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# Dr. Michael Hix, Baritone, with Cheryl Lemmons on Piano

Abilene Christian University

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THE ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

PRESENTS

Dr. Michael Hix,  
baritone

with

Cheryl Lemmons, Piano



January 22, 2015

7:30 pm

WPAC Recital Hall



# Program

Deep River  
Give Me Jesus

Spiritual  
arr. Mark Hayes (b. 1953)

*Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt  
Rheinlegendchen  
Der Tambourg'sell

Gustav Mahler  
(1860-1911)

*Trois Mélodies de Verlaine*

La Mer est plus belle  
Le Son du Cor s'afflige  
L'Échelonnement des haies

Claude Debussy  
(1862-1918)

Deutschland ("In Sturmesnacht")  
Homesick Blues  
Deutschland 1952

Paul Dessau  
(1894-1979)

*Tierverser*

Das Schwein  
Das Pferd  
Der Elefant  
Die Kellerassell

*Three Songs, Op. 10*

Rain Has Fallen  
Sleep Now  
I Hear an Army

Samuel Barber  
(1910-1981)

# Program Notes

## **Deep River and Give Me Jesus – Mark Hayes’ Spiritual arrangements**

Since H.T. Burleigh’s early 20<sup>th</sup> century arrangements, the Spiritual has become a significant part of the American song recital repertoire. Mark Hayes’ arrangements continue in the tradition of Burleigh, Moses Hogan and others, providing beautiful and artistically satisfying solo works which are suitable in both the church service and concert hall. “Deep River” features a lush piano figuration throughout, depicting the moving water of the title. The meditative and moving “Give Me Jesus” reminds us to relinquish our earthly lives and cares, and find rest and comfort in the peace of Jesus.

## ***Des Knaben Wunderhorn* – G. Mahler**

*The Youth’s Magic Horn*, a collection of folk poetry and songs published by Brentano and Arnim in 1805, was one of the most important textual sources of Romantic Era Lieder. Composers including Weber, Loewe, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Brahms, all set texts from this publication. During Mahler’s life, he drew great inspiration from these texts, setting more than two dozen Wunderhorn poems. The three songs presented this evening, originally composed for voice and orchestra between 1892-1901, were published as part of the collection known as *Songs from Des Knaben Wunderhorn*.

## **Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt (St. Anthony’s Sermon to the Fish)**

At sermon time Anthony  
finds the church empty!  
He goes to the rivers  
and preaches to the fish!  
They flap with their tails!  
They gleam in the sunshine,  
they gleam!

The carp with roe  
have all congregated;  
their jaws gaping,

intent on listening!  
Never did a sermon  
so please the fish!

Sharp-snouted pike,  
that fence continually,  
swam up in a hurry  
to hear the holy man!  
Even those odd creatures  
that continually fast:  
I mean the codfish,

appear for the sermon!  
Never did a sermon  
so please the codfish!

Good eels and sturgeon  
that people of quality relish,  
even they condescend  
to attend the sermon!  
Crayfish, too, and turtles,  
usually slowboats,  
climb hurriedly from the depths  
to hear this voice!  
Never did a sermon  
so please the crayfish!

Fish big and fish small!  
Of quality and common!

## **Rheinlegendchen (Rhine Legend)**

Now I mow by the Neckar,  
now I mow by the Rhine;  
now I have a sweetheart,  
now I'm alone!

What good is mowing  
if the sickle doesn't cut;  
what good is a sweetheart,  
if he/she doesn't stay with me!

So should I then mow  
by the Neckar, by the Rhine,  
then I will throw  
my little gold ring in.

It will float in the Neckar  
and float in the Rhine,  
it shall swim right down  
into the deep sea.

They raise their heads  
like rational creatures!  
At God's command  
they listen to the sermon.

The sermon finished,  
each one turns away!  
The pike remain thieves,  
the eels great lovers;  
the sermon was pleasing,  
they all stay the same!

The crabs go backwards;  
the codfish stay fat;  
the carp gorge a lot,  
the sermon's forgotten!  
The sermon was pleasing,  
they all stay the same!

And when it swims, the little ring,  
then a fish will eat it!  
The fish will land  
on the king's table!

The king would ask,  
whose ring can it be?  
Then my sweetheart would say:  
'The ring belongs to me!'

My sweetheart would spring  
up hill and down hill,  
would bring back to me  
my fine little gold ring!

