

THE
Aldelburgh
CONNECTION

*Catherine Robbin
and Friends*



WALTER HALL
SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2003
2:30 p.m.

We wish to thank
Che Anne Loewen
for sponsoring Nancy Argenta,
James and Charlotte Norcop
for sponsoring Catherine Robbin,
Patsy and Jamie Anderson
for sponsoring Benjamin Butterfield,
and
Christopher Bunting
for sponsoring
Daniel Lichti
in today's concert.



We are also very grateful to
the Estate of Paul Baker
for its support of this concert.

Paul was a devotee of vocal music in
general, and a great admirer
of Catherine Robbin. His presence
at our concerts is sorely missed;
but we very much appreciate this legacy
to The Aldeburgh Connection in
support of one of his favourite singers



Today's programme is performed
on the Edith McConica Steinway

Catherine Robbin and Friends

NANCY ARGENTA, soprano CATHERINE ROBBIN, mezzo
BENJAMIN BUTTERFIELD, tenor DANIEL LICHTL, baritone
STEPHEN RALLS and BRUCE UBUKATA, piano

Since the creation of The Aldeburgh Connection, more than twenty years ago, Catherine Robbin has been our 'First Lady of Song'. The beauty of her voice continues to inspire us and her communicative powers are unrivalled. There is nothing like Catherine's uncanny ability to identify with a song and to present its meaning to an audience with unerring clarity. We are sad at the thought of what the concert stage is losing, but we are proud and happy to salute her achievements.

Today's programme will reflect many of the highlights of her appearances with us. We begin with the song she sang at the opening of our inaugural concert in February, 1982. (*Sweet was the song* was also the first song sung by Peter Pears at the opening of the first Aldeburgh Festival in 1948.) Our opening concert also included *Abraham and Isaac*, which we repeat this afternoon. Singing in one's own language is the most natural mode of expression; Catherine's skills are both distinctive and instinctive.

French song has been one of her specialities. Early in their work together, Catherine and Bruce toured southern France for the *Jeunesses musicales* and established a rapport in the genre, particularly in the music of Fauré. We remember a superb, ecstatic performance of that composer's *Chanson d'Eve* in the Glenn Gould Studio, February, 1994. The *Lieder* repertory, too, has given us some of the high points of Catherine's career. She was a star, of course, at Schubert's 200th birthday party and during our Wolf centenary commemoration earlier this year. No one who heard her performance of Wolf's *Mignon-Lieder* on February 22 will ever forget it — nor will those who thrilled to the Brahms *Alto Rhapsody* last December.

One cannot be objective in choosing memories and we keep returning to Catherine's singing in English. Fortunately, our 10th anniversary cassette preserves excerpts from *Brush up your Shakespeare* of May, 1987. From that concert, *Tom, Dick or Harry* (*Kiss me, Kate*) should be bronzed! Communication is ultimately what Catherine's art has been about. Her audiences will treasure their memory of it and her students will be the lucky recipients of her wisdom. We wish her long and happy years of rewarding and successful teaching.

Sweet was the song the Virgin sang (*anon.*) John Attey (d. ?1640)

Wir eilen mit schwachen, doch emsigen Schritten (*anon.*)
(Cantata 78) Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

We hasten with faltering, yet eager footsteps, O Jesu, Master, for help. You faithfully seek the sick and erring. Ah, hear how we raise our voices, asking for help! Look graciously and kindly upon us!

I attempt from Love's sickness to fly (John Dryden)
(The Indian Queen) Henry Purcell (1659-95)

Sound the trumpet (*Nahum Tate*)
(Birthday Song for Queen Mary) Purcell

Three songs from 'The Land of Lost Content' (A.E. Housman)
John Ireland (1879-1962)

The Lent Lily
The Encounter
Epilogue

Mandoline (Paul Verlaine) (Op. 58/2) Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Mandolin: The serenaders and the lovely women who listen exchange trivial words under the singing branches. There is Thyrsis and there's the eternal Clytander, and there's Damis who, for many a heartless woman, wrote many a tender verse.

