

The D'Angelo Department of Music
at
Mercyhurst University

Presents

The
Senior Recital
of

Alyssa Downey, soprano
In Collaboration with Linda Peters, piano
Featuring Shane Dexter, tenor

“Thank you for the Music”
Walker Recital Hall
Sunday, April 19, 2026
5:00pm



MERCYHURST
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D'ANGELO DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

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PROGRAM

The Girl in 14G

Jeanine Tesori
(b. 1961)

Three Browning Songs

Amy Marcy-Cheney Beach
(1867-1944)

I. The Year's at the Spring

II. Ah, Love But a Day!

III. I Send my Heart up to Thee

**Please hold applause till the end*

La vie en rose

Louiguy
(1916-1991)

“O mio babbino caro”

from *Gianni Schicchi*

Giacomo Puccini
(1858-1924)

Via Dolorosa

Billy Sprague (b. 1952)
Niles Borop (b. 1956)

Pie Jesu

from *Requiem*

Andrew Lloyd Webber
(b. 1948)

Featuring Shane Dexter, tenor

Edelweiss

from *The Sound of Music!*

Richard Rodgers (1902-1979)
Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960)

Thank you for the Music

from *Mama Mia!*

Benny Anderson
(b. 1946)

Never Enough

from *The Greatest Showman*

Benj Pasek (b. 1985)
Justin Paul (b. 1985)

The use of recording devices is strictly prohibited. Please turn off and stow all electronic devices. Thank you.

NOTES

Jeanine Tesori, born on November 10, 1961, is an American musical theatre composer, arranger, pianist, and conductor. Jeanine Tesori has been nominated three times for Tony Awards for her Broadway works: *Twelfth Night* (1998), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (2002), and *Caroline, or Change* (2004). Not only is she known and recognized for her on stage works she also has composed several songs for various films including *The Emperor's New Groove 2: Kronk's New Groove* (2005), *Wrestling with Angels* (2006), *Shrek the Third* (2007), and three animated Disney DVDs (*Mulan II*, *Lilo and Stitch II*, *The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning*). Tesori played the piano from the age of three and went on to study at Barnard College; however, not originally for a music degree. Tesori went to Barnard in pursuit of a medical degree, later changing her degree to music and jumpstarting her career as a composer.

The Girl in 14G was written for the American actress Kristen Chenoweth and featured on her 2001 debut CD, *Let Yourself Go*. This song is based on Chenoweth's personal experience when she first moved to New York City, and how she couldn't sleep due to the constant noise. *The Girl in 14G* follows the story of a girl moving into an apartment and discovering that the floor below her is a noisy opera singer, and living above a jazz singer. The girl in this piece is a quiet and reserved character who, towards the end of the song, discovers her voice by standing up for herself amidst the noise.

This work is an extremely complex piece, composed in F major at an allegro tempo of 132 beats per minute, and spans a high soprano range from G3 to D6, showcasing the performer's agility through coloratura runs and stylistic shifts. Throughout the piece, one hears elements from the opera *Tristan und Isolde*, the aria *Queen of the Night* from *The Magic Flute*, as well as *Swan Lake*. This piece also contains improvised scatting in the style of Ella Fitzgerald. On top of the complexity of the music, the singer must also demonstrate three different characters in one. This work requires advanced vocal and acting abilities, but when put together is an impressive display of talent.

Amy Marcy-Cheney Beach (1867-1944) was the first American woman to fully achieve vast recognition as a composer of large-scale orchestra works. The most well-known works that she gained recognition from are *Symphony, op. 32*; *Violin Sonata*; *Piano Concerto, op. 45*. Amy Beach was not only a composer and performer but also assumed many leadership roles. She was actively involved with advancing the cause of American women composers as well as both the Music Teachers National Association and the Music Educators National Conference.

These three works are set to poems written by Robert Browning (1812-1899) and are referred to as the Three Browning Songs. *The Year's at the Spring* follows the character of a girl who is basking in the beauty of spring and the world around her. As stated in the song "God is in his heaven; the hillside's dew pearled", life is abundant and rich. The words for this work come specifically from Robert Browning's poem *Pippa Passes*. The song is written in B♭ Major, with a vocal range of F4 to F5. In the accompaniment, one can hear the bubbling excitement of continuous piano triplets that represent the tone and joy of the changing seasons.

