



College of Music
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MSU Concert Orchestra

Fantastic Music Tales

A Night at the Opera

Katherine Kilburn, conductor
Fátima Corona, conductor
Asieh Mahyar, conductor

Thursday, December 2, 2021
Cobb Great Hall, 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

Procession of the Nobles
from *Mlada* (1889–1890)

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
(1844–1908)

Asieh Mahyar, conductor

Barcarolle (Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour)
from *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (1876–1880)

Jacques Offenbach
(1819–1880)

Melanie Walker, soprano and Ruoxi Bian, mezzo soprano
Fátima Corona, conductor

O mio babbino caro
from *Gianni Schicchi* (1917–1918)

Giacomo Puccini
(1858–1924)

Xiaobin Ma, soprano
Asieh Mahyar, conductor

Flower Duet (Sous le dôme épais)
from *Lakmé* (1881–1882)

Léo Delibes
(1836–1891)

Xiaobin Ma and Melanie Walker, soprano

Háry Janós Suite (1926)
The Fairy Tale Begins
Viennese Musical Clock
Song
The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon
Intermezzo
Entrance of the Emperor and His Court

Zoltán Kodály
(1882–1967)

Katherine Kilburn, conductor

PROGRAM NOTES

Procession of the Nobles from Mlada (1889-1890) is the introduction to act two from Rimsky Korsakov's *Mlada*, a half opera and half ballet based on a complex libretto by Viktor Krylov. The idea of staging an elaborate opera ballet on a subject from Slavic mythology was conceived by director of the Imperial Theater in St. Petersburg during the season of 1869-1870, but not eventualized up until 20 years later by Korsakov. In his *Mlada*, Korsakov fuses Wagnerian opera with ancient Russian legend, resulting in a fantastic story. Princess Mlada, a role that is danced rather than sung, has been murdered by her rival, Voyslava, who sets out to secure the love of Yaromir, Mlada's lover. The story involves magic, evil spirits, and trips into the underworld.

The only familiar music survived from the opera is the Procession of the Nobles, which opens Act II with people dancing in a midsummer festival. The act then continues with the spirit of Mlada intervening between Yaromir and Voyslava. The procession begins with a bursting tune in brass, joined by other instruments. A central section carries a more melodic theme, but is still full of energy and movement. Then the return of the march tune closes the procession with even more energy. It is worth it to mention that Procession of the Nobles is the final movement of the orchestral suite Rimsky-Korsakov made from this opera.

- Asieh Mahyar

Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour from Les Contes d'Hoffmann (1876-1880) (translation: "Beautiful night, oh night of love"), often referred to as the *Barcarolle*, is the piece opening the third act to Offenbach's final opera, set in Venice, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, composed in 1881.

A barcarolle in French, or barcarole in Italian, which is formed from the word "barca" meaning boat, is a traditional folk song sung by Venetian gondoliers, and Offenbach used this style to compose this beautiful piece. This duet, for soprano and mezzo-soprano, is considered the most famous barcarolle ever written and described in the Grove Book of Operas as "one of the world's most popular melodies."

The text, concerning the beauty of the night and of love, is by Jules Barbier. It is sung by the characters Giulietta - the protagonist Hoffmann's love, a Venetian courtesan - and Nicklausse - Hoffmann's poetic muse, in disguise as his faithful male companion.

- Fátima Corona

PROGRAM NOTES

O mio babbino caro is one of the landmarks of the opera *Gianni Schicchi* (1917-1918), a one-act comic opera by the Italian composer Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924), written late in his career. The opera is the third of a set of three one-act operas called *Il trittico* by the composer. Each of the three works—*Il tabarro*, *Suor Angelica*, and *Gianni Schicchi*—is in a contrasting style—the dramatic, the sentimental, and the comic—and although not related to each other, meant to be presented in a single performance.

The last opera, *Gianni Schicchi*, is the most famous of the set. The Italian libretto is by Giovacchino Forzano (1884-1970) and derived from an episode in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The plot is about a greedy family: the cunning character Gianni Schicchi helps the family re-write their dead father's will. Ultimately, it is revealed that he does this to double-cross the family and take the late father's wealth himself.

The aria "*O mio babbino caro*" from the opera is one of Puccini's most famous arias and is a standard of vocal repertoire through which Lauretta pleads to her father, Schicchi, to allow her to marry her true love, Rinuccio. The octave leaps in the melody line together with the traditional glissandos performed by the singer, adds to the dramatic and pleading quality of the song.

