



LUCAS MEACHEM, BARITONE

IRINA MEACHEM, *PIANIST*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 7:30 PM
MOESER AUDITORIUM, HILL HALL

PRESENTING SPONSOR

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Photo by Simon Pauly

G **RAMMY AWARD-WINNING** baritone Lucas Meachem is one of the most accomplished, in-demand singers of the moment, captivating audiences around the world with his “earnest appealing baritone” (*New York Times*) and “commanding presence” (*San Francisco Chronicle*). Named the winner of San Francisco Opera’s inaugural “Emerging Star of the Year” Award in 2016, Meachem enjoys a busy career at the most important opera houses across the United States and Europe, singing leading roles at Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe Opera, the Vienna Staatsoper, Opéra National de Paris, Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. He won a Grammy Award for his performance of Figaro in John Corigliano’s *Ghosts of Versailles* with Los Angeles Opera.

Following his sensational summer season, which included his house debuts at Salzburger Festspiele with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal in Penderecki’s *St Luke Passion* and the Grafenegg Music Festival with Britten’s *War Requiem*, Meachem started his 18/19 season with his house debut at

Washington National Opera as Germont in *La Traviata*, where the *Washington Post* described him as a “stentorian baritone,” and *Washington Classical Review* as an “implacable, immutable force.” He then sang his “signature role” (*Houstonia*), Figaro in *Barber of Seville*, for his second house debut at Michigan Opera Theatre. Meachem returned to the Metropolitan Opera for two productions: Marcello in *La bohème*, alongside Ailyn Pérez and Michael Fabiano, a performance described as a “winning, smooth baritone [that] was at once refined and robust” (*Parterre*), and Robert in Tchaikovsky’s *Iolanta*. Meachem finishes the season with his house debut at Canadian Opera Company as Marcello.

Born in North Carolina, Lucas Meachem studied music at Appalachian State University, the Eastman School of Music, and Yale University before becoming an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera.

This “homecoming recital” is his first performance at Carolina Performing Arts. The program is a living musical autobiography of Meachem’s artistic journey from his humble beginnings in rural North Carolina to his first professional engagement and several big breaks along the way. Tonight the artist will relive these stories from his career, and share the personal meaning and relationship for each piece with the audience. ■

PROGRAM

COPLAND (1900-1990)

Selections from *Old American Songs*

“Ching-A-Ring Chaw”

“At the River”

“I Bought Me a Cat”

KÁLMÁN (1882-1953)

Der Zigeunerprimas

“I Was King of Gypsy Players”

TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

Eugene Onegin, Op. 24

Onegin’s Aria, Act I, Scene III

GLUCK (1714-1787)

Iphigénie en Tauride, Act II

“Le calme rentre dans mon coeur...”

ENESCU (1881-1955)

Suite No. 2 for Piano in D Major, Op. 10

Sarabande

JOHN CORIGLIANO (b. 1938)

The Ghosts of Versailles

“They Wish They Could Kill Me”

INTERMISSION

MAHLER (1860-1911)

Kindertotenlieder

Nun will die Sonn’ so hell aufgeh’n

Nun seh’ ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen

Wenn dein Mütterlein tritt zur Tür herein

Oft denk’ ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus

RODGERS (1902-1979)

Carousel

“Soliloquy”

PROGRAM NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS

Notes for this evening’s program were written by Dan Ruccia.

COPLAND **Selections from *Old American Songs***

In 1950, Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears commissioned an arrangement of five American folksongs from composer Aaron Copland. Propelled by the positive reaction to the songs, Copland arranged five more in 1952. The ten songs encompass a huge swath of nineteenth-century Americana: spirituals, minstrel songs (with lyrics rewritten by Copland to obscure the songs’ racist origins), political tunes, and children’s songs. Copland largely leaves the melodies alone, providing accompaniments that channel and enhance the character of the originals. “Ching-a-Ring Chaw” is an absurd romp; “At the River” is suitably reverent, with plenty of Copland’s trademark open dissonances; and “I Bought Me a Cat” brims with silly animal sounds.

KÁLMÁN **“I Was King of Gypsy Players” from *Der Zigeunerprimas***

Hungarian composer Emmerich Kálmán, a classmate of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály at the National Hungarian Royal Academy of Music, achieved widespread fame after World War I for his operettas. Composed and premiered in 1912, *Der Zigeunerprimas* is one of his earliest hits. It caught on in the US in particular, where it was renamed *Sári* after its female lead. The operetta tells the story of the clash between Pali Rász, a real-life nineteenth-century gypsy violinist, and his son Laczi, a rising classical virtuoso, which Pali can’t accept. In this song from the beginning of the operetta, Pali reflects back wistfully on his past successes, on the adoration of his (female) fans, and on the ravages of time. Kálmán’s music, full of sweeping lines and longing harmonies, wouldn’t be out of place in a Broadway musical.

