



DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Saturday, April 25, 2026 • 4:00 PM

**SOFIA LoCONTE &
AIDAN COSTANZO**

Junior Recital

Murray and Michele Allen Recital Hall
2330 North Halsted Street • Chicago

Saturday, April 25, 2026 • 4:00 PM

Allen Recital Hall

SOFIA LOCONTE, SOPRANO &

AIDAN COSTANZO, BARITONE

Junior Recital

SAORI CHIBA, PIANO

PROGRAM

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Chevaux de bois (1887)

Clair de lune (1884)

Nuit d'étoiles (1880)

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

From *Frauenliebe und Leben*, op. 42 (1840)

Seit ich ihn gesehen

Er, der Herrlichste von allen

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben

Du Ring an meinem Finger

Süsser Freund, du blickest

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

From *I Hate Music!: A Cycle of Five Kid Songs* (1943)

I Hate Music!

- Intermission -

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912)

Six Sorrow Songs, Op. 57 (1904)

I. Oh, what comes over the sea

II. When I am dead, my dearest

III. O roses for the flush of youth

IV. She Sat and Sang Alway

Sofia LoConte & Aidan Costanzo are from the studios of Jeffrey Ray & Chuck Chandler. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the degree Bachelor of Music.

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

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

Automne (Trois Mélodies, Op. 18, No. 3) (1878)

Mandoline (Cinq Mélodies de Venise, Op. 58, No. 1) (1891)

Les berceaux (Trois Mélodies, Op. 23, No. 1) (1879)

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Winterreise, Op. 81, D. 911 (1828)

IV. Erstarrung

XI. Frühlingstraum

XV. Die Krähe

XXIV. Der Leiermann

PROGRAM NOTES

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Chevaux de bois (1887)

Clair de lune (1884)

Nuit d'étoiles (1880)

Duration: 8 minutes, 15 seconds

More than 100 years after his death, Claude Debussy remains one of the most influential composers in Western classical music. Debussy's compositional style was pioneering in its use of innovative harmonic textures to create lush colors. His music evokes dreamy imagery similar to the Impressionist paintings of the era. By the end of his life, Debussy had popularized a sound in Europe that prioritized beauty above all else. Today, he is widely regarded as the 'father' of French Impressionism in music.

In his younger years, however, Debussy's compositions displayed a far more jubilant, romantic quality. Originally published in 1888, "Chevaux de bois" (Merry-Go-Round) is the fourth song in the *Ariettes oubliées* (Forgotten Ariettes) song cycle and a stark departure from the three previous songs. Energetic and lively in its opening, "Chevaux de bois" paints an atmospheric picture of a merry-go-round at a busy park: ever-turning and slightly nauseating. After a dizzying repetition of text written by Paul Verlaine, this piece finishes with a melancholic, nostalgic mood as night falls upon the slowing carousel.

Debussy was admitted to the prestigious Conservatoire de Paris at the age of 11, where he would study for the next 11 years. During his time there, he wrote *Quatre Chansons de Jeunesse* (Four Songs of Youth) from which "Clair de lune" (Moonlight) comes. This piece explores the duality of longing and loving: being sad beneath masquerade masks, singing about life but in a sad "minor key," and fountains "sobbing with ecstasy," all beneath the moonlight.

Written by teenage Debussy, "Nuit d'étoiles" (Night of Stars) is considered his first published composition and captures the young composer's fascination with sound painting. He set the dramatic poetry of Théodore de Banville, describing a lost lover, and comparing them to elements in nature, to rich chords in the piano, and a sighing vocal line. These three songs examine the early compositions of Claude Debussy and his first steps toward becoming the composer he is remembered as today.

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

From *Frauenliebe und Leben*, op. 42 (1840)

Duration: 16 minutes

Robert Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben* is a popular eight-part song cycle depicting "A Woman's Love and Life." The unnamed female protagonist journeys from falling in love with a man at first sight ("Seit ich ihn gesehen,") to marrying him ("Du Ring an meinem Finger,") to birthing their child ("An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,") and follows the woman to her husband's eventual death. Throughout her character arc, the narrator is defined by her relationship to a man and to motherhood. This poetry, written by Adelbert von Chamisso, offers a reductive and outdated perspective on a woman's life and begs the question: "What value does this piece hold for the modern listener?"

Robert Schumann was married to virtuoso pianist and composer Clara Schumann, with whom he had seven children. Throughout their marriage, she was the breadwinner and ultimately his main support during his debilitating mental health struggles. His entire marriage was an inversion of the *Frauenliebe und Leben* story. In other words, the cycle is an idealist fantasy of what he perhaps wished his relationship with his wife could have resembled. It was only after a years-long legal battle with Clara's father, who wished to keep the two apart, that they were granted permission to marry. Robert is thought to have gifted the piece to Clara as a wedding gift, a manifesto for their marriage, and a plea for subservience.