- Asieh Mahyar

Flower Duet (Sous le dôme épais) from Lakmé was written between 1881-1882, and Léo Delibes's *Lakmé* follows the tragic romance between Lakmé, daughter of the Brahmin priest Nilakantha, and Gérald, a British officer. Delibes drew inspiration from the short story "Les babouches du Brahmane" by Théodore Pavie and the book *Le Mariage de Loti* by Pierre Loti, both of which detailed the landscape, culture, and customs of India. Thus, *Lakmé* is very much a product of its time, reflecting European fascination with the Far East, the popularity of "exoticism" in 19th century art, the realities of European imperialism, and the novelty of traveling to faraway lands in an age of limited mobility.

The Flower Duet appears in Act 1 of the opera, after Nilakantha, angered over the British occupation's crackdown on religious freedoms, rebels by attending a religious gathering. During his

PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

absence, Lakmé and her servant Millika escape to a nearby river, where they gather exquisite flowers such as jasmine and roses. Regarded as one of the most popular operatic duets, the Flower Duet is recognized by listeners for its appearance in film, TV shows, and commercials.

- Paige Rissman

Háry János Suite - Beginning in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, concepts of nationalism were sweeping the European continent, spurring many composers to take newfound interest in the history, culture, and art of their respective countries. Zoltán Kodály was one such composer who did so with the story of *Háry János*, weaving factual history together with folkloric components typical of his native Hungary.

Inspired by a Hungarian veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, the suite captures the mythical tales created by the real-life Háry János. According to Kodály, Háry János was “a peasant, a veteran soldier who day after day sits in the tavern, spinning yarns about his heroic exploits which are an inextricable mixture of realism and naïveté, of comic humor and pathos. Though superficially he appears to be merely a braggart, essentially he is a national visionary and poet.” Kodály’s work pays tribute to the imagination of Háry János in the form of a four-part opera, which begins with the story of Háry’s romantic escapades in Vienna with Napoleon’s wife, Marie Louise. Incensed by this revelation, Napoleon himself wages war against Háry’s forces in Vienna. Naturally, Háry triumphs over the French single-handedly, rejecting Marie Louise for his childhood sweetheart at the opera’s conclusion.

Artistic expressions of nationalism, exhibited through the usage of Hungarian folk tunes and instruments such as the *cimbalom*, predominate in the *Háry János Suite*. Kodály was fascinated with Hungarian folk music, specifically the music of Gypsies native to the countryside. Together with fellow Hungarian Béla Bartók and armed with an old tape recorder, Kodály collected thousands of songs from the Gypsy population in Hungary.

- Paige Rissman

ARTIST FACULTY BIOS

Katherine Kilburn was a recipient of the Thelma A. Robinson Conducting Award, and has been Assistant Conductor of the National Repertory Orchestra, the El Paso Opera, the Hot Springs Music Festival, the Bowling Green State University Philharmonia, and the St. Louis Symphony Chorus. She was Conductor of the Interlochen Arts Academy Wind Ensemble, Music Director and Conductor of the Greater New Haven Youth and Chamber Orchestras, Conductor of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Youth Repertory Orchestra, and Interim Director of the Vermont Youth Orchestra Association's Philharmonia.

She has conducted the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra, the Lawrence University Symphony Orchestra and Opera Theater, the Green Bay Symphony, Ensemble X, Cleveland Opera Theater, and the Baldwin Wallace Symphony Orchestra.

Ms. Kilburn assisted Sir Simon Rattle for performances of Peter Grimes at the Salzburg Easter Festival, and toured with world-renowned clarinetists David Shifrin and Alexander Fiterstein. She has conducted numerous world and USA-premieres and has conducted in the Cabrillo Music Festival, the MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music Festival, the Philadelphia International Music Festival, and the Sewanee Summer Music Festival.

Ms. Kilburn has been on the faculty of Cornell University, Kent State University, and Baldwin Wallace Conservatory, and is now Assistant Director of Orchestras at Michigan State University.

Ms. Kilburn studied conducting at the Conservatoire Darius Milhaud in France and at the Royal Academy of Music in London. She holds the DMA in Contemporary Music from Bowling Green State University, the MM in Orchestral Conducting from the University of Michigan, the MM Choral Conducting from Indiana University, and the BA in Music and French from Wellesley College.

Born in Mexico, **María Fátima Corona del Toro** began playing violin at the age of eight. In 2010, after graduating with honors in violin performance from the Autonomous University of Baja California, Miss Corona became a professor of music at the Autonomous University of Nayarit.

