

The Power Of Myth



Wednesday, November 16, 2022

The Department of Music and the Student Activities Council present

Opera and Music Theater Workshop

Meg Bragle Gruits, director
Sirapat Jittapirom, piano

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Rose Recital Hall
University of Pennsylvania



PROGRAM NOTES

Myths and legends have been with us since we first looked with wonder at the world around us and at each other. The power of these stories is the truth they still impart centuries after their creation.

One of Stephen Sondheim's first musicals, *The Frogs*, is based on a play by Aristophanes. It tells the story of Dionysus who goes to the underworld to bring back his favorite playwright in hopes that great art can save civilization.

My Fair Lady may not have an immediately obvious connection to mythology, but was based on *Pygmalion*, a play by George Bernard Shaw. Shaw was inspired by the myth of a king who sculpts his version of a perfect woman brought to life by Aphrodite just as Henry Higgins changes Eliza from a "gutter snipe" into a lady.

In a modern(ish) retelling of the Faust legend, *Damn Yankees* brings the devil to baseball. The tale of Doctor Faustus who sells his soul to Mephistopheles in return for knowledge and pleasure still resonates today. Here, we meet an ordinary man who wants his team (the Washington Senators) to beat the Yankees so badly he trades his soul for the chance to lead them to the championship.

For musicians, the story of Orpheus is particularly poignant. We all wish for our music to reach people so powerfully. Anaïs Mitchell's *Hadestown* is a retelling of two intersecting love stories - Orpheus and Euridice and Hades and Persephone. It shows the power of music to change hearts and create hope and is at the center of our work tonight.

PROGRAM

“Invocation and Instructions to the Audience” from <i>The Frogs</i> Full Company	Stephen Sondheim (1930-2021)
“All I’ve ever known” from <i>Hadestown</i> Laura Jannetta, mezzo soprano	Anaïs Mitchell (1981-present)
“On the Street where you Live” from <i>My Fair Lady</i> Ethan Zhang, tenor	Frederick Loewe (1901-1988)
“Our Lady of the Underground” from <i>Hadestown</i> Emily Monfort, soprano	Anaïs Mitchell
“All Aboard” from <i>The Frogs</i> Thomas Sharrock, baritone	Stephen Sondheim
“Whatever Lola Wants” from <i>Damn Yankees</i> Julia Polster, soprano	Richard Adler (1921-2012) / Jerry Ross (1926-1955)
“Ariadne” from <i>The Frogs</i> John Huebner, baritone	Stephen Sondheim
“Show Me” from <i>My Fair Lady</i> May Pik Yu Chan, soprano	Frederick Loewe
“Hey, Little Songbird” from <i>Hadestown</i> Charles Witmer, bass	Anaïs Mitchell
“Flowers” from <i>Hadestown</i> Grace Matwijec, soprano	Anaïs Mitchell
“Epic III” from <i>Hadestown</i> Troy Zhang, tenor	Anaïs Mitchell
“We Raise our Cups” from <i>Hadestown</i> Emily Montfort, Laura Jannetta, Grace Matwijec and Full Company	Anaïs Mitchell

Opera and Musical Theater Ensemble

Meg Bragle Gruits, director

May Pik Yu Chan, *soprano*

Laura Jannetta, *soprano*

Emily Monfort, *mezzo soprano*

Thomas Sharrock, *baritone*

Ethan Zhang, *tenor*

John Huebner, *baritone*

Grace Matwijec, *soprano*

Julia Polster, *soprano*

Charles Witmer, *bass baritone*

Troy Zhang, *tenor*

Sirapat Jittapirom, piano

With thanks to the University of Pennsylvania Music Department

Dr. Timothy Rommen, Department Chair

Dr. Anna Weesner, Undergraduate Chair

Dr. Michael Ketner, Director of Performance

Sophie Shalit, Performance Operations Coordinator

Mattie Hewitt, Communications Coordinator

Eugene Lew, Director of Sound and Music Technology

and

The Otto E. Albrecht Music Library

Liza Vick, Head

penn music UPCOMING CONCERTS

Thursday, November 17 - 8:00 PM
Penn Baroque and Recorder Ensembles

Friday, November 18 - 6:00 PM
Penn Jazz Ensembles

Sunday, November 20 - 3:00 PM
Penn Wind Ensemble

Friday, December 2 - 7:00 PM
Penn Chamber

Saturday, December 3 - 7:00 PM
Penn Chorale

Monday, December 5 - 7:30 PM
Penn Collegium Musicum

Wednesday, December 7 - 7:30 PM
Penn Sound Collective

Thursday, December 8 - 8:00 PM
Penn Arab Music Ensemble

Saturday, December 10 - 8:00 PM
Penn Symphony Orchestra: Sibelius Symphony no. 2

Monday, December 12 - 7:00 PM
Penn Samba

For more, visit the Music Department Calendar
music.sas.upenn.edu/events