

WONG YONG EN, SOPRANO  
ASHLEY CHUA, PIANO  
ELICIA NEO, VIOLIN

# *Junior Recital*



J.S. BACH  
L. BOULANGER  
F. POULENC  
A. SUKARLAN

Thursday, April 29, 12:30pm  
Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music  
Concert Hall/YouTube

# *Acknowledgements*

Thank you for attending my recital, and for reading my programme notes! I am truly glad you are here. Let's have a good time.

My heartfelt gratitude to:

Prof Bennett, for years of guidance and encouragement

Ashley, for playing so many notes

Elicia, for opening this recital with us

The overworked YST crew

The voice studio, for making me laugh

My parents, for gifting me my greatest joys: being alive, and pursuing music



# Programme

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

“Laudamus Te”

*Mass in B Minor* (1749)

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

“Jesu, Brunnquell aller Gnade”

*BWV 162 Ach! Ich sehe, itzt, da ich zur Hochzeit gehe* (1715)

LILI BOULANGER

I. “Elle était descendue au bas de la prairie”

XI. “Les lilas qui avaient fleuri”

*Clarières dans le ciel* (1914)

FRANCIS POULENC

I. “C”

II. “Fêtes Galantes”

*Deux Poèmes de Louis Aragon* (1943)

ANANDA SUKARLAN

Puisi Pendek tentang Cinta (2015)

Sonian Menjelang Senja (2015)

O You Whom I Often and Silently Come (2013)

If I Can Stop One Heart From Breaking (2014)

# Notes

Opening our recital is the “**Laudamus Te**” from Bach’s Mass in B Minor. The violin begins with a bright, virtuosic rendition of the song’s melodic themes, later echoed by the voice. The two instruments weave their lines in and out of each other, creating a dancelike counterpoint so resonant with the joy of the text.

Following this is “**Jesu Brunnquell aller Gnade**”, the third piece from a church cantata (a narrative told through a succession of solo songs and choral works). The poetry is in German, i.e. spoken language as opposed to Latin liturgical text. This was crucial to Lutheran belief that worship and Scripture should be available in the native language, so that more people could understand. On an emotional level, this also makes the worship feel more personal and earnest.

## Texts and Translations

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

“Laudamus Te”

*Mass in B Minor* (1749)

Laudamus Te  
Benedicimus Te  
Adoramus Te  
Glorificamus Te

We praise Thee  
We bless Thee  
We adore Thee  
We glorify Thee

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

“Jesu, Brunnquell aller Gnade”

BWV 162 *Ach! Ich sehe, itzt, da ich zur Hochzeit gehe* (1715)

Jesu, Brunnquell aller Gnade  
Labe mich, elenden Gast  
Weil du mich berufen hast

Jesus, fountainhead of all grace  
Refresh me, a wretched guest  
Since You have called upon me

Ich bin matt, schwach, und beladen  
Ach, erquicke meine Seele  
Ach, wie hungert mich nach dir

I am weary, weak, and burdened  
Ah, refresh my soul,  
Ah, how I hunger after You!

Lebensbrot, das ich erwähle  
Komm, vereine dich mit mir

Bread of Life, which I have chosen,  
Come, unite myself with You!



# Notes

I was completely enamoured by Boulanger's thirteen-song cycle when a friend suggested I perform some for this recital. Here are songs number **one** and **nine**, both perfumed with floral imagery and washes of extended chords. The first song is a nostalgic painting of a past adolescent love. The second is one of doubt, reflecting on a year that has passed and preparing for heartbreak that is to come.

Next is Poulenc's set of Louis Aragon poems. These are war songs; both composer and poet fought for the French Resistance in World War II, and were thus intimately acquainted with the devastation of war. "**C**" narrates the crossing of a bridge at the Ponts-de-Cé: a site of several battles throughout France's history, including at the French Revolution. Haunting images are juxtaposed against one another: a wounded knight, an unlaced corset, swans lying in trenches... This was characteristic of the Surrealist literary movement, to which Aragon was a vital contributor. All the while, Poulenc's performance marking "trés calme" and spaced-out chord voicings adds to the song's dreamlike character. "**Fêtes Galantes**" is a weird mass of puns set to music marked "unbelievably fast, in the style of a music hall". This gross juxtaposition heightens the absurdity and vulgarity of the scenes described.