You can mow by the Neckar,  
you can mow by the Rhine!  
You can always toss in  
your little ring to me!

## **Der Tambourg'sell (The Drummer Boy)**

I, poor drummer boy!  
They are leading me out of the  
dungeon!

If I'd remained a drummer,  
I would not lie imprisoned!

Oh, gallows, you tall house,  
you look so frightening!  
I don't look at you any more!  
Because I know that's where I  
belong!

When soldiers march past,  
that are not billeted with me.

When they ask who I was:  
Drummer of the first company!

Good night! You marble rocks!  
You mountains and hills!  
Good night, you officers,  
corporals and musketeers!  
Good night!  
Good night, you officers!  
Corporals and grenadiers!

I cry out with a clear voice:  
I take leave of you!  
Good night!

## ***Trois Mélodies de Verlaine* – C. Debussy**

Debussy's Three Melodies are the last settings of Verlaine poems in a period of his life that was predominantly influenced by Symbolism and Verlaine in particular. They combine musical richness and respect for the texts. Verlaine's gifts as a landscape painter are fully developed in these three poems on the sea, the hedgerows in the meadows, and a winter evening. They are exquisite bits of nature description that reveal the poets' entrancement with the English countryside.

(Excerpted from *The Singer's Debussy* by Marie-Claire Rohinsky)

## **La Mer est plus belle (The sea is more beautiful)**

The sea is more beautiful  
Than the cathedrals,  
A faithful wet nurse,  
A rocker of death-rattles  
The sea over which  
The Virgin Mary prays.

It has all the qualities  
Terrible and sweet.  
I hear its pardons  
And its wrath roar.  
This immensity  
Is without willfulness.

Oh! So patient  
Even when malicious  
A friendly breath haunts  
The wave and sings to us:  
"You, without hope,  
May you die without suffering!"

And then beneath the skies  
Which reflects in it a brighter smile  
It looks blue,  
Pink, gray and green...  
More beautiful than all  
And better than us!



## **Le son du cor**

### **(The sound of the horn)**

The sound of the horn mourns  
Away toward the woods,  
Of a sorry you wish to believe one and only  
Which comes to die out at the foot of the hill  
Amidst the short howlings of the roving north wind.  
The soul of the wolf weeps in this voice  
Which rises with the declining sun,  
In an agony you wish to believe soothing,  
Both enrapturing and distressing

To enhance this lulled lament  
The snow falls in long trails of rags  
Across the blood-red sunset

And the air seems to be an autumnal sigh,  
So mild is this monotonous evening  
That enfolds the sluggish landscape.

## **L'échelonnement des haies**

### **(The spacing of the hedgerows)**

The spacing out of the hedgerows  
Is frothing endlessly, sea-like  
And clear in the mist  
Fragrant with young berries.

In this vagueness of a Sunday,  
Here comes also to play  
Large ewes as  
Soft as their white wool

Trees and windmills  
Are light on the delicate green  
Where come to frolic and stretch  
The agile colts.

Just now there broke  
A wave, rolling in curls,  
Of flute-like bells  
In the milk-white sky.

## **Paul Dessau Lieder**

The composer Paul Dessau (1894-1979) was arguably one of the most significant composers of the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic), yet a large portion of his music remains unperformed and unknown. Dessau composed a wealth of vocal music, which includes five operas and over 250 lieder. Homesick Blues is one of the few of pieces Dessau composed in English. Dessau set this Langston Hughes poem while in exile during the Nazi reign of terror. In the poetry of Langston Hughes Dessau found a voice that spoke of oppression and the racial inequality shared by African-Americans and German

Jews. Forty-one of Dessau's lieder (including all of the songs presented this evening with the exception of "Homesick Blues") are masterful settings of Dessau's collaborator Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956). "Deutschland (In Sturmesnacht)" which paints an optimistic picture of a future Germany without Hitler, was composed during Dessau's exile in the U.S. The song was composed at the request of the American Office of War Information, which broadcast the song in Germany using shortwave radio. "Deutschland 1952" is one of Dessau's most hauntingly beautiful songs. Brecht's moving text and Dessau's musically simple setting capture the melancholy of postwar Germany and movingly depicts the state of Germany in 1952: a country internally torn asunder. Composers have frequently been drawn to collections of poems about animals. Ravel's *Histoires Naturelles* (Natural History) and Poulenc's *Le Bestiaire* (The Bestiary) are famous examples of song cycles that utilize such poetry. Between 1967 and 1973, Dessau set ten of Brecht's animal verses. Brecht uses anthropomorphized animals to spin his biting socio-political satire.

