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Marshall University Music Department Presents a Senior Recital, Robert Alfred Nuñez, baritone with William Murphy, piano

Robert Alred Nunñez
Marshall University

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SCHOOL of MUSIC and THEATRE

presents

Senior Recital

Robert Alfred Nuñez, baritone
with
William Murphy, piano

Saturday, May 3, 2014
Jomie Jazz Forum
3:00 p.m.

This program is presented by the College of Arts & Media through the School of Music and Theatre with the support of student activity funds. For more information about this or other music events, please call (304) 696-3117, or view our website at www.marshall.edu/carn/music.

Program

Komm Süsses Kreuz
from *St. Matthew Passion*

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Mai
Nell

Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)

Dover Beach

Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)

Intermission

Come Paride vezzoso
from *L'elisir d'amore*

Gaetano Donizetti
(1797-1848)

Non t'amo più

Francesco Paolo Tosti
(1846-1916)

In the silence of the night
As fair as day in blaze of noon

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

An die ferne Geliebte

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

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This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in vocal performance. Mr. Nuñez is a student in the voice studio of Professor Linda Dobbs.

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Program Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was the most renowned composer of the late-high Baroque period. He was part of a large musical family and made his living as a church organist and choirmaster. He provided music for services, often composing works that were written and performed in a week's time. Among his many works are two existing Passions, large choral works based on biblical texts about Jesus' life and death. The aria "Komm Süßes Kreuz," meaning "come sweet cross" is from the St. Matthew Passion which was written in 1727 or 1729. Bach used Matthew Chapter 8, verse 7 as the text. In the recitative section of the aria, the bass soloist first represents the crowd. In the aria, the soloist soon becomes Simon of Cyrene, the on-looker in the crowd who is forced to carry the cross for Jesus.

The French composer **Gabriel Fauré** (1845-1924) began his career composing works for piano and then art songs. Scholars have considered him a transitional figure between the Romantic era and Impressionism. He made his living teaching piano and harmony lessons and that soon led to his being appointed the inspector of the music conservatories in France. Among his students were Debussy and Ravel. Fauré's music falls into three stylistic periods: early (1860-1865), middle (1880 to 1904), and late (1906-1922). "Mai" was composed in 1862 during his early period and was influenced by the salon style of the Classical and Romantic era. "Nell" was composed in his middle period during which his compositional style matured as he experimented with a developing harmonic language.

Samuel Barber's (1910-1981) love of literary texts and the music of previous musical periods set him apart from other leading composers of his time. Barber came from an upper class family that nurtured his musical abilities. While at The Curtis Institute of Music, he studied composition. He also played the piano and sang. In 1931, Barber set "Dover Beach," a poem written by Matthew Arnold, a Victorian poet and critical essay

writer. Arnold's poem "Dover Beach" can be interpreted in several ways. He often wrote about isolation and about the loss of faith. Arnold's poem begins by describing a beautiful place, but then becomes very pessimistic about mankind's lack of humanity, a mankind that "Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light, nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain." The poem also speaks about the horrors of war, describing Sophocles' clashing armies on the Aegean Sea.

The creation of "Dover Beach" came at a time when the young Barber was questioning his abilities as a composer and it was originally written for baritone and string quartet. During this period Barber was greatly influenced by the music of the late Renaissance. Tone painting is used throughout this work. For instance, one example is a repeated pattern in the accompaniment of intervals alternating from the fourth to fifth of the scale to represent the waves on the beach. Each instrument of the string quartet enters in layered imitation. He also used chant-like melodic figures and melodic recitative, another feature common in the sixteenth century. One can hear this when the singer says, "Sophocles long ago heard it on the Aegean."

Barber normally played and sang his own compositions, but sometimes he asked Rose Bampton, a contralto, to sing in his place. "Dover Beach" was published in 1936. Barbra B. Heyman in her book *Samuel Barber* perfectly describes what "Dover Beach" is about. She said, "His interest in late sixteenth century Italian vocal music seems to find a voice in "Dover Beach;" the relationship between voice and instruments, the points of imitation that coincide with beginnings of text lines, the alternating contrapuntal and homophonic fabric are all suggestive of a quasi-motet style."

Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848) was one of three important composers of opera in Italy during the early to mid-nineteenth century. This period became known for a style of singing that would later be called *bel canto* or beautiful singing. Though the musical language was similar to writings for the voice used by Baroque and Classical era composers, the name *bel canto* came

to distinguish the style of writing for voice and a singing technique during the mid-nineteenth century that was characterized by florid writing and great lyricism. *L'elisir d'amore* was written in 1832. It is the story of a young man, Nemorino, who is in love with a bold young woman, Adina, who owns a small estate. She rejects his attention for that of a visiting soldier, Belcore. Early in Act I, Belcore marches into the community and flirtatiously presents a flower to Adina.

In the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, **Francesco Paolo Tosti** (1846-1916) composed art songs in the popular style of that era. During his early career he often faced great poverty. He made his living teaching students and singing. This eventually brought him recognition and he moved to England where his teaching had considerable success. Among his most famous students were the children of Queen Victoria. His music attracted famous singers like Enrico Caruso and Nellie Melba; their performances spread his works to a diverse audience. Tosti knew how to write for the singer and wrote over 400 songs. He was a talented singer himself and his songs were expressive and appreciated by a wide audience. "Non t'amo più" (I love you no longer), was written in 1884, with text by Carmelo Errico.

Sergi Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) has been considered by scholars as one of, or even the last composer who wrote in the (Russian) Romantic Style. He was known for his piano compositions as well as his keyboard virtuosity. He came from an aristocratic family and his cousin, who was a concert-pianist, suggested that Rachmaninoff pursue music. In his compositions he often used chants, hymns, and folk songs. While many of his compositions were written for piano, he also wrote art songs. Both "In the silence of night" (1890) and "As fair as day in blaze of noon" (1896) were written early in his career. Rachmaninoff immigrated to New York in 1917 after Russia blocked the performance of his works due to his political stance.

The genius of **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827) was recognized early in his career when he was equally regarded as a pianist and a composer. By 1810 he had written many of his major works including symphonies, concertos, sonatas, and much of his chamber music. By the time Beethoven wrote his song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*, he was completely deaf and suffered periods of deep depression. In 1812, he wrote a letter to "The Immortal Beloved." The name of this lover was never identified. But the combination of his deafness, depression, and unrequited love left him very alone. Krehbiel quoted Beethoven's letters in 1816, "My kind regards to your wife. I, alas! have no wife. I have met only one and her I shall probably never get." In 1816 he completed his song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* (*To the Distant Beloved*). Beethoven set a group of poems by Alois Jeitteles using similar music and poetry for the first and last songs. The songs were set with no complete breaks between each song, rather they were connected with musical material that led to new keys and introduced the new thematic material in each song. This was the first song cycle in history. In the first song, the text declares that the lover will send his love to the beloved in his songs. In the second and third songs, nature is asked to remind the beloved of the poet's affection. In the last song, the poet asks the beloved to sing his songs to herself and to always remember him. In this, Beethoven's music returns to the first song, bringing the cycle to a close.

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