Irina Meachem, pianist

First-generation Romanian-American pianist Irina Meachem has served as a staff pianist/coach at companies such as Palm Beach Opera, Sarasota Opera, Opera Birmingham, Amarillo Opera, Nashville Opera, Shreveport Opera, OperaWorks, Chicago Summer Opera, Mill City Summer Opera, Opera in the Ozarks, Bay View Music Festival, The Banff Centre, and the Interlochen Summer Arts Academy. As a soloist, Ms. Meachem performed *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Augsburg Symphonic Band in a Romanian tour in 2009. She earned a Master’s of Music degree from Florida State University and a Bachelor’s of Music from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. Additionally, she attended the George Enescu High School of Music in Bucuresti, Romania. Irina has performed with her husband, baritone Lucas Meachem, in recitals at the Athenaeum in Bucuresti, Romania, Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, Hamline University in Minnesota, and the Moore County Arts Recital Series in Whispering Pines, North Carolina.

TCHAIKOVSKY Onegin's Aria, Act I, Scene III from *Eugene Onegin*, Op. 24

Of the ten operas that Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky composed, only *Eugene Onegin* remains in wide circulation in the Western world, buoyed in no small part by the fame of Tatyana's letter-writing scene, when Tatyana has fallen under the spell of a romantic novel. She expresses her undying love for Onegin, a visiting nobleman and playboy whom she has just met. In response, Onegin sings this aria near the close of Act I, declaring that marriage isn't really his thing, and that he really thinks of Tatyana as a sister, concluding that she should learn to control those pesky, overwrought feelings in the future lest someone try to take advantage of her. Needless to say, she is crushed. This is not the last time this particular music appears in the opera: Tchaikovsky brings back a few fragments of it in ironic form in Act III, when Onegin tries and fails to win Tatyana's affections.

Onegin

Когда бы жизнь домашним кругом
Я ограничить захотел,
Когда б мне быть отцом, супругом
Приятный жребий повелел,
То верно б, кроме вас одной,
Невесты не искал иной.
Но я не создан для блаженства,
Ему чужда душа моя.
Напрасны ваши совершенства,
Их не достоин вовсе я.
Поверьте, (совесть в том порукой),
Супружество нам будет мукой.
Я сколько ни любил бы вас,
Привыкнув, разлюблю тотчас.
Судите ж вы, какие розы
Нам заготовил Гименей,
И, может быть, на много дней!
Мечтам и годам нет возврата!
Ах, нет возврата;
Не обновлю души моей!
Я вас люблю любовью брата,
Любовью брата,
Иль, может быть, еще нежней!
Иль, может быть еще,
Еще нежней!
Послушайте ж меня без гнева,
Сменит не раз младая дева
Мечтами легкие мечты.

Onegin

If I wished to pass my life
within the confines of the family circle,
and a kindly fate had decreed for me
the role of husband and father,
then, most like, I would not choose
any other bride than you.
But I was not made for wedded bliss,
it is foreign to my soul,
your perfections are vain,
I am quite unworthy of them.
Believe me, I give you my word,
marriage would be a torment for us.
No matter how much I loved you,
habit would kill that love.
Judge what a thorny bed of roses
Hymen would prepare for us,
and, perhaps, to be endured at length!
One cannot return to dreams and youth,
I cannot renew my soul!
I love you with a brother's love,
a brother's love
or, perhaps, more than that!
Perhaps, perhaps more than that!
Listen to me without getting angry,
more than once will a girl exchange
one passing fancy for another.
Learn to control your feelings; ...
... Not everyone will understand you as I do.
Inexperience leads to disaster!

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GLUCK “Le calme rentre dans mon coeur...” from Act II of *Iphigénie en Tauride*

The Parisian opera world of the late 1770s was divided into two warring camps: the Gluckists and the Piccinnists. The former supported Christoph Willibald Gluck, who had taken Parisian opera by storm in 1774, and the latter rallied around the Italian Niccolò Piccinni, who had been brought to Paris explicitly to become Gluck’s rival (essentially, the rivalry boiled down to an argument about whether the German or Italian school of music was superior to the other). The Académie Royale sought to stoke their rivalry by having them both create operas based on *Iphigénie en Tauride*. Gluck struck first in May 1779—Piccinni’s wouldn’t be staged until early 1781—and his version was a huge hit. His last major opera, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, is a summation, of sorts, of Gluck’s ideas about opera, quoting liberally from earlier works.

