.

Mon destin fut digne d'envie,

My destiny is worthy of envy;

Et pour avoir un sort si beau,

And to have a fate so fine,

Plus d'un aurait donné sa vie,

More than one would give his life

Car sur ton sein j'ai mon tombeau,

For on your breast I have my tomb,

Et sur l'albâtre où je repose

And on the alabaster where I rest,

Un poète avec un baiser

A poet with a kiss

Écrivit: "Ci-gît une rose

Wrote: "Here lies a rose,

Que tous les rois vont jalouser."

Of which all kings may be jealous."

III. Bright star

text by John Keats (1795-1821)

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art--

Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night

And watching, with eternal lids apart,

Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,

The moving waters at their priestlike task

Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,

Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask

Of snow upon the mountains and the moors--

No--yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,

Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,

To feel for ever its soft swell and fall,

Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,

Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,

And so live ever--or else swoon to death.

Fate makes a choice

text by Jon Kern (1815-1894)

Love!

Love!

Love!

These humans are always asking for Love.

Demanding More, Begging for Love.

Dying for, Killing for, Needing, Needing,

Needing, Needing...

The Fate of love am I,

Respected, and feared.

A god above mortals,

Deciding destiny,

I'm known by my work,

You are blind to me.

Your most treasured moments,

Assumed as accidents.

Humans feel the flush,

The rush of blood,

The heat of what is new.

I'm cold and professional!

I'm cold, I'm cold, I'm cold.

Uncaring are the lovers for the Fate who has
united them.

Uncared for, Who will play Fate for me?

Who will play Fate for me?

Worn down by this weary job,

Carried out alone.

My life feeling empty,

Fulfilling others, feeling empty.

Before there can be lovers, there must be,

Strangers...