Ah, Love But a Day describes the struggles of a wife in her marriage. More specifically, the changes one goes through in life, and the fear that as the world changes, their love will change too. The musicality and tone of this piece are a drastic change from the previous work, including more chromaticism and harmonic restlessness. This song is written in F minor, with a vocal range spanning C4 to A♭5. In the second half of the song, Beach shifts the piece to its parallel key (F major rather than F minor), and the accompaniment shifts to its original texture to a triplet eighth-note pattern. The same vocal melody returns, but underneath it, the harmonic world has changed, a beautiful representation of the lyrics.

I Send my Heart up to Thee comes from the poem "In a Gondola" from Browning's third *Bells and Pomegranates* collection. In this poem, the narrator sings to his lover in a gondola. Beach uses Browning's poems but gives the text new meaning when all three pieces are together, painting an intricate love story. The feeling of spring and all being right in the world, then with the seasons changing, worry arises that love will change too, and finally, sending their heart up to their love, whether that is to heaven or wherever they may be. This piece starts in 9/8 in D-flat major but modulates back and forth to E major. Beach uses these modulations to emphasize the lyrics, transitioning between sections and adding extra flair in the pivotal moments of the piece. There is a common theme of duple rhythms in the vocal line, creating a sort of contrast between the vocal and piano line that forces the singer to be incredibly attentive. All together Beach brings Robert Browning's poems to life as they have never been seen before, with text painting and intricate harmonies and modulations, every note and beat giving purposeful meaning to the piece.

Louis Guglielmi (1916-1991), also known as Louiguy, was a 20th-century Spanish-born French composer of Italian descent. He was born in Barcelona and studied at the Conservatoire de Paris. Louiguy was responsible for composing almost three dozen film scores. His most famous composition is that of *La vie en rose*. While Guglielmi is responsible for the music in *La vie en rose*, Edith Piaf was the master behind its enchanting lyrics, as well as the voice behind the iconic piece.

Edith Piaf (1915-1963) was a French singer and actress. Piaf lived an incredibly difficult life, starting with the loss of her mother and later living on the streets with her father, who was a street performer. After years of struggle, her life took a drastic turn when she met Louis Leplee, who decided to invest in her future. Her name was changed from Edith Gassion to “La Môme Piaf” (Kid Sparrow). With him, she began singing in cafés and cabarets, quickly gaining recognition and fame. Her most famous piece, of course is *La vie en rose*.

La vie en rose (To see life in rose/pink) was written in 1945 and released in 1947. The meaning of this piece is like the popular phrase “to see life through rose colored glasses.” Or in other words, seeing the beauty in life and finding joy and freedom in everything, and especially in the one you love. This song gained massive popularity, not only in France but all over the world. So much popularity that Piaf decided to record an English version. With this English recording, several famous American artists have done covers, including Grace Jones, Lady Gaga, Michel Bubl , and Louis Armstrong. This piece is in 3/4, giving that waltz-like feel, and has a beautiful, flowing melodic line. The rise and fall of the phrases perfectly match the romantic qualities of the lyrics.

La Vie en rose
Des yeux qui font baisser les
miens
Un rire qui se perd sur sa bouche
Voil  le portrait sans retouches
De l’homme auquel j’appartiens

Eyes that make mine droop
A laugh that gets lost on his
mouth
Here is the portrait without
retouching
Of the man to whom I belong

Quand il me prend dans ses bras
Il me parle tout bas
Je vois la vie en rose

When he takes me in his arms
He speaks to me softly
I see life in pink

Il me dit des mots d’amour
Des mots de tous les jours
Et  a me fait quelque chose

He tells me words of love
Words of everyday life
And it does something to me

Il est entr  dans mon c ur
Une part de bonheur
Dont je connais la cause

He’s entered my heart
A piece of happiness
I know the cause

C’est lui pour moi, moi pour lui da
ns la vie
Il me l’a dit, l’a jur  pour la vie
Et d s que je l’aper ois
Alors je sens en moi
Mon c ur qui bat

It’s him for me, me for
him in life
He told me, he swore it for life
And as soon as I see him
Then I feel inside me
My heart beating

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) came from a long line of musicians who studied at Bologna and composed for church and, in some cases, opera. The family name carried on the title of *maestro di cappella* for 124 years, and Giacomo was expected to follow in his family's footsteps, carrying on the family legacy. Puccini made his name as a composer studying at the Milan Conservatory and secured his fame and legacy primarily through his operas. Some of his most famous operas include *Manon Lescaut* (1893), *La bohème* (1896), and *Madama Butterfly* (1904).

