



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
Music and Theatre Programs

Hayley Shoemaker, mezzo-soprano
Irena Ravitskaya, piano

A Woman's Life and Love

February 14, 2025 • 7:30 pm • Palmer Recital Hall

-Program-

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 mir verwundert an
- VII. An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust
- VIII. Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan

-Intermission-

Penelope John Musto
(b. 1954)

- I. Prologue
- II. Penelope's Lament
- III. Weaving Song
- IV. Epithalamium
- V. The Suitors
- VI. Odyssey
- VII. Epilogue: Penelope's Song

Program Notes and Translations

Tonight's program features works that explore love through eyes of two vastly different female characters. In *Frauenliebe und Leben*, the listener hears the protagonist's perspective as she moves through life alongside her husband, from first love to his death in the final song. Her story centers on marriage, motherhood, and devotion to family. In *Penelope* (based on the character from Homer's *Odyssey*), by contrast, the protagonist lives largely in her husband's absence, sustained by endurance, independence, and the eventual acceptance of her circumstances.

Each composer's distinct compositional style clearly depicts the unique experiences of these women. Schumann's writing is reflective of the romantic period: expressive harmonies, vivid text painting, and memorable melodic lines. Throughout the cycle, piano and voice function as equal partners, a defining hallmark of Schumann's Lieder. The songs of *Frauenliebe und Leben* form an intimate psychological portrait of love and devotion. By contrast, Musto reveals the inner workings of Penelope's mind through disjunct melodic lines, ambiguous tonalities, and complex ostinato figures, exploring not only her love for Odysseus but also the grief, anger, and daydreams that shape her experience during his long absence.

I am immensely grateful to Dr. Irena Ravitskaya for her collaboration in this performance. Both works demand a high level of technical mastery and musical sensitivity, and I cannot thank her enough for her generosity and artistry in taking on repertoire that calls for a pianist of her virtuosity.

Frauenliebe und Leben

Robert Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Op. 42, consists of eight Lieder for voice and piano, all set to poems by Adelbert von Chamisso. The cycle was composed in 1840, often referred to as Schumann's *Liederjahr* (year of song), during which he wrote more than 200 songs. This extraordinary outpouring was fueled in large part by his love for his future wife, Clara Wieck, herself an exceptional pianist and composer. As noted previously, Schumann treats the voice and piano as equal partners, with the piano frequently offering emotional insight and clarifying the deeper meaning of the poetry and vocal line. This is especially evident in the return of the opening melody at the end of the cycle, as it depicts the protagonist's profound grief as she relives the moment of first seeing her husband.

I. Seit ich ihn gesehen

translations by Richard Stokes

Seit ich ihn gesehen
Glaub ich blind zu sein;
Wo ich hin nur blicke,
Seh ich ihn allein;
Wie im wachen Traume
Schwebt sein Bild mir vor,
Taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel,
Heller nur empor.
Sonst ist licht- und farblos
Alles um mich her,
Nach der Schwestern Spiele
Nicht begehrt ich mehr,
Möchte lieber weinen,
Still im Kämmerlein;
Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub ich blind zu sein.

Since first seeing him,
I think I am blind,
Wherever I look,
Him only I see;
As in a waking dream
His image hovers before me,
Rising out of deepest darkness
Ever more brightly.
All else is dark and pale
Around me,
My sisters' games
I no more long to share,
I would rather weep
Quietly in my room;
Since first seeing him,
I think I am blind.

II. Er der Herrlichste von allen

Er, der Herrlichste von allen,
Wie so milde, wie so gut!
Holde Lippen, klares Auge,
Heller Sinn und fester Mut.
So wie dort in blauer Tiefe,
Hell und herrlich, jener Stern,
Also er an meinem Himmel,
Hell und herrlich, hehr und fern.
Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen;
Nur betrachten deinen Schein,
Nur in Demut ihn betrachten,
Selig nur und traurig sein!
Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,
Deinem Glücke nur geweiht;
Darfst mich niedre Magd nicht kennen,
Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!
Nur die Würdigste von allen
Darf beglücken deine Wahl,
Und ich will die Hohe segnen,
Viele tausendmal.
Will mich freuen dann und weinen,
Selig, selig bin ich dann;
Sollte mir das Herz auch brechen,
Brich, o Herz, was liegt daran?