This aria from Act II finds Orestes and his friend Pylades chained in the Temple of Diana in Tauris. Orestes, having recently killed his mother Clytemnestra, is wracked with guilt. The aria falls just as he is about to sink into a nightmare-filled sleep. Of course, the calm of which he sings is illusory—signified musically by the unsteady ostinato in the accompaniment—but its relief is enough to bring him a temporary respite.

ORESTE

Recit.:

Dieux! protecteurs de ces affreux rivages,
Dieux! avides de sang, tonnez, tonnez, écrasez-moi!
Où suis-je? à l’horreur qui m’obsède
Quelle tranquillité succède?

Aria:

Le calme rentre dans mon coeur!
Mes maux ont donc lassé la colère céleste?
Je touche au terme du malheur!
Vous laissez respirer le parricide Oreste?
Dieux justes! Ciel vengeur!
Oui, le calme rentre dans mon coeur!

ORESTE

Recit.:

Ye gods, protectors of these frightful shores,
gods avid for blood, thunder away, crush me...
Where am I? What peace is this that succeeds
the horror that haunts me?

Aria:

Calm has returned to my heart...
My woes have then exhausted heaven’s wrath?
I have reached the limits of adversity.
You allow to breathe the parricide Oreste?
Gods just! Heaven vengeful!
Yes, calm has returned to my heart...

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ENESCU *Sarabande* from Suite No.2 for Piano in D Major, Op.10

George Enescu was a burgeoning fourteen-year-old violin virtuoso when he moved to Paris in 1895. Four years later, he graduated from the Paris Conservatoire, having studied composition with Massenet and Fauré and violin with Martin Pierre Marsick. After graduating in 1899, he dove into the Parisian musical world, splitting his time in his native Romania. This suite, written between 1901 and 1903 (and sometimes subtitled “Des cloches sonores” or, “sounding bells”), won the Pleyel Prize from a jury of Massenet, Debussy, Vincent D’Indy, and other major figures in Parisian compositional life. The *Sarabande* draws on the dreamier side of bell chimes and brims with endless, Fauré-like melodies that seem to hover in space.

CORIGLIANO “They Wish They Could Kill Me” from *The Ghosts of Versailles*

Commissioned for the hundredth anniversary of the Metropolitan Opera in 1980 (though not premiered until 1991), John Corigliano’s *Ghosts of Versailles* is an opera about the power of opera. Corigliano calls it a “grand opera buffa,” combining the massive scale of grand opera with the humor of opera buffa. In its original form, it calls for a huge orchestra and dozens of singers, making it nearly impossible to stage as intended. Loosely based on the third play in Beaumarchais’s *Figaro* trilogy (you may have heard of the other two), it is set in the afterlife, where Beaumarchais tries to cheer up the newly beheaded Marie Antoinette by staging his play *La Mère coupable*. This aria falls at the beginning of the opera-within-an-opera, wherein an aged Figaro introduces himself with a (possibly ever so slightly exaggerated) account of his life and adventures.

MAHLER *Kindertotenlieder*

In 1833, the poet Friedrich Rückert's children Luise and Ernst died suddenly of scarlet fever. Bereft and searching for answers, he transformed his grief into 428 poems that tackle the question of loss from every possible angle. The poems were intended as a private ritual, so they weren't published until 1871, five years after the author's death.

Thirty years later in 1901, Gustav Mahler discovered (or perhaps rediscovered) Rückert's poetry and set out on two parallel compositions: the variegated *Rückert-Lieder* and *Kindertotenlieder*. He started writing both sets in a flurry in summer 1901, intending both to have orchestral accompaniment. He finished the *Rückert-Lieder* first, in 1902, and its much darker companion two years later.

Much has been written about *Kindertotenlieder*, about its bleak mood (with short bursts of hope), Mahler's word painting (particularly in the last movement's storm), his transparent orchestration, the nature of the poems he selected (each of which deal in some way with light-related imagery) and his conspicuous

alterations to them, and so on. Less discussed is what happens when Mahler condensed his delicately textured orchestration, full of carefully chosen timbres, for the piano. In the orchestral version, so much emotional weight is carried by the sustaining power of the woodwinds and strings (and its contrast with the harp and selected percussion). On the piano, the notes can only ever decay, giving the music an even clearer sense of futility and darkness, especially in the more lyrical passages. At the same time, the unified tone of the piano makes all of Mahler's delicious harmonic twists and turns—and there are lots of them, particularly in the outer two songs—that much clearer.

