

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

DAME SARAH CONNOLLY, mezzo-soprano

JULIUS DRAKE, piano

Friday, March 22 – 7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM (*Selection of Program Notes*)

***Italienisches Liederbuch* [Sel.]**

Hugo Wolf

Born: March 13, 1860, in Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia

Died: February 22, 1903, in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1891-96

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Like all of Wolf's mature songbooks, the *Italienisches Liederbuch* was composed in feverish bouts. Paul Heyse's translation of the anonymous Italian poems had been published in 1860. Wolf ignored the ballads and death laments, and concentrated almost exclusively on the *rispetti* – short love poems that depict a wide variety of emotions.

Quatre Chansons

Albert Roussel

Born: April 5, 1869, in Tourcoing, France

Died: August 23, 1937, in Royan, France

Composed: c. 1924

Duration: 10-24 minutes

Roussel was the dominant French composer between World Wars. He is arguably the greatest French symphonist and the greatest French ballet composer. A child of wealthy French industrialists, he was orphaned at the age of seven and was sent to live with his grandfather who died when Roussel was eleven. For the rest of his life Roussel sought order, routine, discipline; his songs continually return to the theme of saying farewell to a loved one.

Trois Chanson de Bilitis

Claude Debussy

Born: August 22, 1862, in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France

Died: March 25, 1918, in Paris, France

Composed: 1897-98

Duration: 10 minutes

Debussy's *Trois Chansons de Bilitis* were published in their original form for voice and piano in 1897, with a dedication to the writer André Gide. The texts were those of the well-known prose poems by Pierre Louÿs. As Edward Lockspeiser writes, these songs "provide the most moving revelations of the hedonistic, pagan art of Debussy, a reminder that the antique grace and splendor of the earlier *Après-midi d'un faune* was not only still alive in the composer's imagination, but that it was capable of a more remote, and therefore still more poignant spiritualization."

Sechs Maeterlinck Lieder, Op. 13

Alexander von Zemlinsky

Born: October 14, 1871, in Vienna, Austria

Died: March 15, 1942, in Larchmont, NY

Composed: 1910-13

Duration: 18 minutes

In the early years of the twentieth century, Zemlinsky straddled the aesthetic fence between the hyper-Romanticism of Wagner and the emerging avant-garde, led by his former pupil, Arnold Schoenberg. With Zemlinsky's Op. 13 songs we find none of the angularity or fragmentation of Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*—instead his approach remains very lyrical and tonally centered. But there is also none of the hyperbole of Wagner or the other late romantics; Zemlinsky applies the language of the late nineteenth century with the relatively cool reserve of someone who has seen its opposite, and struck a balance between sense and reason.