

Notes

All the pieces in this program share one common theme: they are a reaction or response to an event or idea. Among the six different composers, the responses vary from tender and inquisitive to confrontational and sarcastic. The compositions all date from the years surrounding the two World Wars – a time marked by dramatic political and social upheaval.

Winter Words centers on the gaining of experience - be it is good or bad. Written post-Second World War, this was a time when European society was unsure of how things stood and where their future lay after the monumental destruction. “At Day-close in November” sets the tone for the cycle. Each song illustrates a new scene where the loss of innocence and human righteousness is the center theme. “Before Life and after” provides a moral for the cycle and final thought in the struggle to regain innocence after the moral chaos of years of conflict.

The next group is largely about scenic memories. When listening to the Rorem, “Early in the Morning” appears to have a fond memory attached to it. Hiding within the tonal harmonic structure is slight ambiguity as to whether that memory is a happy one or not. In the *Deux Poemes de Louis Aragon*, the poet explores two different French sites. “C” depicts a scene surrounding the infamous Ponts-de-Cé, which has a rich history in French culture. “Fêtes galantes” provides an animated view of Parisian life on the street.

Kurt Weill and Howard Dietz wrote “Schickelgruber” in response to the rise of Hitler’s regime in Germany. This piece is blatantly confrontational in its anti-Nazi and anti-Hitler stance and unapologetic about it. “Es Regnet” examines human emotions and how they are shown through both words and expression. Hollaender wrote both the music and lyrics to “Münchhausen,” prior to the rise of Hitler. Very clearly a song in protest of the German regime, songs of this nature went into hiding surrounding the war.

Noël Coward, a British composer, adopts a different language of response using sarcasm and wit to depict British high society prior to World War II. “Zigeuner” tells the tale of a gypsy and the exciting life he leads. Written as a satire of the self-righteous imperialism of the British Empire, “Mad Dogs and Englishmen” praises every other cultural group for having the sense to stay inside during warmest time of day. “Mrs. Worthington,” is Coward’s way of asking mothers to stop trying to live their dreams out through their children... especially when those children are of the less-fortunate sort.

Program

<i>Winter Words</i> , Op. 52 (Hardy)	Benjamin Britten
At Day-close in November	(1913 – 1976)
Midnight on the Great Western (<i>or</i> The Journeying Boy)	
Wagtail and Baby (<i>A Satire</i>)	
The little old Table	
The Choirmaster’s Burial (<i>or</i> The Tenor Man’s Story)	
Proud Songsters (<i>Thrushes, Finches, and Nightingales</i>)	
At the Railway Station, Upway (<i>or</i> The Convict and Boy with the Violin)	
Before Life and after	

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Early in the Morning (Hillyer)	Ned Rorem
	(b. 1923)
<i>Deux Poemes de Louis Aragon</i>	Francis Poulenc
C	(1899 – 1963)
Fêtes galantes	

Intermission

Schickelgruber (Dietz)	Kurt Weill
Es Regnet	(1900 – 1950)
Münchhausen (Hollaender)	Friedrich Hollaender
	(1896 – 1976)

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Zigeuner	Noël Coward
Mad Dogs and Englishmen	(1899 – 1973)
Mrs. Worthington	

Thank you to...

Professor Thomas – for believing in me from the very beginning and pushing me forward throughout my time with you. It has been wonderful and I owe you the world for giving me the tools to unlock my voice. I couldn't imagine getting to this point without you.

Cris – for making a recital happen in two months! Working with you this year has been a great experience and I feel like I have grown more since having you as my coach. Your humor and demand for excellence have been wonderful.

My family – for waiting four years to finally hear me sing. You have been there every step of the way and given me the support and push to keep going, even when it got tough.

Grant – for putting up with me throughout this experience and never getting annoyed. You have shown me that you can indeed perform and teach and do both very well.

Darla – for living with me and easing my nerves when I thought I would go crazy. You have always been there to support me and I cannot thank you enough for that!

Kristen – for sticking by my side for too many years. I cannot imagine my life without you. Even when you are across the country, I know you are still by my side.

Rebekah – for being my studio buddy all this time. You have always been there to talk things through and make sense of the craziness we make for ourselves.

The Fabulous Studio of Nova Thomas – for being wonderful every week. I am so blessed to have you all as my support group.

My WCC friends – for the past four years! This has been great growing with all of you here at Westminster. I am proud to call you my friends and colleagues.

Westminster College of the Arts of Rider University
Westminster Choir College
presents

In Response

Kale Thompson
Tenor
Cris Frisco
Piano

Saturday, March 24, 2012
5:30 p.m.
Williamson Hall

Kale Thompson is a candidate for the degree Bachelors of Music in Music Education
Kale Thompson is a student of Nova Thomas