



DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Sunday, February 8, 2026 • 7:00 PM

ISABELLA
WILIFORD

Junior Recital

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

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Allen Recital Hall

ISABELLA WILIFORD, SOPRANO

Junior Recital

LEO RADOSAVLJEVIC, PIANO

PROGRAM

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)
Let The Bright Seraphim, from *Sampson* (1741)

Jules Massenet (1842–1912)
Il est doux, il est bon from *Hérodiade* (1881)

Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936)
Stornellatrice P .69 (1906)
Pioggia P .90 (1909)

Amy Beach (1867–1944)
Three Browning Songs, Op.44 (1900)
1. The Year's at the Spring
2. Ah, Love, but a day!
3. I send my heart up to thee!

Franz Schubert (1798–1828)
Nacht und Träume D.827 (1825)
Gretchen am Spinnrade from *Faust* (1814)
Du bist die ruh Op.59, No.3 (1822)

Isabella Wiliford is from the studio of Viktoria Vizin. 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.

PROGRAM NOTES

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Let The Bright Seraphim, from *Sampson* (1741)

Duration: 5 minutes, 45 seconds

George Frideric Handel was a Baroque composer who composed thirty oratorios and fifty operas. “Let the Bright Seraphim” is from the oratorio *Samson*, which tells the story found in the Book of Judges within the Old Testament. Handel composed *Samson* immediately after *Messiah* in 1741 and it became an immediate success. “Let the Bright Seraphim” is a triumphant aria for coloratura soprano and trumpet. This da capo aria celebrates Samson’s heroic end by calling heavenly hosts to praise him featuring vocal trumpet imitation. Handel originally intended to end this oratorio on a tragic note but then decided to add this aria which leads into the final chorus.

Jules Massenet (1842–1912)

Il est doux, il est bon from *Hérodiade* (1881)

Duration: 4 minutes, 50 seconds

Jules Massenet is renowned for his emotionally rich music that creates vivid atmospheres. He is most well-known for his opera *Manon*, while having written over 33 operas over the course of four and a half decades.

“Il est doux, il est bon” meaning, “He is sweet, he is good” is an aria from Massenet’s opera *Hérodiade*, and sung in Act 1 by Salomé to Phanuel, a Chaldean astrologer. This scene takes place in the courtyard of Hérode’s palace during the reign of King Herod Antipas in Jerusalem. Salomé, daughter of the queen, was abandoned at birth and is unaware she is the daughter of King Hérode’s wife. In this piece she declares her desire to find her mother and tell him that only Jean (John the Baptist) truly understands her, describing his comforting voice and presence.

Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936)

Stornellatrice P .69 (1906)

Pioggia P .90 (1909)

Duration: 3 minutes, 10 seconds

Ottorino Respighi was an influential Italian composer, violinist, and musicologist known for his orchestral writing in the “Roman Trilogy” (*Fountains of Rome*, *Pines of Rome*, and *Roman Festivals*). He was born in Bologna, where he studied violin and composition.

"Stornellatrice" is one of Respighi's most famous art songs exploring themes of love and emotional conflict through the metaphor of a folk singer. A "stornello" is a traditional form of Italian folk song, typically improvisatory and short, dealing with love, and characterized by alternating stanzas. This song is a dialogue between the singer's heartfelt desires and a cynical echo. The singer asks, "what use is it to sing of endless love if the echo only replies with "never" or "die".

"Pioggia" (Rain) was composed in 1909 to a poem by Vittoria Pompili. It describes the beauty and renewal that the rain brings to a parched garden. Respighi uses evocative piano writing to depict the sound and feeling of a downpour. "Pioggia" was originally a standalone work for voice and piano; however Respighi orchestrated it in 1913 as the third song in his *Tre Liriche* P. 99a.

Amy Beach (1867–1944)

Three Browning Songs, Op.44 (1900)

Duration: 7 minutes, 30 seconds

Composer and pianist Amy Beach is recognized as a leading figure in American music. She was the first woman to gain success with large-scale musical forms such as a full symphony. Amy Beach's *Three Browning Songs* are romantic, expressive songs set to the poetry of Robert Browning. The set takes you on a journey starting with a joyful awakening from "The Year's at the Spring." This is followed by "Ah, Love, but a Day," which shifts with harmonic ambiguity to convey a sense of change and longing. Finally, Beach ends this set with "I send my heart up to thee!" which shows a lyrical counterpoint between piano and voice. This piece shows a need for connection to something and a vulnerability through not only words but musical motifs.

Franz Schubert (1798–1828)

Nacht und Träume D.827 (1825)

Gretchen am Spinnrade from *Faust* (1814)

Du bist die ruh Op.59, No.3 (1822)

Duration: 12 minutes, 5 seconds

Franz Schubert was a 19th century Austrian composer bridging the Classical and Romantic eras. He wrote over 600 art songs as well as symphonies, chamber music, and piano works. Despite dying early at only 31 years old, Schubert gained much recognition. He writes with deep emotional expression which shows in not only the vocal line but in the harmonic structures.

“Nacht und Träume” (Night and Dreams) is an art song that floats along slowly, quietly depicting the night of delightful dreams. The melodic line shows graceful simplicity as it soars above the consistent sixteenth notes of the accompaniment, guiding along the text. During the piece there is a modulation to G major mimicking the sunrise continuing the dream-like atmosphere.

“Gretchen am Spinnrade” from *Faust* is about a spinstress, Gretchen, at the spinning wheel in a trance depicting her obsessive thoughts of Faust. The melodic line mirrors her emotional turmoil from heartache to swooning over Faust. The accompaniment mimics the motion of a spinning wheel staying consistent in the rise and fall of the music. The piece builds her emotions and tension until a climactic kiss. Her emotions are so overwhelming that the wheel moves with her. The piece then returns to the spinning motif as she regains composure in her obsession.

“Du bist die ruh” (You are Repose) is a famous German art song expressing deep, mystical love where the beloved is peace. The accompaniment is gentle, in a lullaby-like 3/8 meter which creates an intimate atmosphere. The text at the beginning of the lines is tender and move to create intensity later in the phrase. As the final piece in my recital, I dedicate this to my grandparents Andy and Nancy Zerban who are no longer with us but always gave me the peace that this song brings.

Notes by Isabella Wiliford

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