



School of **MUSIC**

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA / COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Nicole Corbett, soprano
Senior Recital

Marco Polo, piano

Saturday, November 8, 2025
7:20 p.m.
MUB 101

Program

Wo bin ich? Wach' Ich? Ist es ein Traum?
From *Hänsel und Gretel*

Engelbert Humperdinck
(1854-1921)

Nicole Corbett, soprano
Marco Polo, piano

The Sun is Love

Gwyneth Walker
(b. 1947)

- I. *Circling the Sun*
- II. *Quietness*
- III. *The Sunrise Ruby*
- IV. *Dualities*
 - a. *insomnias*
 - b. *meetings*
 - c. *mirrors*
 - d. *stones*

V. *A Waterbird*

Nicole Corbett, soprano
Marco Polo, piano

Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen
From *Die Zauberflöte*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Nicole Corbett, soprano
Gavin Gallagher, baritone
Marco Polo, piano

Sous le dôme épais
"Flower Duet"
From *Lakmé*

Léo Delibes (1836-1891)

Nicole Corbett, soprano
Marbella Deininger, mezzo soprano
Marco Polo, piano

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the Voice Performance Certificate.
Nicole is from the studio of Dr. Pfund.

Program Notes

Wo bin ich? Wach' Ich? Ist es ein Traum?

Hänsel und Gretel is an opera by German composer Engelbert Humperdinck (1854-1921). Initially, Humperdinck wrote a few folksongs based on the *Hänsel und Gretel* fairytale by the Grimm brothers at the request of his sister for her children to perform them at Christmas. When he continued creating the full opera, his sister Adelheid wrote the libretto. The opera follows siblings Hänsel and Gretel who get sent into the forest by their frustrated mother. The forest is dark and scary and the children quickly get lost. Hänsel and Gretel encounter magical creatures like the Sandman and the Dew Fairy, and eventually outwit an evil Witch who tries to capture them for her Gingerbread House.

In the aria “Wo Bin Ich? Wach' ich? Ist es ein Traum?” Gretel has just been awakened by the Dew Fairy and wonders, “Where am I? Am I awake? Is this a dream?” She sings with a mix of disorientation and wonder as she notices the birds greeting the morning around her and realizes that she and her brother are safe. Gretel then wakes Hänsel, and together they sing a playful birdsong duet, reflecting their childhood joy and innocence even in frightening situations.

Listen for the theme that begins early in the aria on the words “Hoch in den Zweigen da lispelt es leise,” which translates to “High in the branches are soft whispers.” This melodic line recurs throughout the opera, particularly in the Sandman and Dew Fairy arias, as well as in the final scene with the freed souls of the children. To me, this theme portrays a fantastical quality, indicating that the children remain in a dreamlike state. This is unsurprising due to the fact that this motif is first introduced when the Sandman is putting the children to sleep. This raises the question: are any of these magical occurrences actually happening, or are they the product of the children’s imagination?

The Sun is Love

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is an American composer whose catalogue includes more than 150 commissioned works. She grew up in New Canaan, Connecticut, demonstrating her musical abilities from a young age. Her compositional style is strongly rooted in her family’s Quaker background. She graduated from Brown University and the Hart School of music and taught at the Oberlin College Conservatory, resigning from academic employment in 1982 to focus on composing, and has lived a quiet life on a dairy farm ever since. The piece reflects the ebbs and flows of resilience by constantly shifting between sections of varying dynamics and musical textures.

Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī (1207–1273) was a Persian poet, mystic, and theologian born in Balkh, Persia (modern day Afghanistan). Educated in traditional religious studies, he became a teacher and later formed a profound bond with a holy man named Shams al-Din Mohammed. Rūmī and Shams spent

much time learning and studying and learning together, so much so that Rūmī often neglected other relationships. When Shams died, Rūmī began writing poetry that explored desire, love, loss, and spirituality, including *Dīwān-e Shams-e Tabrizī*, dedicated to Shams.