The most critical thing to know about the work, though, is that it is a piece of imaginative empathy. Mahler uses Rückert's words as a jumping-off point, exploring what it might be like to experience the unfathomable loss of a child. Three years after finishing *Kindertotenlieder*, when his own daughter succumbed to scarlet fever, he wrote to a friend, "When I really lost my daughter, I could not have written these songs anymore."

the beautiful brain: the drawings of santiago ramón y cajal

25 January -
7 April 2019

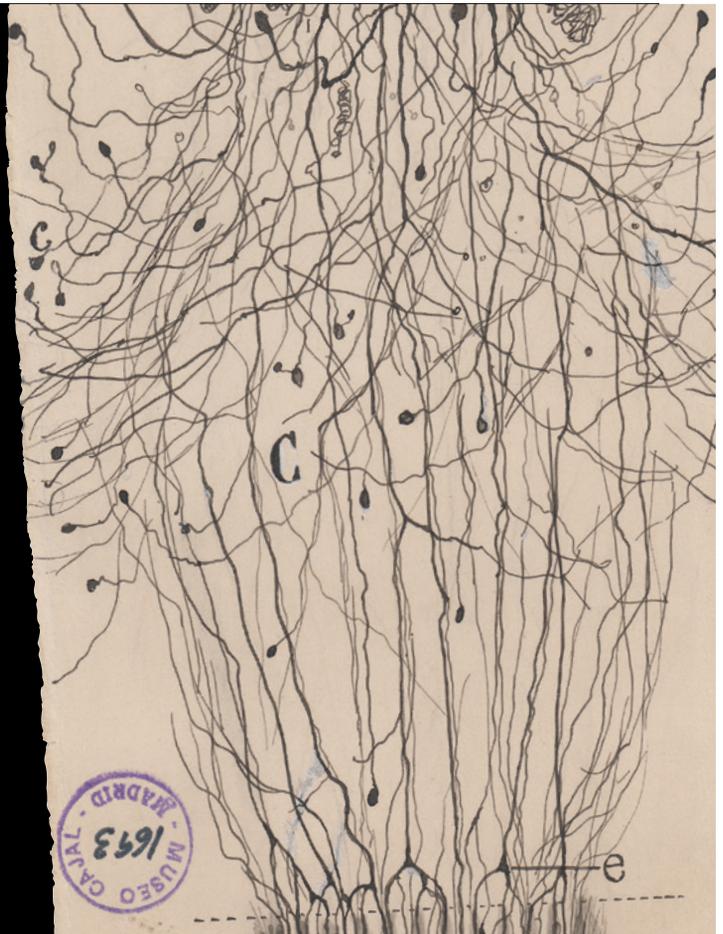


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The Beautiful Brain: The Drawings of Santiago Ramón y Cajal was organized by the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota with the Cajal Institute, Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), Madrid, Spain.



Santiago Ramón y Cajal, *A cut nerve outside the spinal cord* (detail), 1913
ink and pencil on paper, 9 x 3 2/3 in. Courtesy of Instituto Cajal (CSIC).



Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgehn,

Als sei kein Unglück die Nacht geschehn!
Das Unglück geschah nur mir allein!
Die Sonne, sie scheintet allgemein!

Du mußt nicht die Nacht in dir verschränken,
Mußt sie ins ew'ge Licht versenken!
Ein Lämplein verlosch in meinem Zelt!
Heil sei dem Freudenlicht der Welt!

Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen

Ihr sprühtet mir in manchem Augenblicke.
O Augen!
Gleichsam, um voll in einem Blicke
Zu drängen eure ganze Macht zusammen.

Doch ahnt' ich nicht, weil Nebel mich
umschwammen,
Gewoben vom verblendenden Geschicke,
Daß sich der Strahl bereits zur Heimkehr schicke,
Dorthin, von wannen alle Strahlen stammen.

Ihr wolltet mir mit eurem Leuchten sagen:
Wir möchten nah dir bleiben gerne!
Doch ist uns das vom Schicksal abgeschlagen.

Sieh' uns nur an, denn bald sind wir dir ferne!
Was dir nur Augen sind in diesen Tagen:
In künft'gen Nächten sind es dir nur Sterne.

Wenn dein Mütterlein tritt zur Tür herein

Und den Kopf ich drehe, ihr entgegen sehe,
Fällt auf ihr Gesicht erst der Blick mir nicht,
Sondern auf die Stelle, näher nach der Schwelle,
Dort, wo würde dein lieb Gesicht sein,
Wenn du freudenhelle trätest mit herein,
Wie sonst, mein Töchterlein.