ARTIST FACULTY BIOS

In 2011, she made her debut as the conductor of the Esperanza Azteca Nayarit Symphony Orchestra, becoming the first female conductor of this project nationwide.

In 2020, Ms. Corona pursued an Artistic Diploma in orchestral conducting at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., with Simeone Tartaglione and Murry Sidlin. She was the assistant conductor and the violin coach at the DC Concert Orchestra Society, and Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras. She has taken masterclasses with Linus Lerner, Benjamin Zander, Carlos Spierer, Ángel Garrido, Alfredo Ibarra, David Harutyunyan, and Kenneth Kiesler.

She has performed in numerous venues across the US, Mexico, Canada, and Ecuador. Currently, Ms. Corona is pursuing a master's degree as a TA at Michigan State University with Octavio Más-Arocas. She is also the assistant conductor of the Opera, M21, Concert, and Symphony ensembles from MSU.

Asieh Mahyar holds a master's degree in orchestral conducting from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Asieh Mahyar is currently pursuing her D.M.A. in orchestral conducting at Michigan State University with Octavio Más-Arocas. Miss Mahyar holds a TA position and serves as Assistant Conductor for Symphony Orchestra, Musique 21 and Concert Orchestra.

Previously, Miss Mahyar served as TA at UMass-Amherst, assistant conductor at UMass SO and co-director of UMass All University Orchestra. She had been appointed Assistant Conductor at Tchaikovsky Music School of Yerevan and assistant conductor at Sorayesh choir. Asieh has attended masterclasses with Miguel Hart-Bedoya, Kenneth Kiesler, Hovhanness Mirzoyan, and Antanina Kalechyts, among others. Her other mentors include Morihiko Nakahara, Kristo Kondakci, Ruben Asatryan, and Loris Tjecknavorian.

STUDENT BIOS

Mezzo-soprano **Ruoxi Bian** from China is a first-year DMA student at Michigan State University under the tutelage of Professor Jane Bunnell. Ms. Bian's awards include first prize in the San Jose International Performance and Visual Arts Festival, first prize in Sino-Singapore International Music Festival, and third prize in the Beijing Piano Competition. Previous credits include opera scenes in the title role of *Carmen*, *La Clemenza di Tito* (Sesto), and *Norma* (Adalgisa).

Soprano **Melanie Walker** is thrilled to be performing with the MSU Concert Orchestra. She recently appeared in the MSU Opera Theatre's presentation of *Serenade to Music*. Operatic roles include *Infermiera* (*Suor Angelica*) and *Girl 2/Actor 2* (*ANON*). A champion of contemporary music, she has sung the world premieres of *Rekindle* by Christopher Kaminski, *Les Roses de Saadi* by Philip Lasser, *I wanna fly* by Duncan Peterson-Jones, and participated in the North American premiere of *Elegy* by Gabrielle Goliath. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts at Michigan State University in the studio of Jane Bunnell.

Xiaobin Ma is a Chinese soprano. Xiaobin completed her BA degree and her first vocal Master's degree in Shandong University of Arts, China. Opera roles include Susana, Masetta, and Elvira. She was the winner of The Chinese Peafowl Award in 2014, Opera Concorso in 2014, and the Hong Kong International Vocal Open Competition in 2015. She attended the International Vocal Arts Institute summer program in 2016. She graduated with her second Vocal Master's degree from Mannes School of Music with Amy Burton in 2019. She is currently pursuing a DMA at Michigan State University with Richard Fracker.

PERSONNEL

Violin I

*Harvey Lee
Eliza Guernsey
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*Ethan Biederman
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Charles Grace
Matthew Husted
Brody Keeley
David O'Donnell
Michael Peebles

Tuba

Michael Kirby

Harp

Kevin Cawley

Piano/Cimbalom/Celeste

Anqi Huang
Asieh Mahyar

Percussion

Marisa Balamucki
Angel Hernandez
Catherine Lee
Ben Mapes
Evan Moore
Noah Mallett
Gina Moy

TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour (Barcarolle)

Lyrics by Jules Barbier

Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour
Souris à nos ivresses
Nuit plus douce que le jour
Ô, belle nuit d'amour!
Le temps fuit et sans retour
Emporte nos tendresses
Loin de cet heureux séjour
Le temps fuit sans retour
Zéphyr embasés
Versez-nous vos caresses
Zéphyr embasés
Donnez-nous vos baisers!
Vos baisers! Vos baisers! Ah!
Belle nuit, ô, nuit d'amour
Souris à nos ivresses
Nuit plus douce que le jour,
Ô, belle nuit d'amour!
Ah! souris à nos ivresses!
Nuit d'amour, ô, nuit d'amour!
Ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah!