The Sun is Love sets Rūmī's poetry to music by Gwyneth Walker, translated by Coleman Barks (1937). The cycle opens with "Circling the Sun," a lively song that introduces themes of sacredness and love with an ethereal piano accompaniment. "Quietness" begins unaccompanied, with the piano entering after the first few measures. The text prompts the listener to let go by surrendering to love. "Flirtation: Light and Wine and Pomegranate Flowers" is a playful set of flirtatious songs, in which the singer entices and teases her lover. The fourth song, "The Sunrise Ruby," is passionate, using consonant harmonies to evoke a sense of surrender. "Dualities" is a group of four short songs, each covering different aspects of love. The singer expresses love as both longing and pain, with varying vocal and piano ranges. The cycle concludes with "A Waterbird," a straightforward, pure, love song in which the singer relates her love to the beauty of the nature around her.

Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) is known to be one of the greatest composers of the Classical period. He was a child prodigy, composing his first piano sonata at only four years old. His adolescent musical excellency resulted in performances for European royalty, including King Louis XV of France and King George III of Great Britain. He composed more than 600 compositions throughout his life, including instrumental and vocal works, varying from smaller to large scale pieces. Among his most famous works are the *Mass in C Minor*, *Piano Concerto No. 21*, and his three operas, *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), *Don Giovanni* (1787), and *Così fan tutte* (1790).

Mozart's final opera, *Die Zauberflöte* (1791), or *The Magic Flute*, is set in a mythical land between the sun and the moon. This opera follows Prince Tamino as he goes on a journey to rescue Pamina, the daughter of the Queen of the Night, from the supposedly evil Sarastro. With the help of a magic flute and a comical birdcatcher named Papageno, Tamino defeats the trials he is presented with and the Queen of the Night is defeated. The opera ultimately resolves in light conquering darkness and harmony being restored.

"Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen" or "In men who feel love" is a duet between Pamina and Papageno, occurring in Act I after Papageno has helped her escape from the palace of Sarastro. Pamina and Papageno sing of the importance of love and how "man and woman, and woman and man, reach towards the deity." This duet represents the juxtaposition of Pamina, who is gentle and Papageno, who is humorous. This balances the tone of the opera and displays Papageno's humanity beneath the surface.

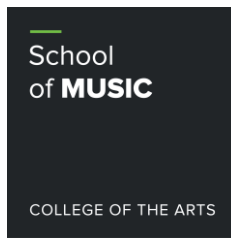
Sous le dôme épais

“Flower Duet”

Léo Delibes (1836-1891) was a French composer best known for his operas and ballets. He is often regarded as the first to write high quality music for ballet. His musical style can be described as light and elegant, with qualities that lean toward exoticism. Delibes studied at the Paris Conservatoire and worked as an accompanist at many different theatres. Following the success of his opera *Coppélia*, Delibes devoted his career to composition only and wrote a total of 3 ballets, several operas and opéra comiques, and several *mélodies*.

Not much is known about Edmond Gondinet (1828-1888), a French playwright and librettist who produced forty plays and had several theatrical successes. He often collaborated with notable writers such as Alphonse Daudet and Eugène Labiche. Philippe Gille (1831-1901), his co-librettist for *Lakmé* (1883), was a French dramatist and librettist. Gille was educated at Lycée Charlemagne and he went on to study law. He later worked as a sculptor and a clerk before working in journalism for the arts. Gilles provided the libretto for *Vent du soir, ou L'horrible festin*, composed by Jacques Offenbach. In the 1870s, he collaborated with other writers and librettists, including Edmond Gondinet.

Lakmé is a three-act opera set in British India in the mid-nineteenth century, based on the novel *Rarahu ou Le Mariage de Loti* by Pierre Loti. This opera follows a Brahmin priest named Nilakantha, who is forced to practice Hinduism in secret due to British occupation. His daughter, Lakmé, falls in love with a British officer and Nilakantha does everything in his power to stop this forbidden relationship, including trapping and injuring the soldier. The story ends tragically with Lakmé eating a poisonous flower as she knows she will inevitably lose Gerald. The “Flower Duet” occurs in Act I of the opera as Lakmé and her servant Mallika gather flowers to prepare a bath by the river. The music reflects the beauty of the nature surrounding them with lush orchestration and floating vocal lines. Personally, I interpret this song as a moment of serenity and peace before the drama unfolds and ultimately descends into tragedy.



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