Gianni Schicchi is one of three one-act operas that form *Il Trittico* (The Triptych): *Il Tabarro*, *Suor Angelica*, and *Gianni Schicchi*. Each opera is in a different style than the first: the dramatic, the sentimental, and the comedic. Based on Dante's Divine Comedy, *Gianni Schicchi* is about a family; in this family, the character *Gianni Schicchi* conspires and impersonates the character Buoso Donati in order to rewrite his will. His plan is to marry his daughter into the family and then double-cross them and seize their wealth. "O mio babbino caro" (Oh my beloved father) is sung by the character Lauretta in the middle of the opera, just after tensions rise between Schicchi and the family of Rinuccio, the boy she loves. The song is her crying out to her father, begging and pleading with him, telling him that she loves Rinuccio and wishes to buy a ring and marry him.

"O mio babbino caro" is used in various movies and is still performed to this day. The aria is written in Ab Major and is in 6/8 time. The aria contrasts from the rest of the opera as it is slower and is the only 'set piece,' the rest being through-composed.

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 love him, he
is handsome, handsome;
I want to go to Porta Rossa
to buy the ring!

Yes, yes, I want to go there!
And if I loved him in vain,
I would go to the Ponte Vecchio,
but to throw myself in the Arno!

I am anguished and tormented!
Oh God, I'd want to die!
Papa, have pity, have pity!
Papa, have pity, have pity!

Billy Sprague (born 1952, Tulsa, Oklahoma) and **Niles Borop** (born 1956, Nashville, Tennessee) are American Christian songwriters best known for their collaboration on *Via Delorosa*. Sprague, a graduate of Texas Christian

University, started off his career as a member of Amy Grant's backup band before becoming a well-known and sought-after Nashville songwriter and recording artist. He has received four Dove Awards and released 10 solo albums. Borop, who is also based in Nashville, is a prolific writer and music publisher whose collaborations consist of Contemporary and Southern Gospel music. Their co-written *Via Dolorosa*, originally recorded by Sandi Patty in 1984, earned a Dove Award for Song of the Year and has since been performed and recorded by several artists around the world.

Via Dolorosa was written as a narrative retelling of Jesus's journey carrying the cross down the Via Dolorosa to the hill of Golgotha. The Via Dolorosa is a street in the Old City of Jerusalem, traditionally held to be the path Jesus walked on the way to his crucifixion, the same itself translating from Latin to "the way of suffering." This song was first released by Sandi Patty in 1984 and quickly became one of the most beloved songs in contemporary Christian music. It is a standalone sacred work written specifically to give this ancient story a powerful and fresh voice.

This work is in E minor, written in common time, with a slow, deliberate tempo of approximately 72 BPM, a pace that mirrors the weight of each step along the road to Calvary. Harmonically, the piece relies on a diatonic I-IV-V framework, with moments of suspension and resolution that heighten its emotional impact at key textual climaxes. Melodically, with each chorus the phrases grow in intensity and range, reflecting the mounting weight of the journey, before arriving at a final, hushed resolution.

Andrew Lloyd Webber (born 1948) is one of the most influential figures in the musical theatre world. Webber was born into a musical family, with his father being a composer and his mother a pianist. He demonstrated extraordinary talents from a young age, enrolling at the Royal College of music later partnering with lyricist Tim Rice to create his first major successes. These works included *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita*, solidifying Webber as a bold new composer willing to push some musical boundaries. Andrew Lloyd Webber's two most famous works are *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986), the longest-running show in Broadway history, and *Cats* (1981). Webber is one of the few who have achieved EGOT status (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony Awards).

Pie Jesu is the most celebrated movement from Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Requiem* (1985). The *Requiem* was written in memory of Lloyd Webber's father, William Lloyd Webber, who died in 1982. The *Requiem* won the 1986 Grammy Award for Best Classical Contemporary Composition. *Pie Jesu* became a memorable hit single and has been recorded by numerous artists, most notably Sarah Brightman and Charlotte Church. It has become recognized as one of the most beloved sacred choral works of the 20th century.

