

*FACULTY AND
GUEST ARTIST RECITAL*

SUSANNE MENTZER, Mezzo-Soprano

JAMES DUNHAM, Viola

CRAIG RUTENBERG, Piano (guest)

Monday, September 11, 2006

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Three Songs

Clara Schumann

Warum willst du And're fragen, Op. 12 No. 11 (1819-1896)

Sie liebten sich Beide, Op. 13 No. 2

Ihr Bild, Op. 13 No. 1

Zwei Gesänge, Op. 91

Johannes Brahms

for mezzo-soprano, viola, and piano

(1833-1897)

Gestillte Sehnsucht

Geistliches Wiegenlied

Frauenliebe und Leben, Op. 42

Robert Schumann

(1810-1856)

INTERMISSION

Lachrymae: Reflections on a Song of John Dowland, Op. 48

Benjamin Britten

(1913-1976)

for viola and piano

Sifting through the Ruins (2005)

Libby Larsen

for mezzo-soprano, viola, and piano

(b. 1950)

I. A Listing

II. To the Towers Themselves

III. Don't Look for me Anymore

IV. Untitled

V. Someone Passes

The reverberative acoustics of Duncan Recital Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

BIOGRAPHIES

Introduced to opera as a teenage usher in Santa Fe, New Mexico, American SUSANNE MENTZER is one of today's foremost mezzo-sopranos. She is widely admired as a specialist in trouser roles, most notably for her portrayals of Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Der Komponist in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. She also specializes in the music of Berlioz, Mozart, Strauss, and the Bel Canto repertoire. Ms. Mentzer enjoys a significant concert and recital career, with a particular interest in chamber music, and is known as an interpreter of the vocal works of Mahler and as a proponent of women's music. She has appeared with the great opera companies and orchestras in North America and Europe, the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, and on tour to Japan with the Metropolitan Opera, the Bavarian State Opera, and Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival.

This fall Ms. Mentzer appears with the New York Philharmonic in the title role of Ravel's *L'enfant et les Sortilèges* and then returns to the Metropolitan Opera for her fifteenth season in the world premiere of *The First Emperor* by Tan Dun and directed by Zhang Yimou. She is known to Met audiences for her notable portrayals of Der Komponist, Octavian, Cherubino, Dorabella (both shown on PBS), Idamante, Mélisande, Nicklausse, and Rosina.

Ms. Mentzer will also perform *Huits Scenes de Faust* by Berlioz with the St. Louis Symphony and will return there for chamber music in March. She will also appear in February with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and pianist Craig Rutenberg performing British songs from 1900-1930.

The past season found Ms. Mentzer at the Pittsburgh Opera in one of her signature roles, Der Komponist (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) and at the Chicago Opera Theatre in the title role of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Orchestral engagements included Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with Jahja Ling and the San Diego Symphony and chamber music with the Sun Valley Summer Symphony. A celebrated recitalist, Ms. Mentzer appeared at Tannery Pond, New York, with her frequent collaborator, Craig Rutenberg. She shared the stage with pianist Martin Katz for an evening of song at the University of Delaware, and continued her partnership with guitarist Sharon Isbin at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and Town Hall in New York City.

As a respected interpreter of the music of Berlioz, Susanne Mentzer participated in the recent bicentennial celebrations with performances of *Romeo et Juliette*, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, and *La Damnation de Faust* with the New York Philharmonic under the batons of Lorin Maazel, Sir Colin Davis, and Charles Dutoit. She also appeared as Mary in *L'enfance du Christ* with the Dresdner Philharmonie, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and sang *Les nuits d'été* with several orchestras including the Orchestre de Paris, the Aspen Chamber Symphony, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and the IRIS Orchestra.

In demand as a recitalist, Susanne Mentzer has appeared at Lincoln Center, in Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall, and at the Tisch Center 92nd Street Y, among others, and in collaboration, with guitarist Sharon Isbin, pianist Leon Fleisher, the Orion and American String Quartets, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Chicago Symphony, the New York Philharmonic Chamber Musicians, Music from Angel Fire, Chicago Chamber Musicians, and Sun Valley Summer Symphony.

Ms. Mentzer has recorded two programs that she often performs in concert: "The Eternal Feminine," a recital of music by women composers (Koch International Classics) which includes the premiere of Libby Larsen's *Love*

After 1950 with her long-time pianist, Craig Rutenberg, and her personal favorite, "Wayfaring Stranger" (Erato), a collection of international folk-songs arranged for voice and guitar with Grammy Award-winning Sharon Isbin. Ms. Mentzer recently premiered another work by Libby Larsen entitled *Sifting through the Ruins* for viola, voice, and piano, based on tributes from 9/11/01. The second performance of this work is included on this evening's program.

Her extensive discography also includes two Haydn rarities: the opera *L'Isola Disabitata* (Costanza) and the dramatic cantata *Arianna a Naxos* on Arabesque. In addition, there is Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (Cherubino) with Sir Charles Mackerras for Telarc, *Idomeneo* (Idamante) with Sir Colin Davis for Philips Classics, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Zerlina) with Riccardo Muti and Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Rosina) for EMI, Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* (Jane Seymour) with Dame Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé on Decca, Gounod's *Faust* (Siebel) with the Welsh National Opera for Teldec, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* and *Il Turco in Italia* conducted by Sir Neville Marriner on Philips, and the Grammy-nominated recording of *Arlecchino* by Busoni. Susanne Mentzer appeared on PBS broadcasts of "Live from the Met" in productions of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and on the James Levine 25th Anniversary Concert. She was featured as Artist of the Week on the A&E Network series "Breakfast with the Arts." She can be seen on DVD in *Don Giovanni* from Teatro alla Scala and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* from the Opéra de Paris.