Their short silk coats, their long dresses with trains, their elegance, their joy and their soft blue shadows whirl around in the ecstasy of a pink and grey moon, and the mandolin prattles among the shivers from the breeze.

Dans le forêt de septembre (Catulle Mendès) (Op. 85/1) Fauré

In the forest of September: Branches with muffled sounds, sonorous trunks hollowed by age, the ancient sorrowful forest is attuned to our melancholies.

Oh pine trees gripping the abyss, deserted nests in broken branches, burnt-out thickets, flowers without dew, you know well what suffering is!

And while a man, a pallid passerby, weeps in the solitary wood, laments of shadow and mystery greet him with corresponding weeping.

Kind forest! open promise of the exile that life implores, I come with a still lively step into your depths that are still green.

But from a slender birch tree along the path a leaf, slightly reddish, grazes my head and trembles on my shoulder; it is because the forest, growing old, knowing that winter, when everything miscarries, is already near in me, as in it, gives me the brotherly charitable gift of its first dead leaf.

Pavane pour une infante défunte

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Two duets from Op. 28

Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

Es rauschet das Wasser (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

She: Water is ever in turmoil, ever on the move; the stars wend their care-free way across the sky, as do the clouds. So, too, love is in turmoil and passes on.

He: The waters are in turmoil, the clouds disperse; but the stars remain, changing and wending their way. So, too, with love, if it be true love: it is in motion, and yet it does not alter.

Der Jäger und sein Liebchen (Hoffmann von Fallersleben)

The huntsman and his sweetheart: He: Is not the sky blue? Stay by the window and watch, sooner or later I will come home from the hunt.

She: I have other ideas, I want to dance tonight! Stay away if you won't dance with me! No matter how blue the sky, I'll not stand and wait for you.

Sabbath Morning at Sea (Elizabeth Barrett Browning) (Sea Pictures)

Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

The Vagabond (Robert Louis Stevenson) (Songs of Travel)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac (Chester Miracle Play) (Op. 51)

Benjamin Britten (1913-76)



INTERMISSION

during which tea will be served in the Torel Room
with the kind assistance of students
of the Opera Division, Faculty of Music



Seligkeit (Ludwig Höltz) D433

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Bliss: Joys without number bloom in Heaven's hall for angels and transfigured ones, as our fathers taught. Oh! there would I be, eternally rejoicing!

Sweetly down upon each smiles a heavenly bride; harp and psalter sound, and everyone dances and sings. Oh! there would I be, eternally rejoicing!

I would sooner stay here if Laura smiles at me with a look that says I've to lament no more. Blissful then with her, I'll stay here forever!

Ave Maria (Ellens Gesang III) D839

Schubert

Da unten im Tale

German folksong, arr. Brahms

He: Down in the valley the stream is troubled, and I can't tell you, I love you so.

She: You always talk of love, you always talk of constancy, and a bit of falsehood goes with it too.

He: And if I tell you ten times that I love you, and you don't understand, I shall have to go somewhere else.

She: For the time that you loved me I thank you, and wish that somewhere else you may fare better.

Die Schwestern (Eduard Mörike) (Op. 61/1)

Brahms

The sisters: We two sisters, we beauties, our faces so similar, identical as two eggs, identical as two stars,

We two sisters, we beauties, we have nut brown tresses; if you plait them together, you can't tell them apart.

We two sisters, we beauties, we dress the same, walking in the meadow, and singing hand in hand.

We two sisters, we beauties, we race each other at spinning, we sit together in an alcove, and sleep in the same bed.

O sisters two, you beauties, how the tables have turned! You love the same sweetheart; and now the song is over!

Breit über mein Haupt (Adolf Friedrich von Schack) (Op. 19/2)

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Spread over my head your black hair and incline your face to me, so that into my soul, so brightly and clearly, will stream the light of your eyes.

I do not want the splendour of the sun above, nor the glittering crown of stars; I want only the night of your locks and the radiance of your gaze.

A quiet girl (Betty Comden and Adolph Green) (Wonderful Town)

Leonard Bernstein (1918-90)

Have some Madeira, m'dear (Michael Flanders)

Donald Swann (1923-94)

Dear old Donegal (anon.)