### **Deutschland ("In Sturmesnacht")**

In the stormy night, a dark night,  
 a rose has bloomed  
 In distress I woke up  
 And found the rose had bloomed.

Hitler's ghost, the bloody ghost  
 Will also blow away

Hitlers come and go  
 The German people remain.

Hitler will be chased away  
 We must stive  
 And our lovely Germany  
 Will finally bloom.

### **Deutschland 1952**

O Germany, how you are ripped apart  
 And not only with yourself  
 In cold and darkness  
 One beats another.  
 And you would have such beautiful plains  
 and so many lively cities:  
 If you had only trusted yourself,  
 It would all have been child's play.

## **Tierverser (Animal Verses)**

### **Das Schwein (The Pig)**

There once was a pig  
That had only one leg.  
Once it was in a hurry,  
When it slid on its backside  
Into the violet bed:  
It was a down-right pig.

### **Das Pferd (The Horse)**

There once was a horse  
that was not worth much.  
For racing it was too stupid,  
tethered to the wagon, it fell over,  
he became a politician,  
he is now highly decorated

### **Der Elefant (The Elephant)**

There once was an elephant  
Who had no sense.  
Once he carried around by orders  
twenty trees instead of two  
and broke his leg in the process.  
An idiot, my soul!

### **Die Kellerassel (The Woodlouse)**

Once there was a woodlouse  
Who slipped into a mess  
The basement, in which she loused  
Broke apart one lovely day  
So that the whole house of stone  
Pattered upon her little head.  
She is said to have become  
religious.

### ***Three Songs, Op. 10 – Samuel Barber***

Samuel Barber, one of the most frequently performed composers of his generation, had a great affinity for music for the voice. This is evidenced by the 106 songs and two major operas that are counted among his oeuvre. The Op. 10, settings of James Joyce, contains three of Barber's most popular songs. The Irish poet James Joyce provided inspiration for countless other 20th century composers including Del Tredici, Cage, Berio, Sessions, and Persicheti among others.

# Biography

## Michael Hix, baritone

Baritone Michael Hix has been praised by critics for his "expressive voice" and "commanding stage presence." Hix's career highlights include performances at Tanglewood Music Center, a solo appearance with the Boston Pops in "Bernstein on Broadway," and his Carnegie Hall debut as the baritone soloist in Rutter's *Mass of the Children*. Recent European performances include the bass solos in Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* and *Heligmesse* at the International Haydn Festival in Vienna, Austria and song recitals in Dresden and Leipzig, Germany. A frequently sought after concert soloist his repertoire includes over 35 oratorios, cantatas, and major concert works. Hix has been featured in concerts with the Boston Pops, Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, Georgia Symphony, New Mexico Philharmonic, Canticum Novum, Tallahassee Symphony, Tupelo Symphony, Montgomery Symphony, and the Tallahassee Bach Parley. Included among his over 20 stage roles are Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, the Drunken Poet in *The Fairy Queen*, Grosvenor in *Patience*, Germont in *La Traviata*, and Noye in *Noye's Fludde*.

His 2014-2015 performance season include Brahms' *Requiem* in Dallas, Noye in Britten's *Noye's Fludde* in Washington, and Christmas Pops concert with the Montgomery Symphony among others.

Hix was recently presented the Thomas Hampson Award from the American Musicological Society, and a Research Visit Grant from the DAAD to support his continued research on the Lieder of East German composer Paul Dessau. Dr. Hix holds degrees in Music Theory, Historical Musicology, and Voice performance from Furman University and Florida State University. Dr. Hix is an Assistant Professor of Vocal Studies at the University of New Mexico.

# Upcoming Events

Recital: Enrique Barrera, Tenor	January 24, 7:30 pm Recital Hall
Recital: Naomi Worley, Soprano	January 30, 7:30 pm Recital Hall
Recital: Dayna Coppedge, Clarinet	January 31, 3:00 pm Recital Hall
Visiting Scholar Recital: Hyunjoo Lee	February 3, 7:30 pm Recital Hall
Orchestra Concert	February 19, 7:30 pm Cullen Auditorium