He, the most wonderful of all,
How gentle and loving he is!
Sweet lips, bright eyes,
A clear mind and firm resolve.
Just as there in the deep-blue distance
That star gleams bright and brilliant,
So does he shine in my sky,
Bright and brilliant, distant and sublime.
Wander, wander on your way,
Just to gaze on your radiance,
Just to gaze on in humility,
To be but blissful and sad!
Do not heed my silent prayer,
Uttered for your happiness alone,
You shall never know me, lowly as I am,
You noble star of splendor!
Only the worthiest woman of all
May your choice elate,
And I shall bless that exalted one
Many thousands of times.
Then shall I rejoice and weep,
Blissful, blissful shall I be,
Even if my heart should break,
Break, O heart, what does it matter?

III. Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben,
Es hat ein Traum mich berückt;
Wie hätt er doch unter allen
Mich Arme erhöht und beglückt?
Mir war's, er habe gesprochen:
"Ich bin auf ewig dein"—
Mir war's—ich träume noch immer,
Es kann ja nimmer so sein.
O lass im Traume mich sterben,
Gewieget an seiner Brust,
Den seligen Tod mich schlürfen
In Tränen unendlicher Lust.

I cannot grasp it, believe it,
A dream has beguiled me;
How, from all women, could he
Have exalted and favored poor me?
He said, I thought,
'I am yours forever',
I was, I thought, still dreaming,
After all, it can never be.
O let me, dreaming, die,
Cradled on his breast;
Let me savor blissful death
In tears of endless joy.

IV. Du Ring an meinem Finger

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringelein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.
Ich hatt ihn ausgeträumet,
Der Kindheit friedlich schönen Traum,
Ich fand allein mich, verloren
Im öden, unendlichen Raum.
Du Ring an meinem Finger
Da hast du mich erst belehrt,
Hast meinem Blick erschlossen
Des Lebens unendlichen, tiefen Wert.
Ich will ihm dienen, ihm leben,
Ihm angehören ganz,
Hin selber mich geben und finden
Verklärt mich in seinem Glanz.
Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringelein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

You ring on my finger,
My golden little ring,
I press you devoutly to my lips,
To my heart.
I had finished dreaming
Childhood's peaceful dream,
I found myself alone, forlorn
In boundless desolation.
You ring on my finger,
You first taught me,
Opened my eyes
To life's deep eternal worth.
I shall serve him, live for him,
Belong to him wholly,
Yield to him and find
Myself transfigured in his light.
You ring on my finger,
My golden little ring,
I press you devoutly to my lips,
To my heart.

V. Helft mir, ihr Schwestern

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
Freundlich mich schmücken,
Dient der Glücklichen heute mir,
Windet geschäftig
Mir um die Stirne
Noch der blühenden Myrte Zier.
Als ich befriedigt,
Freudigen Herzens,
Sonst dem Geliebten im Arme lag,
Immer noch rief er,
Sehnsucht im Herzen,

Help me, my sisters,
With my bridal attire,
Serve me today in my joy,
Busily braid
About my brow
The wreath of blossoming myrtle.
When with contentment
And joy in my heart
I lay in my beloved's arms,
He still called,
With longing heart,

Ungeduldig den heutigen Tag.
Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
Helft mir verscheuchen
Eine törichte Bangigkeit,
Dass ich mit klarem
Aug ihn empfang,
Ihn, die Quelle der Freudigkeit.
Bist, mein Geliebter,
Du mir erschienen,
Giebst du mir, Sonne, deinen Schein?
Lass mich in Andacht,
Lass mich in Demut,
Lass mich verneigen dem Herren mein.
Streuet ihm, Schwestern,
Streuet ihm Blumen,
Bringet ihm knospende Rosen dar,
Aber euch, Schwestern,
Grüss ich mit Wehmut,
Freudig scheidend aus eurer Schar.