Wenn dein Mütterlein tritt zur Tür herein,
Mit der Kerze Schimmer, ist es mir, als immer
Kämst du mit herein, huschtest hinterdrein,
Als wie sonst ins Zimmer!
O du, des Vaters Zelle,
Ach, zu schnell erloschner Freudenschein!

Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen.

Bald werden sie wieder nach Hause gelangen!
Der Tag ist schön! O sei nicht bang!
Sie machen nur einen weiten Gang!

Now the sun wants to rise so brightly,

As if no catastrophe happened during the night.
The tragedy happened to me alone.
The sun, it shines on everyone.

You must not shut up the night inside you,
Must immerse it in eternal light.
A little lamp went out in my tent.
Greetings to the joyous light of the world.

Now I see well why such dark flames

You flashed at me sometimes,
Oh eyes!
Just as if, totally in one instant,
To concentrate all your power.

But I didn't suspect, because fog
surrounded me,
Trapped by blinding fate,
That the ray was already preparing to depart
To that place from where all rays come.

You wanted to tell me with your flashing:
We'd love to be able to stay with you!
But that has been denied us by fate.

Just look at us, for soon we will be far from you.
What are only eyes to you in these days,
In future nights will be only stars.

When your dear mother walks in through the door

and I turn my head to look at her,
my gaze doesn't rest on her at first,
but rather on that place, closer to the threshold,
where your sweet face would be,
if, bright with joy, you entered with her, as you used to do,
my dear daughter.

When your dear mother walks in through the door,
With the candle's glow, I feel as I always did,
That you came in with her, slipped behind into
The room as you always did.
Oh you, ray of happiness in your father's cell,
Too quickly extinguished!

I often think they've only gone out.

Soon they will get back home. The day is fine.
Oh, don't be afraid.
They're only taking a long walk.

Jawohl, sie sind nur ausgegangen
 Und werden jetzt nach Hause gelangen!
 O, sei nicht bang, der Tag is schön!
 Sie machen nur den Gang zu jenen Höh'n!

Sie sind uns nur vorausgegangen
 Und werden nicht wieder nach Hause gelangen!
 Wir holen sie ein auf jenen Höh'n
 Im Sonnenschein!
 Der Tag is schön auf jenen Höh'n!

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus,

Nie hätt' ich gesendet die Kinder hinaus;
 Man hat sie getragen hinaus,
 Ich durfte nichts dazu sagen!

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Saus,
 Nie hätt' ich gelassen die Kinder hinaus,
 Ich fürchtete sie erkranken;
 Das sind nun eitle Gedanken.

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Graus,
 Nie hätt' ich gelassen die Kinder hinaus;
 Ich sorgte, sie stürben morgen,
 Das ist nun nicht zu besorgen.

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Saus,
 in diesem Braus,
 Sie ruh'n als wie in der Mutter Haus,
 Von keinem Sturm erschreckt,
 Von Gottes Hand bedeckt.

Indeed, they've only gone out
 And will soon come back home.
 Oh, don't be afraid; the day is fine.
 They're only walking up to those heights.

They've only gone on before us
 And will soon come back home.
 We'll catch up with them on those heights
 In the sunshine.
 The day is fine upon those heights.

In this weather, in this raging wind,

I should never have sent the children out;
 Someone carried them away,
 I didn't have anything to say about it.

In this weather, in this tempest,
 I should never have let the children go out,
 I was afraid they'd get sick,
 Now that's just a futile thought.

In this weather, in this dreadfulness,
 I should never have let the children go out,
 I was afraid they'd die tomorrow,
 That's not a problem now.

In this weather, in this tempest,
 in this wind,
 They're at peace as if in their mother's house,
 Frightened by no storm,
 Protected by God's hand.

Translation copyright © 2005 by Celia Sgroi from gopera.com/lieder

RODGERS “Soliloquy” from *Carousel*

Even in 1945, eight minutes was a long time for a solo song in a musical—it's about as close to an aria as you'll find on Broadway—but Billy Bigelow is just that excited at the prospect of being a father. It's said that at the first rehearsals, the lyrics sheet for “Soliloquy” was five feet long. This central number from Rodgers and Hammerstein's second musical is, in a way, two different songs: up-tempo and arrogant while Billy assumes he'll have a son; softer, concerned, and protective when he realizes it could be a girl. To say that the song peddles in gender stereotypes is an understatement—“His mother can teach him / The way to behave / But she won't make a sissy out o' him” and “You can have fun with a son / But you gotta be a father to a girl” and “My little girl / Is half again as bright / As girls are meant to be!” It ends with Billy declaring he's willing to steal to provide for his child. But, much like Billy himself, the song has a big heart, even if its words are a little rough around the edges. ■