# *Texts and Translations*

LILI BOULANGER

*Clarières dans le ciel* (1914)

I. "Elle était descendue au bas de la prairie"

Elle était descendue au bas de la prairie,  
et, comme la prairie était toute fleurie  
de plantes dont la tige aime à pousser dans l'eau,  
ces plantes inondées je les avais cueillies.

Bientôt, s'étant mouillée, elle gagna le haut  
de cette prairie-là qui était toute fleurie.  
Elle riait et s'ébrouait avec la grâce  
dégingandée qu'ont les jeunes filles trop grandes.

Elle avait le regard qu'ont les fleurs de lavande.

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She descended to the bottom of the meadow,  
and, as the meadow was flowering  
with plants whose stems loved to sprout from the water,  
I plucked these flooded plants.

Then, drenched all over, she climbed to the top  
of the flowering meadow.  
She laughed and snorted with the  
gangly grace of young girls who are too tall.

She had the look of lavender flowers.

# *Texts and Translations*

XI. "Les lilas qui avaient fleuri"

Les lilas qui avaient fleuri l'année dernière  
vont fleurir de nouveau dans les tristes parterres.  
Déjà le pêcher grêle a jonché le ciel bleu  
de ses roses, comme un enfant la Fête-Dieu.

Mon cœur devrait mourir au milieu de ces choses,  
car c'était au milieu des vergers blancs et roses  
que j'avais espéré je ne sais quoi de vous.

Mon âme rêve sourdement sur vos genoux.  
Ne la repoussez point. Ne la relevez pas  
de peur qu'en s'éloignant de vous elle ne voie  
combien vous êtes faible et troublée dans ses bras.

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The lilies which bloomed last year  
will bloom anew in the sad flowerbeds.  
Already the spindly peach tree has littered the blue sky  
with its roses, like a child on Corpus Christi.

My heart will have to die in the midst of all this,  
since it is in the midst of white and pink orchards,  
where I hoped for something from you— I don't know what.

My soul dreams quietly on your knee.  
Do not push it away. Do not lift it  
for fear that it will drive away the one who does not see  
how weak and trembling you are in their arms.



# *Texts and Translations*

FRANCIS POULENC

*Deux Poèmes de Louis Aragon (1943)*

I. "C"

J'ai traversé les ponts de Cé  
C'est là que tout a commencé

I crossed the Ponts-de-Cé  
It's there that everything began

Une chanson des temps passés  
Parle d'un chevalier blessé

A song of times gone by  
Tells of a wounded knight

D'une rose sur la chaussée  
Et d'un corsage délacé

Of a rose on the pavement  
And of an unlaced corset

Du château d'un duc insensé  
Et des cygnes dans les fossés

Of a deranged Duke's castle  
And the swans in trenches

De la prairie où vient danser  
Une éternelle fiancée

Of a meadow where  
An eternal fiancé will dance

Et j'ai bu comme un lait glacé  
Le long lai des gloires faussées

And I drank like iced milk  
The long stories of false glories

La Loire emporte mes pensées  
Avec les voitures versées

The Loire carries away my thoughts  
With the overturned cars

Et les armes désamorçées  
Et les larmes mal effacées

And the defused weapons  
And the tears poorly wiped away

Ô ma France, ô ma délaissée  
J'ai traversé les ponts de Cé

Oh my France, oh my abandoned one  
I crossed the Ponts-de-Cé

# *Texts and Translations*

## II. "Fêtes Galantes"

On voit des marquis sur des bicyclettes  
On voit des marlous en cheval-jupon  
On voit des morveux avec des voilettes  
On voit les pompiers brûler les pompons

