



2024/25
SEASON

GRADUATE PERFORMANCE RECITAL

A Woman's Love & Life

Alissa Magee

Soprano

Historical Performance Practice, DMA

5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

 **Florence Harkness Memorial Chapel**

11200 Bellflower Road Cleveland, OH



**CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY**
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Music

10900 Euclid Avenue Cleveland, OH
case.edu/artsci/music

PROGRAM

L'astratto, op. 8, no. 4

Barbara Strozzi
(1619-1677)

L'amante segreto, op. 2, no.16

Mikhail Grazhdanov, harpsichord

Médée, Cantates françaises: livre premier, no. 5

Louis-Nicolas Clérambault
(1676-1749)

Maude Cloutier, violin
Mikhail Grazhdanov, harpsichord

– INTERMISSION –

Frauenliebe und -leben, op. 42

Robert Schumann
(1810-1856)

- I. Seit ich ihn gesehen
- II. Er, der Herrlichste von allen
- III. Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben
- IV. Du Ring an meinem Finger
- V. Helft mir, ihr Schwestern
- VI. Süßer Freund, du blickest
- VII. An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust
- VIII. Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan

Mikhail Grazhdanov, fortepiano

PROGRAM NOTES

During the 2017 Attorney General confirmation of Jeff Sessions, senator Elizabeth Warren was silenced for reading a critical letter. Following the ruling to silence Warren, Senator Mitch McConnell said on the Senate floor:

“Senator Warren was giving a lengthy speech. She had appeared to violate the rule. She was warned. She was given an explanation. Nevertheless, she persisted.”

Although McConnell's words were meant to criticize Warren's actions, the phrase “nevertheless she persisted” quickly became a rallying cry for women's resilience and strength, especially in the face of adversity or opposition. This program explores how other historical and mythological women “nevertheless persisted” in loving and living. I hope their incredible courage will serve as a beacon of inspiration to you, as it has to me.

The first two women you will meet persist through lovesickness. The first, **L'astratto**, calls upon music to soothe her suffering. In search of a perfect remedy, she attempts to sing several love songs, yet each time breaks down into recitative that mocks both herself and songwriting in general. The second, **L'amante segreto**, captures the pain of unrequited or otherwise forbidden love. Over a languid passacaglia bass, the leading lady laments how the eyes of her beloved simultaneously heal and wound her. Both settings originate from the pen of Barbara Strozzi, a courageous and accomplished composer in her own right.

The next woman to take the stage persists through abandonment. We find **Médée** in the moment after her husband Jason has left her, deeply despairing and conflicted. Clérambault's setting gives voice to her anguished soul as she contemplates feelings of love, heartbreak, and fury. Her cantata begins with an expressive recitative which lays out her situation. It leads into a central aria, whose vivid ornamentation conveys her passion, rage, and sorrow. Her story reaches its emotional peak as she contemplates her inner destruction and chooses to exact revenge.

The final woman you will meet persists through loss. Over the course of eight songs, **Frauenliebe und -leben** portrays a woman's transformation through love. The cycle opens with **Seit ich ihn gesehen**, a hesitant song that captures the woman's feelings of love at first sight. **Er, der Herrlichste von allen** develops her deep admiration for her new beloved. In **Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben**, the woman realises that she is loved in return. Brisk chords in the accompaniment mirror the fluttering of her heart as she tries to process her joy. At the midpoint arrives **Du Ring an meinem Finger**, a song which marks the lovers' engagement. Schumann employs a gentle, repetitive motif to illustrate the certainty and peace of this moment. The fifth song, **Helft mir, ihr Schwestern**, captures the woman enlisting her sisters' help on her wedding day. The music here fittingly brims with activity and anticipation. By contrast, the next song, **Süsser Freund, du blickest mich verwundert an**, captures an intimate moment between the lovers as husband and wife. Schumann here evokes a most serene atmosphere through gently spacious chords and recitative-like vocal writing. The mood returns to exuberance as the woman describes the joys of motherhood in **An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust**. Joy then gives way to mourning in the final song, **Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan**. Though it could end in grief, Schumann instead concludes this song with a reprise of *Seit ich ihn gesehen*, as if telling us that love endures even if we do not. Perhaps a better verb is “persists.”

HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE AT CWRU

The **Historical Performance Practice (HPP) Program** is one of the nation's premier programs for advanced musicians pursuing careers in early music. This highly selective, fully funded program offers exceptional training in historically informed performance, combining rigorous academic study with extensive artistic and professional development. As part of the Joint Music Program with the Cleveland Institute of Music, students study with renowned faculty, collaborate with conservatory musicians, and engage with leading performers, scholars, and guest artists from around the world. They have access to the Kulas Collection of Historical Instruments, which supports immersive study of repertoire from the Middle Ages through the 19th century, while developing expertise in historical techniques, research, and ensemble leadership. Graduates of the HPP program build successful careers in academia, performance, and arts administration across the global early music scene.

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