Lovely night, oh, night of love
Smile upon our joys!
Night much sweeter than the day
Oh beautiful night of love!
Time flies by, and carries away
Our tender caresses for ever!
Time flies far from this happy oasis
And does not return
Burning zephyrs
Embrace us with your caresses!
Burning zephyrs
Give us your kisses!
Your kisses! Your kisses! Ah!
Lovely night, oh, night of love
Smile upon our joys!
Night much sweeter than the day
Oh, beautiful night of love!
Ah! Smile upon our joys!
Night of love, oh, night of love!
Ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah!

O mio babbino caro

Original lyrics in Italian

Translation by Asieh Mahyar

O mio babbino caro
Mi piace, è bello, bello
Vo' andare in Porta Rossa
A comperar l'anello!
Sì, sì, ci voglio andare!
E se l'amassi indarno,
Andrei sul Ponte Vecchio,
Ma per buttarmi in Arno!
Mi struggo e mi tormento!
O Dio, vorrei morir!
Babbo, pietà, pietà!
Babbo, pietà, pietà!

Oh my dear papa
I like him, he is so handsome.
I want to go to Porta Rossa
To buy the ring!
Yes, yes, I want to go there!
And if my love were in vain,
I would go to the Ponte Vecchio
And throw myself in the Arno!
I am pining, I am tormented!
Oh God, I would want to die!
Father, have mercy, have mercy!
Father, have mercy, have mercy!

Flower Duet

Original lyrics in French
by Edmond Gondinet

LAKMÉ

Viens, Mallika, les lianes en fleurs
Jettent déjà leur ombre
Sur le ruisseau sacré qui coule, calme et
sombre,
Eveillé par le chant des oiseaux
Tapageurs!

MALLIKA

Oh! maîtresse,
C'est l'heure ou je te vois sourire,
L'heure bénie où je puis lire
dans le c'ur toujours fermé de Lakmé!

LAKMÉ [in duet with Mallika, below]

Dôme épais le jasmin,
A la rose s'assemble,
Rive en fleurs frais matin,
Nous appellent ensemble.
Ah! glissons en suivant
Le courant fuyant:
Dans l'on de frémissante,
D'une main nonchalante,

Gagnons le bord,
Où l'oiseau chante, l'oiseau, l'oiseau
chante.
Dôme épais, blanc jasmin,
Nous appellent ensemble!

MALLIKA

Sous le dôme épais, où le blanc jasmin

A la rose s'assemble,
Sur la rive en fleurs riant au matin,
Viens, descendons ensemble.
Doucement glissons
De son flot charmant
Suivons le courant fuyant:
Dans l'on de frémissante,
D'une main nonchalante,
Viens, gagnons le bord,
Où la source dort
Et l'oiseau, l'oiseau chante.
Sous le dôme épais,
Sous le blanc jasmin,
Ah! descendons ensemble!

English translation by Joel Sattler

LAKMÉ:

Look Mallika! Lianes are in bloom
Casting downward their shadows
Over the sacred stream that flows calm
and somber
Awakened by the sound of the song-
happy birds!

MALLIKA:

Oh dear mistress!
It's time at last I see you smiling
The time has come and I am reading
What was closed up in the heart of
Lakme!

LAKMÉ [in duet with Mallika, below]

Dome canopy sweet jasmine
All the roses forever
Flowers in the morn freshly born
Call us to come together
Ah glide along and sing along
The current so strong
The sun so hot the water is shimmering
Hand skimming the surface
nonchalantly
Cutting through the edge
While birds are singing singing sing
enchanted
Dome canopy white jasmine
Call us to come together

MALLIKA [in duet with Lakme, above]:

Under dome canopy where the white
jasmine
All the roses forever
River flowers in the morn freshly born
Let us both go down together
Gently we glide on and we float along
Follow the current so strong
The sun so hot the water is shimmering
Hand skimming the surface nonchalantly
Come let us reach the edge
Where the spring sleeps
And birds singing, sing enchanted
Under dome canopy where the white
jasmine
Let us go down together

LAKMÉ

Mais, je ne sais quelle crainte subite,
S'empare de moi,
Quand mon père va seul à leur ville
maudite;
Je tremble, je tremble d'effroi!