On voit des mots jetés à la voirie  
On voit des mots élevés au pavois  
On voit les pieds des enfants de Marie  
On voit le dos des diseuses à voix

On voit des voitures à gazogène  
On voit aussi des voutures à bras  
On voit des lascars que les longs nez gênent  
On voit des coïons de dix-huit carats

On voit ici ce que l'on voit ailleurs  
On voit des demoiselles dévoyées  
On voit des voyous On voit des voyeurs  
On voit sous les ponts passer des noyés

On voit chômer les marchands de chaussures  
On voit mourir d'ennui les mireurs d'œufs  
On voit péricliter les valeurs sûres  
Et fuir la vie à la six-quatre-deux

# *Texts and Translations*

We see marquis on bicycles  
We see pimps in horse costumes  
We see brats with their veils  
We see firefighters burning their pompoms

We see words jump into the garbage dump  
We see words lifted up to the wall  
We see the feet of the children of Mary  
We see the backs of the orators

We see cars pulled by engines  
We see cars pulled by hands too  
We see rascals embarrassed by their long noses  
We see eighteen-carat idiots

We see here whatever we see elsewhere  
We see misguided young ladies  
We see thugs, we see voyeurs!  
We see the drowned passing under the bridge

We see the cobblers lose their jobs  
We see the egg checkers die of boredom  
We see the decline of sure values  
And flee from life on the six-four-two



# Notes

Concluding the recital is a selection of four songs by Indonesian composer Ananda Sukarlan. The first pair are in Bahasa Indonesia. Here, I must thank my friends Cindy and Joshie for helping with translation and diction. The texts are both love poems, reflecting different stages and sentiments of romance. **Puisi Pendek tentang Cinta** (text by Rieke Diah Pitaloka) is a brief love letter sent to a long distance partner. **Sonian Menjelang Senja** (text by Farick Ziat) mourns the arrival of daybreak and the departure of a lover from my bed.

The **last two** are in English, with poetry by Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson respectfully. I am not a great reader of poems but I have adored everything I've read by these writers. Sukarlan sets them with a touching warmth and sincerity.

My research to fulfil the Music and Society degree requirements in my final two YST years surrounds contemporary Southeast Asian music. It has been a lot of work, and the subject means a great deal to me.

If you enjoyed these songs and would like to discover more, please visit [seacamdatabase.com](http://seacamdatabase.com).

# *Texts and Translations*

ANANDA SUKARLAN

Puisi Pendek tentang Cinta (2015)

Maaf aku tidak bisa menulis banyak  
Tinta ku habis  
Semalan kugores langit  
dengan namamu  
Tak perlu bingung begini saja  
Berapapun jarak kita,  
Akan kukirim setangkai cinta untuk mu,  
setiap hari.  
Setuju?



Sorry I can't write much  
My ink ran out  
All night I scratched the sky  
with your name  
No need to be confused, just put it this way  
Regardless of our distance,  
I will send a sprig of love to you  
every day.  
Agreed?

# *Texts and Translations*

ANANDA SUKARLAN

Sonian Menjelang Senja (2015)

Pagi tanpa hujan aku endap kan  
kehilangan bayangmu  
Sisa embun pagi  
bias mentari meluluhkan gelisah

Basah, luka, senja  
merendam letih  
doa doa terlupa



In the rainless morning I mourn  
the loss of your shadow  
The remainder of the morning dew  
the sun's rays melt the restless.

Wet, wounded, the evening  
drowns the tiredness  
of prayers forgotten

# *Texts and Translations*

ANANDA SUKARLAN

O You Whom I Often and Silently Come (2013)

O you whom I often and silently come where you are  
that I may be with you,  
As I walk by your side or sit near, or remain in the same  
room with you,  
Little you know the subtle electric fire that for your sake  
is playing within me.

ANANDA SUKARLAN

If I Can Stop One Heart From Breaking (2014)

If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
I shall not live in vain;  
If I can ease one life the aching,  
Or cool one pain,  
Or help one fainting robin  
Unto his nest again,  
I shall not live in vain.