VI. Süßer Freund, du blickest

Süsser Freund, du blickest
Mich verwundert an,
Kannst es nicht begreifen,
Wie ich weinen kann;
Lass der feuchten Perlen
Ungewohnte Zier
Freudig hell erzittern
In dem Auge mir!
Wie so bang mein Busen,
Wie so wonnevoll!
Wüsst ich nur mit Worten,
Wie ich's sagen soll;
Komm und birg dein Antlitz
Hier an meiner Brust,
Will in's Ohr dir flüstern
Alle meine Lust.
Weisst du nun die Tränen,
Die ich weinen kann,
Sollst du nicht sie sehen,
Du geliebter Mann?
Bleib an meinem Herzen,
Fühle dessen Schlag,
Dass ich fest und fester
Nur dich drücken mag.
Hier an meinem Bette
Hat die Wiege Raum,
Wo sie still verberge
Meinen holden Traum;
Kommen wird der Morgen,
Wo der Traum erwacht,
Und daraus dein Bildnis
Mir entgegen lacht.

Impatiently for this day.
Help me, my sisters,
Help me banish
A foolish fearfulness;
So that I with bright eyes
May receive him,
The source of all my joy.
Have you, my love,
Really entered my life,
Do you, O sun, give me your glow?
Let me in reverence,
Let me in humility
Bow before my lord.
Scatter flowers, O sisters,
Scatter flowers before him,
Bring him budding roses.
But you, sisters,
I greet with sadness,
As I joyfully take leave of you

Sweet friend, you look
At me in wonder,
You cannot understand
How I can weep;
Let the unfamiliar beauty
Of these moist pearls
Tremble joyfully bright
In my eyes!
How anxious my heart is,
How full of bliss!
If only I knew
How to say it in words;
Come and hide your face
Here against my breast,
For me to whisper you
All my joy.
Do you now understand the tears
That I can weep,
Should you not see them,
Beloved husband?
Stay by my heart,
Feel how it beats,
That I may press you
Closer and closer.
Here by my bed
There is room for the cradle,
Silently hiding
My blissful dream;
The morning shall come
When the dream awakens,
And your likeness
Laughs up at me.

VII. An meinem Herzen, an meinem Brust

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!
Das Glück ist die Liebe, die Lieb ist das Glück,
Ich hab's gesagt und nehm's nicht zurück.
Hab überschwenglich mich geschätzt,
Bin übergücklich aber jetzt.
Nur die da säugt, nur die da liebt
Das Kind, dem sie die Nahrung giebt;
Nur eine Mutter weiss allein,
Was lieben heisst und glücklich sein.
O, wie bedaur' ich doch den Mann,
Der Mutterglück nicht fühlen kann!
Du lieber, lieber Engel, Du
Du schauest mich an und lächelst dazu!
An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,
Du mein Wonne, du meine Lust!

On my heart, at my breast,
You my delight, my joy!
Happiness is love, love is happiness,
I've always said and say so still.
I thought myself rapturous,
But now am delirious with joy.
Only she who suckles, only she who loves
The child that she nourishes;
Only a mother knows
What it means to love and be happy.
Ah, how I pity the man
Who cannot feel a mother's bliss!
You dear, dear angel, you,
You look at me and you smile!
On my heart, at my breast
You my delight, my joy!

VIII. Nun has du mir den ersten Schmerz getan

Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan,
Der aber traf.
Du schläfst, du harter, unbarmherz'ger Mann,
Den Todesschlaf.
Es blicket die Verlassne vor sich hin,
Die Welt ist leer.
Geliebet hab ich und gelebt, ich bin
Nicht lebend mehr.
Ich zieh mich in mein Innres still zurück,
Der Schleier fällt,
Da hab ich dich und mein verlornes Glück,
Du meine Welt!

Now you have caused me my first pain,
But it struck hard,
You sleep, you harsh and pitiless man,
The sleep of death.
The deserted one stares ahead,
The world is void.
I have loved and I have lived,
And now my life is done.
Silently I withdraw into myself,
The veil falls,
There I have you and my lost happiness,
You, my world!

Penelope

This song cycle, composed in 2000 by John Musto, sets a text drawn from Denise Lanctot's expansive meditation on wandering. Here, Odysseus's physical travels are juxtaposed with Penelope's imaginative wanderings as she undertakes a turbulent emotional journey and ultimately constructs her self-sufficient inner world. The opening song introduces motives that recur throughout the cycle, beginning with a twelve-tone ostinato accompanying Penelope as she presents herself and her situation, followed by what Musto calls the "weaving motive." This weaving theme permeates the work and appears in varied musical styles—most notably in "Penelope's Lament", which draws on blues idioms, and in "Epilogue: Penelope's Song", which leans into a country-western style. In "The Suitors," the motive is deliberately unraveled, with singer and pianist intentionally falling out of sync. In this way, the shifting treatment of the weaving motive mirrors Penelope's inner life, guiding the listener through states of longing, disruption, and resolution.