In addition to her active performance career, Ms. Mentzer has an interest in the development of young singers. Formerly at DePaul University School of Music in Chicago, she is a newly appointed Professor of Voice at the Shepherd School of Music. In addition, she is on the faculty of the Aspen Music Festival and School and frequently gives master classes throughout the country. She has worked with young singers associated with the George London Foundation and is a board member of the William M. Sullivan Foundation which awards study grants to young singers.

Since 1991, Susanne Mentzer has organized the annual Jubilate benefit concert featuring stars of the opera and dance world to support Chicago's Bonaventure House, a residence for people living with AIDS for which she received the Alexian Brothers USA Thelan Award. This year's concert will be held November 19, 2006.

Born in Philadelphia and raised in Maryland and New Mexico, Ms. Mentzer began her studies in music therapy at the University of the Pacific and later transferred to the Juilliard School, where she received her Bachelor and Master's degrees. She honed her craft in the Houston Grand Opera Studio and studied voice with Norma Newton.

Soloist, chamber musician, and teacher, JAMES DUNHAM is active internationally as a recitalist and guest artist. Formerly violist of the Grammy Award winning Cleveland Quartet and Naumburg Award winning Sequoia Quartet, he has collaborated with such renowned artists as Richard Goode, Emanuel Ax, Joshua Bell, Sabine Meyer, Bernard Greenhouse, and members of the Guarneri, Juilliard, and Tokyo Quartets. An advocate of new music, he has worked with many prominent composers, and in July 2001, gave the premiere of a new sonata for viola and piano written for him by Libby Larsen. In addition to his solo and chamber music activities, Mr. Dunham has served as guest principal viola with the Boston Symphony under Seiji Ozawa and

the Dallas Symphony under Andrew Litton. From 1987 through its final recordings and concerts in December 1995, Mr. Dunham was violist of the renowned Cleveland Quartet. The Quartet won the 1996 Grammy for "Best Chamber Music Performance" for their Telarc recording of John Corigliano's *String Quartet* written for their final tour.

Prior to becoming Professor of Viola at the Shepherd School of Music, Mr. Dunham served as Professor of Viola at the New England Conservatory and the Eastman School of Music. His summer activities include teaching and performing at many festivals, including those of Marlboro, Aspen, Sarasota, Yale at Norfolk, Bowdoin, and Musicorda. He has served as principal violist of the San Diego Mainly Mozart Festival for ten seasons, and last summer celebrated his ninth year as violist of the Festival der Zukunft in Ernen, Switzerland. He is featured on a compact disc of recent music for viola and winds on the Crystal Records label, and has recorded with the Sequoia Quartet for Nonesuch and Delos and with the Cleveland Quartet for Telarc.

Pianist CRAIG RUTENBERG, "whose playing ranged from sterling directness to expansive beauty," (San Francisco Chronicle) has collaborated with many of the world's greatest vocalists and is recognized as one of the most distinguished accompanists on the stage today.

Having studied with John Wustman, Geoffrey Parsons, and Pierre Bernac, Mr. Rutenberg has appeared in recital with Denyce Graves, Sumi Jo, Harolyn Blackwell, Susanne Mentzer, Frederica von Stade, Angelika Kirchschrager, and Dawn Upshaw. In addition, he has appeared frequently with Thomas Hampson, Ben Heppner, and Jerry Hadley, as well as Olaf Baer, Simon Keenlyside, and Stanford Olsen, and he has performed with Mr. Hampson at the White House under the Clinton administration.

Mr. Rutenberg, whose recording with Susanne Mentzer prompted Opera News to praise him for "(making) the piano sing with clean articulation and a palette of colors to coordinate with...every mood," records for Deutsche Grammophon, EMI/Angel, BMG/RCA and Koch International. He has appeared repeatedly in concert on national and international television and radio, including numerous PBS specials.

Currently Visiting Professor at the Royal College of Music in London and Guest Coach at Operahögskolan in Stockholm, Sweden, Mr. Rutenberg also takes on the responsibilities of Head of Music Administration at the Metropolitan Opera in September 2006. He regularly coaches and gives master classes at the Chicago Lyric Opera for American Artists, the Pittsburgh Opera Center, Chicago Opera Theatre, and the Vancouver Opera, as well as the training programs at the Washington Opera and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Craig Rutenberg has also worked for the Opera Studio de Paris, the Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the San Francisco Opera, the Houston Grand Opera, the Santa Fe Opera, and the Glimmerglass Opera.

In addition to his teaching activities in the 2006-07 season, Mr. Rutenberg appears in recital with Christine Brewer, Susanne Mentzer, Ben Heppner, Quinn Kelsey and Thomas Hampson. As a solo pianist, he is recording the complete piano portraits and études of Virgil Thomson.