The words of this piece combine the traditional final verse of the thirteenth-century poem *Dies Irae* and the seventh-century *Agnus Dei*. This piece is written for soprano (or boy treble), originally performed by 14-year-old treble Paul Miles-Kingston alongside Sarah Brightman. It is in Bb major and was composed with simple, gentle harmonic movements straying away from drama or complexity. There is no development or tension within this piece just sustained, flowing lyricism.

Pie Jesu, Pie Jesu
Qui tollis peccata
mundi
Dona eis requiem
Dona eis requiem

Merciful Jesus, Merciful Jesus
Who takes away the sins of the
world
Grant them rest
Grant them rest

Agnus Dei, Agnus Dei
Qui tollis peccata
mundi
Dona eis requiem
Dona eis requiem
Sempiternam, sempiternam
requiem.

Lamb of God, Lamb of God
Who takes away the sins of the
world
Grant them rest
Grant them rest
Everlasting, everlasting
rest.

Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) was one of the most celebrated composers in the history of American musical theatre. Rodgers is the first person to achieve EGOT status, receiving a Tony, Oscar, Grammy, Emmy, additionally a Pulitzer Prize. Rodgers is best known for two incredibly influential partnerships, first with lyricist Lorenz Hart who he crafted a series of shows in the 1920s and 30s, before joining **Oscar Hammerstein II** (1895-1960) to produce a string of groundbreaking works. These works include *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, and *The Sound of Music*. His melodies, accompanied by effortless lyricism and emotional depth, resulted in some of the most recognized and performed songs in the world, ensuring his legacy as an indispensable voice in the American songbook.

“Edelweiss” comes from the beloved 1959 Broadway musical *The Sound of Music*, which follows the story of Maria, who takes a job as governess to a large family while she decides whether to become a nun. Maria ends up falling in love with the children, and eventually their widowed father, Captain von Trapp, who is ordered to accept a commission in the German Navy despite his opposition to the Nazi’s. “Edelweiss” is sung by Captain von Trapp and his family and is a display of quiet aching patriotism, a love for his homeland in Austria, for which he must farewell.

While “Edelweiss” seems simple in its composition, with its straightforward melodic line and gentle $\frac{3}{4}$ waltz pattern, each aspect Rodgers has written carries great emotional weight. Rodgers wanted this piece to have the true feeling of an

actual Austrian folk song, for which he provided a haunting waltz like pattern, based on simple romantic Biedermeier era tunes like Hänschen klein and others. “Edelweiss” turned out to be one of the most adored and remembered songs from the musical, and the last song that Rodgers and Hammerstein ever wrote together.

Benny Andersson (born December 16, 1946, Stockholm, Sweden) is a Swedish musician, composer, and producer. Andersson launched his career with the popular Swedish beat group The Hep Stars, referred to as the “Swedish Beatles,” prior to meeting fellow songwriter Björn Ulvaeus while on tour. The two eventually invited their respective girls, Anni-Frid Lyngstad and Agnetha Fältskog, to join them, and together they formed the internationally recognized band ABBA. From 1972 to 1982, Benny and Björn wrote every song the group produced, creating some of the best-selling records in pop history. Andersson has been honored with Tony and Oliver Award nominations and was granted the title of professor by the Swedish government in 1995, later receiving honorary doctorates from Stockholm University and Luleå Tekniska Universitet.

“Thank You for the Music” was originally featured on ABBA’s fifth studio album, *ABBA: The Album* (1977). In 1999, the song was woven into *Mamma Mia!*, a jukebox musical with a book by British playwright Catherine Johnson. *Mamma Mia!* is set on a fictional Greek island called Kalokairi, and it follows the story of a twenty-one-year-old girl named Sophie who is soon to be married. Sophie, raised by her single mother Donna, is desperate to know who her father is, so upon finding a journal of her mother describing a summer where she met three men around the time she was conceived, and “dot, dot, dot,” Sophie invites the three men to her wedding in hopes of finding her father.

“Thank You for the Music” underscores Sophie’s reunion with her three potential fathers, as she recalls how her mother used to sing the song to her as a child. In the movie adaptation, the song presents itself in the end credits and briefly in the second movie. This song is a light-hearted, pure, joyful song, a celebration of music itself. Musically, the song is built in a simple verse-chorus structure in a bright major key, with lush, chiming piano voicings driving a steady, lilting groove.