Today, we recognize that Robert Schumann's own marriage bore very little resemblance to this composition, but it still has merit because of its universal pathos and sheer beauty of the music. The intense emotions of love and devotion it conveys are timeless, shared by both listeners of the 19th century and the present-day. *Frauenliebe und Leben* holds so much deeply moving human emotion that Robert Schumann is able to carry us into the fantasy as well and lower a modern audience's antagonism towards this archaic view of womanhood. Musically, the melodies are so simple but deeply evocative, with certain movements feeling almost nostalgic and lullaby-esque. Additionally, Robert Schumann had an unparalleled talent for creating a conversational feel between the singer and the pianist. The sheer beauty of this composition is able to overcome its hypocritical message.

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

From *I Hate Music!: A Cycle of Five Kid Songs* (1943)

Duration: 1 minute

"I hate music!" is what Edys Merrill, Leonard Bernstein's friend and roommate, used to shout— ears covered, walking around the apartment when Bernstein would coach opera singers. Naturally, he dedicated *I Hate Music!: A Cycle of Five Kid Songs* to her. Only seven minutes in total, the work is sung from the perspective of a 10-year-old girl named Barbara. In true Bernstein fashion, the cycle has a jazz-like improvisatory feel. The entire work explores youthful exuberance and the confident insights of children that adults seem to forget. Classical music can seem unwelcoming or cold for the uninitiated, but the titular third piece, "I Hate Music!" pokes fun at that in its satirical style, with Barbara saying: "I hate music! But I like to sing."

Notes by Sofia LoConte

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912)

Six Sorrow Songs, Op. 57 (1904)

Duration: 8 minutes

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, the son of a Sierra Leonean doctor and an Englishwoman, had his first worldwide success at just 23 years old with the publication of his magnum opus, three cantatas based on H.W. Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*. These compositions would launch him to stardom, with the composer being hailed as "the musical lion of London" (The Colored American) and "perhaps the greatest [composer] in the world" (Washington Bee). His successes would afford him the opportunity to tour his works through the United States from 1904–1910.

In America, Coleridge-Taylor would meet and collaborate with some of the greatest literary and musical minds of the time including Booker T. Washington, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Frederick J. Loudin, and most importantly W.E.B. Du Bois. He also received an audience with then-President Theodore Roosevelt. Despite his connection to Du Bois, it was actually the influential black pianist Mamie Hilyer who would send Coleridge-Taylor a copy of Du Bois's book *The Souls of Black Folk*, which enamored the composer greatly. The book's final chapter, *Sorrow Songs*, is a reflection on the slave song and the concept of black suffering being communicated via song, such as the spiritual, a genre rapidly rising to prominence during the turn of the century.

At the same time in his native England, the poetry of Christina Rossetti, a young upper-class white poet now considered by many to be the greatest female poet of the Victorian era, was being rediscovered and lauded widely. Despite these seemingly disparate works, Rossetti's poetry would give voice to Coleridge-Taylor's own set of *Six Sorrow Songs* which he wrote and performed by the end of 1904 and had published in 1906. These unabashedly romantic songs explore love, loss, grief, and the duality of the self, themes that are also central to Du Bois's book.

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

Automne (Trois Mélodies, Op. 18, No. 3) (1878)

Mandoline (Cinq Mélodies de Venise, Op. 58, No. 1) (1891)

Les Berceaux (Trois Mélodies, Op. 23, No. 1) (1879)

Duration: 7 minutes

Arguably the most famous composer of French *mélodie*, Gabriel Fauré wrote over 100 art songs, most of which are still a part of the vocal music canon to this day. I have selected three pieces that, I believe, show the emotional range and depth of Fauré's work that keeps it in concert halls and hearts over 100 years later. "Automne" is a reflection on painful nostalgia, looking back on the lightness of one's youth with a newfound heaviness in the heart. "Mandoline," written last of the three, is a lighthearted description of a scene bursting with lively figures from the pastoral tradition. Finally, "Les Berceaux" is a description of a seaside town where men leave on ships to work and adventure, leaving behind tearful wives and children whose plaintive cries seem to draw the ships back home.

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Winterreise, Op. 81, D. 911 (1828)

Duration: 13 minutes

Despite his untimely death at just 31, Franz Schubert would leave behind one of the most vast and beloved bodies of work in the musical canon. Schubert composed operas, symphonies, chamber pieces, and over 600 *lieder* (German art song). In the last five years of his life while suffering a fatal illness, Schubert would compose three large-scale lieder cycles, which are considered some of his greatest works. His final cycle, *Winterreise* (Winter Journey), tracks the roaming of a man who has left behind a lover who broke his heart. Over its 24 songs, the man wanders through the snow searching for meaning, for companionship, for truth, and, in the end, finds the sweet release of death. One can only imagine the scene of Franz Schubert, slowly dying in his small room writing fondly of death as it looms before him. In 1828, he would perform these 24 pieces in full to a

small group of friends, all of whom thought it too dark and dreadful to enjoy. In response, Schubert "...leap[t] up and replied: 'These songs please me more than all the rest, and in time they will please you as well.'" Published in two groups of 12, the final collection would not reach the public until after Schubert's death in late 1828. He died a starving artist, never knowing the heights of fame which his music would reach.

Notes by Aidan Costanzo