1. Prologue

From the wanderer's cup I drink
Me, Penelope
The ever-patient wife.
Traveling in my mind
Outwitting place and time
Never far behind
The world's greatest wanderer
My husband,
Ulysses.
Appearances can deceive:
As I sit here and I weave
And unweave this coat.
As I sit here and I spin
Then unspin this golden thread.
They all think I'm mad.
"She's gone off her head!"
As you did when we parted
When I smiled at you and said:
Absence is a lack of imagination.
Come, dearest husband,
It's time for bed.

2. Penelope's Lament

Life is hell when you're gone!
Pious vultures circle and descend Ladies in waiting
Betray and befriend.
Crones and crows
Wearing widow black
Gleefully sympathetic
Swoop round to attack.
Life is hell when you're gone!
I'm pecked to death with questions:
Where is Ulysses?
How is Ulysses?
Is he ever coming back?
Where is Ulysses?
How is Ulysses?
Did he send a single postcard:
"Wishing you were here?"
(Where is Ulysses?)
That no good hero husband!
(Where is Ulysses?)
Your bed is getting cold!
Your skin is getting dry!
Your suitors are fed up!
Yet you sit idly by!

We really didn't mean to upset you,
Did we upset you, Penny dear?
Let him go from your life
For he's taken to wife
A map, a sail, his favorite shoes.
Helen of Troy, not you, he pursues.

3. Weaving Song
Loneliness unravels
Distance disappears
When I weave this coat for you, Ulysses.
I wander as I weave and weave
And weave and wander more
My journey, love, will never end
'Til you wander through my door.
Imagining this string
An endless silken strand
Cleaves my heart to yours
In some far and foreign land.
A road is like a thread
A filament of flight.
I'm a high-wire wanderer
On the edge of sheer delight.
Suddenly you awake
A sense that I am there:
A breath, a thread, a whisper,
A strand of golden hair.

4. Epithalamium

In my father's orchard
Beneath a lilac tree
Love unfurle
When you pulled my ribbon free.
My braid came undone
Buttons parted ways
The fire of your promises
Set my skin ablaze.
I drank your thirsty kisses
Full-bodied wine
Imagining with every sip
You'd be forever mine.
And when it was over
You whispered in my ear
"You are all my world
Whether far or near."

5. The Suitors

I can see from my balcony
The meddlers' tête-à-tête
Like a hive of angry hornets
In a furious minuet.
Their droning gossip
Stings the very air
Filling my ears
With venomous despair.
Penelope has come undone
Unspun like so much thread.
Her mind's an empty bobbin
Whirling in an empty head.
Where do you suppose she goes in her mind?

6. Odyssey

On the flap of a lapel I fly.
Wind-swept coasts
Sighing hills
Deserts long abandoned by the sea.
Through a buttonhole I dive.
Sargasso green
Azure Aegean
Setting sail with half a sleeve.
My compass?
A thimble of stars
Stitched in a seamless sky.
I nap on a sun-baked rock.
Swim with dolphin and seal
Rip out a less-than-perfect seam.
Highjack a cloud.
(Navigate the Straits
Of Woe and Jealousy)
I slip into a pocket
An olive grove
Where we once kissed.
Snow begins to fall.
I quickly finish off a hem
The day's work done
Through the needle's eye
In a field of stones
A young girl sings a song of me
For you:

7. Epilogue: Penelope's Song

Don't hurry home, love
Don't hurry home.
I'm not finished
Spinning and unspinning
Wings of spun gold, love
Stories never told, love
Don't hurry home, love
Don't hurry home.
While you're away
I invent and re-invent
The world.
Don't hurry home, love
Don't hurry home.
I'm not finished
Spinning and unspinning
Steeds of pure light, love
Riding through the night, love
Don't hurry home, love
Don't hurry home.
Depart to alight
And alight to depart
I'm in love with beginnings.
Landing and leaving
Weaving unweaving
This nomad's heart
Needs to start
Love's journey again.
Don't hurry home, love.
Don't hurry home.
While you're away
I will travel the earth's Endless end.

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