Benj Pasek (born June 9, 1985, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) and **Justin Paul** (born January 3, 1985, St. Louis, Missouri) are American songwriting duo who began their partnership as freshmen at the University of Michigan. They are among the most acclaimed songwriters of their generation, gaining recognition across pop, musical theatre, film, stage, and television as composers, lyricists, and producers. Their collaborative work together on *Dear Evan Hansen*, *La La Land*, and *The Greatest Showman* produced albums that all landed in the Billboard Top 10, with *The Greatest Showman* reaching number one and becoming the world’s best-selling album of 2018. Their song “City of Stars” from *La La Land* earned them the Academy Award for Best Original Song,

while *Dear Evan Hansen* brought them a Tony Award for Best Original Score. In September 2024, the duo achieved EGOT status, becoming the 20th and 21st EGOT winners and breaking the record for the fastest EGOT interval at seven years and seven months.

“Never Enough” was written for the musical *The Greatest Showman*, which is inspired by the life of Phineas Taylor “P.T.” Barnum, the creator of the world-famous Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey circus. The story follows Barnum as he builds a life for himself after coming from humble beginnings. Barnum brings together a diverse cast of performers, each with a unique talent or characteristic that strays away from the normality. This “circus,” as described by a local critic, becomes a dazzling performance worldwide, captivating audiences with things they have never seen before.

“Never Enough” is sung by the character Jenny Lind, the Swedish Songbird, and a famous opera singer. P.T. Barnum, seeking to expand and polish his legacy, turns away from the circus and tours with Jenny Lind. This piece is a tribute to Lind’s dazzling success, but the fame is never enough to satisfy the soul. This piece is written in Ab major with a vocal range spanning from a Bb 2 up to Eb 5 in its original key. It features a warm, controlled lower range accompanied by a strong vocal belt. Pasek and Paul create a beautiful display of talent and emotion as the piece transitions from near silence, building into a bold climax showcasing the depth and range of this work.

Special Thanks

Mom and Dad – Thank you to my mom and dad who have been there since day one. You both have brought music into my life in so many ways. I have never had to doubt if someone would have my back because I have known you both would be there. You have been to every concert, every game even when they are out of state. I could not have asked for better parents; I love you both so much.

Nick – God brought us together last year and I could not be more thankful. You have been there for me in so many ways and I love you dearly for it. You have supported me in some of my most stressful times at Mercyhurst and brought so much joy into my life. You are an amazing person and an even more amazing boyfriend, thank you for all you do.

Brittany – Since I switched my major sophomore year you have done so much to help guide me throughout my Music Therapy journey. It is thanks to you that I have found my passion in life. I could not have had a better mentor and Music Therapist guiding me along the way, I hope that

I can be at least half of the therapist you are. With Music Therapy sadly leaving Mercyhurst I hope to make my mark on the Music Therapy world with your guidance lighting the way.

Hannah – I have had several teachers here at Mercyhurst that have each given me valuable guidance along the way, however I am so grateful to have finished my journey with you. You have believed in me since day one and helped bring me to my most stressful yet rewarding part of my senior year, my Senior Recital. It has been such a joy learning from you, I can only imagine what great friends we would be if we had gone through college together.

Linda Peters – I have not thanked you nearly enough for everything you have done for me. You have been with me since my freshman year and being along your side has been so incredibly rewarded. Your talent is undeniable, and I would not choose anyone else to have when I walk onto the stage. You have been my rock through every performance since the first time I walked out on the Walker Recital Hall stage.

Abby and Mik – I do not have the words to express my gratitude for both of you. I could not imagine having any other roommates. I feel like I can truly be myself with you two and have never felt so confrontable with a group of friends. The memories we have made will stay with me forever and I will hold onto them dearly. This year will not be the end of our journey but a start into an even deeper friendship.

Brenda Colvin – I have never met a more caring and loving woman of God. You have been a major part of my music journey that has gone unacknowledged for too long. It is thanks to your guidance that I was able to first get the courage to go to college for music. You have believed in me since day one and I am so grateful that God led me to you and furthermore led my family to The Ridge.

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Coaches – I had no idea that cheer or Stunt would have been a part of my journey at college when I arrived for my freshman year. I am so grateful

that Coach O gave me a chance my freshman year to join the cheer team which sparked my incredible Stunt journey. You both have believed in me and supported both my music and Stunt journey, and I am so thankful. I could not have balanced the two without gracious teachers and coaches and I thank you both dearly for letting me embrace my crazy Troy Bolton college life.

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