



DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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Saturday, May 30, 2026 • 4:00 PM

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# ELLA KOZAK

*Junior Recital*

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Brennan Family Recital Hall  
2330 North Halsted Street • Chicago

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# ELLA KOZAK, SOPRANO

*Junior Recital*

NICK POTHIER, PIANO

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## PROGRAM

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George Friederic Handel (1685–1759)  
**Ah, mio cor! Schernito Sei! (1735)**

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)  
**Fiançailles pour rire (1939)**  
    III. Il Vole  
    V. Violon

Richard Strauss (1864–1949)  
**Allerseelen (1885)**  
**Ich Schwebel (1901)**  
**Die Nacht (1885)**

Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835)  
**Vaga Luna, Che Inargenti (1838)**  
**Malinconia, Ninfa Gentile (1829)**  
**Ma Rendi Pur Contento (c. 1820)**

Florence Price (1887–1953)  
**The Moon Bridge (1930)**  
**An April Day (1949)**  
**Spring (1913)**  
**Hold Fast to Dreams (1945)**

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*Ella Kozak is from the studio of Amanda Majeski. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the degree Bachelor of Music.*

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*As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Flash photography is not permitted.*

## PROGRAM NOTES

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George Friederic Handel (1685–1759)

### **Ah, mio cor! Schernito Sei! (1735)**

*Duration: 4 minutes, 30 seconds*

“Ah, mio cor!” is a dramatic aria for soprano written by Handel for his 1735 opera, *Alcina*. The story is originally from the epic poem *Orlando Furioso* by Ludovico Ariosto. It follows the story of the knight Ruggiero, who finds himself on a magical island inhabited by two sorceress sisters, Morgana and Alcina, and his lover, Bradamante, who attempts to save him from their clutches. Though he falls under Alcina’s spell, he eventually makes an escape with Bradamante and leaves the two sisters behind. Alcina initially trapped him to take advantage of him, but she genuinely falls in love with him throughout the opera. In this scene, Alcina has just been told Ruggiero is making his escape from her island. The opening line, which translates to “Ah, my heart! Scorned are you!” shows her true attachment to Ruggiero. She calls out to the gods in desperation, accompanied by a constantly moving piano part that gives a feeling of unease as her magic begins to weaken from her broken heart.

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)

### **Fiançailles pour rire (1939)**

*Duration: 4 minutes*

*Fiançailles pour rire* (Betrothal for laughs) is a song cycle featuring six standalone pieces set to poetry by Louise de Vilmorin. Written in 1939, it was not premiered until three years later in 1942 after Poulenc was briefly called to serve in the military during World War II. His *mélodie* is characterized by unique poetry and witty, creative melodic lines. The third piece of this set, “*Il Vole*,” is based around some interesting poetic wordplay. “*Il vole*” translates both to “it flies” and “he steals.” Thus, you get the lines “the crow flies” and “my lover steals.” It contrasts between smooth melodic lines and sharp, articulated phrases. The fifth piece, “*Violon*,” is in great contrast to “*Il Vole*.” It is meant to evoke the feeling of a night club where the woman is entranced by the sensual sound of the violin and its player. “*Violon*” is a unique piece because of its style of almost excessive expression, allowing the singer to create dramatic, connected lines.

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Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

**Allerseelen (1885)**

**Ich Schwebel (1901)**

**Die Nacht (1885)**

*Duration: 8 minutes, 15 seconds*

Richard Strauss was a German composer best known for his tone poems and operas. These three pieces are examples of his characteristic quiet climaxes and romantic texts that give a strong feeling of yearning. *Allerseelen* (All Soul's Day) represents the day when people contemplate their loved ones whom they have lost. The piece has a sense of reminiscence and melancholy, but not despair. The gentle melodic phrasing of both the voice and piano create a heartwarming environment of nostalgia. *Ich Schwebel* (I float) is a light piece of music, giving the feeling of a young couple dancing the waltz. The vocal line moves up and down the musical staff quickly, which creates a sense that the singer's voice can truly float up and down with ease. The counter melody of the piano often moves in a way that evokes the feeling of a heartbeat, representing the palpitations of the narrator's heart. *Die Nacht* (The night) is a piece about fear—fear of losing one's lover and everything they hold dear to the darkness of the night. The piano holds harmonic tension throughout, creating the sense of quiet horror underneath the lyrical description of everything the night steals.

Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835)

**Vaga Luna, Che Inargenti (1838)**

**Malinconia, Ninfa Gentile (1829)**

**Ma Rendi Pur Contento (c. 1820)**

*Duration: 7 minutes, 45 seconds*

Though Bellini lived a short life, his Italian art songs have lived on to be some of the greatest examples of the *bel canto* (beautiful singing) style that we have to this day. He had a distinct style of repeated arpeggiated or broken chords that can be heard through these three art songs. *Vaga luna, che inargenti* (Lovely moon, that turns to silver) is one of the most famous pieces he ever wrote. It is a heartwarming piece that confronts the ache of distance from one's lover, known for its gentle melody of longing. The simple melody that is repeated twice allows for its expressive nature to shine. *Malinconia, ninfa gentile* (Melancholy, gentle nymph) is a similarly simple song that features a melodic line that flows, mirroring the fountain mentioned in the piece. The narrator characterizes the feeling of melancholy as a nymph, devoting their life to it with pleasure. *Ma rendi pur contento* (Just to make her happy) explores the devotion of love that causes one to place their lover's happiness above their own. The smooth, expressive

melodic line builds tension by using tight, stepwise motion as the narrator declares that they live more in their lover than they do in themselves.

Florence Price (1887–1953)

**The Moon Bridge (1930)**

**An April Day (1949)**

**Spring (1913)**

**Hold Fast to Dreams (1945)**

*Duration: 7 minutes*

Florence Price was an American composer and pianist largely known for being the first Black woman to be recognized as a symphonic composer. She composed over 300 works during her lifetime, many of which were art songs. The *Moon Bridge* was composed as a choral piece for high voices but was also arranged for solo voice and piano. The narrator tells a story of fairies and their whimsical activities under the light of the moon. It gives a sense of childlike wonder with its bright and bouncy melody. *An April Day* evokes a feeling of relaxation, stating “sufficient is it just to live” on such a beautiful day. The virtuosic piano line mimics the wafting zephyrs mentioned in the song. *Spring* is unique in that it includes text written by Price herself. It is composed in three, making it feel like an ecstatic springtime waltz. She wrote of the beauty of nature of spring, which invoke both the dream and pain of ecstasy. *Hold Fast to Dreams* is one of her most popular songs, set to poetry by Langston Hughes. The long, dramatic vocal line accompanied by a fast and fluttery piano part makes the entire piece feel dreamy. The text calls for one not to let go of their dreams, otherwise life is barren and broken.

*Notes by Ella Kozak*



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