Irish song

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Our popular *Greta Kraus Schybertiad*, this year entitled *Schubert and the Esterházy*, will take place in the Glenn Gould Studio on May 7 at 7:30 pm, with four exciting young singers, soprano **Shannon Mercer**, mezzo **Krisztina Szabó**, tenor **Colin Ainsworth** and baritone **Alexander Dobson**. Our party with Viennese, and this year Hungarian, delicacies will take place at intermission. Single tickets are \$50; please call (416) 205-5555.

We expect our 2003/04 Season Brochure to be mailed out in June. In the meantime, mark these dates in your calendar! The four Sunday Series concerts will take place on November 23, January 25, March 14 and May 2. The three recitals at the Glenn Gould Studio are scheduled for January 14 (tenor Colin Ainsworth), March 8 (soprano Nathalie Paulin) and May 12 (baritone Brett Polegato). Our two Young Artists Recitals will take place on December 2 and February 3. Our website has more information about these concerts: www.aldeburghconnection.org.

Our new double-CD set, released this past summer, *The Aldeburgh Connection's Twentieth Anniversary Collection*, is available in the lobby during intermission at a price of \$30, GST included. More than forty of your favourite artists can be heard on more than sixty tracks — two and a half hours of enjoyment, excerpted from our performances over the years. You may also order this CD through our Box Office at (416) 444-3976.



Box office revenues cover only a portion of our operating budget; grants, corporate funding and individual donations are needed for the balance. Audience members are asked to consider joining one of our supporting categories: **Benefactor** (\$1,000 or more), **Champion** (\$500 or more), **Patron** (\$100 or more) and **Friend** (\$50 or more). Donations may be made by cheque or VISA, and may be made in instalments, if you prefer. You will receive information on our activities, and all donations will be acknowledged with a receipt for income tax purposes. Private donors may also act as sponsors for an entire concert, an artist, a special commission, or the intermission tea; however, other donations and suggestions for corporate sponsorship are also very welcome. Your support is vital in helping to ensure the continuation of these concerts.



We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following in presenting today's concert:

- The Estate of Paul Baker,
- Che Anne Loewen
- James and Charlotte Norcop
- Patsy Anderson
- Christopher Bunting
- Sissinghurst, which has provided today's floral arrangements
- The Ontario Arts Council and The City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council
- many individual donors, including:

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We also gratefully acknowledge the following:

- The George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation for a Senior Artist Grant
- The Ontario Arts Council Foundation for the Lieutenant Governor's Award for the Arts

Aldeburgh is the small town on the east coast of England where Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Eric Crozier founded the Festival of Music which flourishes to this day. Artistic directors Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata have visited and worked there for many summers, as has a large number of the singers appearing with The Aldeburgh Connection.

Nancy Argenta was born and raised in Canada, but moved to England in 1982. In 1983 she attracted critical attention as La Chasseresse in Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. She is a renowned interpreter of Bach, Purcell, Mozart, Schubert and even Schoenberg, and has established a reputation as 'the supreme Handel soprano of our age'. She performs with some of the world's best conductors and chamber music ensembles, in concert and on tour, in recital evenings and at many international festivals: Aix-en-Provence, Aldeburgh, Bath, Berlin, Göttingen, New York, and Vienna. She has worked with most of the leading Early Music conductors on both sides of the Atlantic. Her ability to adapt from large scale orchestral works to chamber music and recitals has earned her great recognition and respect within the world of music. This year she has had concerts with the Gabrieli Consort, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Stavanger Symphony Orchestra and Ensemble Resonanz. She has performed in recital in The Netherlands and France with pianist Kelvin Grout and in Israel, Hungary, Belgium and Turkey with Maggie Cole on harpsichord and fortepiano. Ms Argenta has recorded widely, winning prizes and critical acclaim not only for her baroque interpretation, but also for a CD of Schubert *Lieder*.