MALLIKA

Pourquoi le Dieu Ganeça le protège,
Jusqu'à l'étang où s'ébattent joyeux
Les cygnes aux ailes de neige,
Allons cueillir les lotus bleus.

LAKMÉ

Oui, près des cygnes aux ailes de neige,

Allons cueillir les lotus bleus.

LAKMÉ [in duet with Mallika, below]

Dôme épais le jasmin,
A la rose s'assemble,
Rive en fleurs frais matin,
Nous appellent ensemble.
Ah! glissons en suivant
Le courant fuyant:
Dans l'on de frémissante,
D'une main nonchalante,
Gagnons le bord,
Où l'oiseau chante, l'oiseau, l'oiseau
chante.
Dôme épais, blanc jasmin,
Nous appellent ensemble!

MALLIKA

Sous le dôme épais, où le blanc jasmin

A la rose s'assemble,
Sur la rive en fleurs riant au matin,
Viens, descendons ensemble.
Doucement glissons
Suivons le courant fuyant:
Dans l'on de frémissante,
D'une main nonchalante,

Viens, gagnons le bord,
Où la source dort
Et l'oiseau, l'oiseau chante.
Sous le dôme épais, Sous le blanc jasmin,

Ah! descendons ensemble!

LAKME:

I, don't know what overcame me
To fill my heart full of fear
When my father goes down alone to the
doomed city
I tremble, I tremble, my dear

MALLIKA:

Ganesha will watch over his protege
Up til the pond where the merry do play
With wings of snow swans are swimming
Come let us pick the lotus blue

LAKME:

Oh yes, let's go where white swans are
swimming
And let us pick the lotus blue

LAKMÉ [in duet with Mallika, below]

Dome canopy sweet jasmine
All the roses forever
Flowers in the morn freshly born
Call us to come together
Ah glide along and sing along
The current so strong
The sun so hot the water is shimmering
Hand skimming the surface nonchalantly
Cutting through the edge
While birds are singing singing sing
enchanted
Dome canopy white jasmine
Call us to come together
Please

MALLIKA [in duet with Lakme, above]:

Under dome canopy where the white
jasmine
All the roses forever
River flowers in the morn freshly born
Let us both go down together
Gently we glide on and we float along
Follow the current so strong
The sun so hot the water is shimmering
Hand skimming the surface
nonchalantly
Come let us reach the edge
Where the spring sleeps
And birds singing, sing enchanted
Under dome canopy where the white
jasmine
Let us go down together

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- **Andrea L. Wulf** (Vox Humana)

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Sponsorships are available at \$1,000, \$2,500, and \$5,000. Sponsors will receive recognition in the form of event publicity, promotions, programs, and through online recognition. For information about event sponsorships and giving to the college, please call (517) 353-9872 or e-mail music.giving@msu.edu.

UPCOMING EVENTS

12/4 Saturday

Showcase Series

Songs of Comfort and Joy

MSU Choral Union, University Chorale, State Singers and Symphony
Orchestra

8:00 p.m., Cobb Great Hall -

*tickets available exclusively through Wharton Center

12/6 Monday

Joanne and Bill Church West Circle Series

Bach in the USA

7:30 p.m., Fairchild Theatre \$\$

12/7 Tuesday

Dorothy DeLay Masterclass Series

Vadim Gluzman, violin

3:00 p.m., Cook Recital Hall, free

12/7 Tuesday

Viridis and Singing Spartans

7:30 p.m., Fairchild Theatre \$

12/10 Friday

Mosaic, Chamber Choir, and Campus Choir

8:00 p.m., Fairchild Theatre \$

12/11 Saturday

MSUFCU Showcase Series

A Jazzy Little Christmas

8:00 p.m., Fairchild Theatre \$\$\$

12/12 Sunday

MSU Chamber Music Day: Sensory Friendly Spartan Concert

3:00 p.m., Fairchild Theatre, free

12/12 Sunday

Chamber Music Showcase

7:00 p.m., Fairchild Theatre \$

TICKET PRICES

\$ \$12 Adults, \$10 Seniors (age 60 and older), Students with ID and anyone under age 18 are free but require a ticket for admission.

\$\$ \$17 Adults, \$15 Seniors, \$7 Students with ID and anyone under age 18.

\$\$\$ \$22 Adults, \$20 Seniors, \$12 Students and those under age 18.

Please note: *All events scheduled in Murray Hall are general admission seating.*