Catherine Robbin is welcomed on the world's concert and recital stages in repertoire ranging from Bach and Handel to Britten, Elgar, Schubert, Mahler and Berlioz. A highlight last season was the Canadian première of Penderecki's *Credo* at the International Choral Festival in Toronto with the composer conducting. She sang with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem in Bach's *Magnificat*, *Cantata No. 36* with Portland Baroque, *Messiah* with Tafelmusik, the *St. Matthew Passion* with the Vancouver Bach Choir, and with Chicago's Music of the Baroque in a Vivaldi Festival. This season's engagements include recitals for Vancouver's *Music in the Morning* series and Victoria's *Musica Victoria*, and the Women's Musical Club of Toronto, *Messiah* with San Francisco's Philharmonia Baroque and her final performances of this Handel masterpiece at Roy Thomson Hall with the Toronto Symphony. She has sung Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* (a work she recorded with John Eliot Gardiner for Philips) for the Edmonton Symphony and Bach's *St. John Passion* with the Kitchener-Waterloo Philharmonic Choir. In a special tribute to her artistry and career, the CBC has planned a grand finale at the Glenn Gould Studio with Ms. Robbin and Tafelmusik on May 12, 2003. Ms. Robbin has recently been appointed Assistant Professor of the Music Faculty at York University.

Benjamin Butterfield's career has taken him to the Welsh National Opera, throughout Europe with Trevor Pinnock and the English Concert and with Marc Minkowski and Les Musiciens du Louvre, to performances of *Messiah* in San Francisco, to the Carmel Bach Festival and to Japan's Saito Kinen Festival. He has appeared with the Toronto Symphony in Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, in *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* in Montreal and in New Zealand performing Britten's *Spring Symphony* with the Christchurch City Choir. He has sung with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the RIAS Kammerchor of Berlin, Vancouver Opera, Edmonton Opera, New York City Opera, the Houston Symphony and Grand Opera, and with Il Teatro di San Carlo in Naples. He has appeared in concert at Carnegie Hall, the Royal Albert Hall, the Concertgebouw, La Monnaie and Epidaurous in Greece (in Britten's *War Requiem* with the London Symphony Chorus and the State Orchestra of Thessaloniki) and in the Toronto premiere of Franz Schmidt's *Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln*. Upcoming are concerts with the National Arts Centre, Britten's *Serenade for tenor, horn and strings* with Via Salzburg, *Charlotte* with Queen of Puddings Music Theatre, Bach Cantatas at the BBC Proms, *Barber of Seville* with Opera Ontario and *L'Enfance du Christ* with L'Orchestre Symphonique de Strasbourg. He has recorded the Britten *Canticles* with The Aldeburgh Connection, *Opera Encores* with the Canadian Opera Company and *Everlasting Light* by Christos Hatzis with the Elmer Iseler Singers on CBC Records.

Daniel Lichti is a frequent guest soloist with major North American symphonic, choral, and concert organizations, and has appeared in Europe, Japan, and Argentina. Operatic performances include Handel's *Giulio Cesare* in Rome, and Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* in Montreal, and the King in Handel's *Ariodante* with Opera in Concert. This season he sings Fauré's *Requiem* in Calgary and Don Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro* in Montreal, tours the UK with the Bethlehem Bach Choir, and sings Bach's *Johannes Passion* with the Kitchener Waterloo Philharmonic Choir. He has sung Schubert's *Winterreise* at Washington's National Gallery, for Festival Canada in Ottawa, at the Shenandoah Bach Festival in Virginia, and will record this work for ATMA Classique. Recently he gave a series of duo recitals with Catherine Robbin "Songs from Venus and Mars" in Ottawa, Elora, Carmel, California and on CBC. He has made Carnegie Hall appearances in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with St. Luke's Orchestra, and in Bach's *Mass in B Minor* on its centenary in North America with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, and has performed this work in the Thomas Kirche in Leipzig and the Herkules Saal in Munich. He is Associate Professor and Coordinator of Voice for the Faculty of Music at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo. His discography includes *Songs of Hugo Wolf*, two discs of Bach cantatas and the *Mass in B Minor* with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem and recordings of *Lieder* with pianist Janina Fialkowska.



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