



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION  
AND ST. JOSEPH PARISH

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*A family of families*

PRESENTS

**Tunes on a Sunday Afternoon**

September 10, 2023

St. Joseph Church

**At the Turn of the Century:  
Women Voices in Song**  
Performed by Josephine Stracek

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Women Voices in Song**  
*Performed by Josephine Stracek*

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Vítězslava Kaprálová  
1915-1940

**15 Minute Break**

A Dream  
June Twilight  
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1886-1979

Mandoline  
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## Program Notes

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century music has focused on European male composers, often overshadowing an abundance of outstanding contributions from women. Today's program focuses on three composers whose works stand proudly beside their male colleagues as teachers, performers, and composers of merit – Poldowski, Rebecca Clarke, and Vítězslava Kaprálová. The musical selections programmed are a living tribute to their creative energy and many musical accomplishments.

One of the most notable American composers of her time, **Amy Beach** (1867-1944) gained success and recognition through her orchestral compositions. A child prodigy, she made both her performance debut and published her first work in the year 1883. By the time of her death, Beach had published over 300 works.

The selections featured tonight are three of four in Beach's *4 Songs, Op. 1*. Written across the span of two years, the collection includes two pieces in English, one in French, and one in German. "With violets" is set with a chant-like melody, the piano accompaniment creating emotional and tonal shifts based on the text. "Ariette" is marked as if to be sung with a guitar for accompaniment, the tonal changes more apparent in the vocal line with a simple, lilting accompaniment pattern. The third piece in German is based on an old tale of the four seasons and clearly emphasizes shifts in the characters of each "brother" through distinct sections in the piece. All three pieces draw on older musical styles with new harmonic ideas sprinkled throughout.

**Vítězslava Kaprálová** (1915-1940), a child prodigy, began her compositional career at nine and entered conservatory at fifteen. An outstanding composer during her time, recently there has been a renewed interest in her work. While studying at the Prague Conservatory, Kaprálová composed the works she is most well-known for today. Following the German invasion in Czechoslovakia, Kaprálová was left with little support and resource fully partnered with the Czechoslovak Army to compose works for radio, the stage, and the screen. She died suddenly at a young age from the mysterious diagnosis of "army illness."

Opus 18 *Vteriny* (1936) featured on today's program consists of eight pieces, seven songs and a piano interlude. Translated as *Seconds*, the pieces are snapshots into the lives of friends and family members of Kaprálová.

The sixth and seventh songs were written for her father and mother respectively. The texts and tempos of the pieces seem to show a commentary on Kaprálová's feelings towards these two individuals. The most interesting dedication is the sixth song, a piano solo. Written after the death of the first president of Czechoslovakia, "Postmrtná variace" is based on the folksong "Tatíčku starý náš" ("Our dear old dad").

"Novoroční" ends the cycle as the shortest yet most profound piece. Looking to the future, the work brings hope to the forefront. Beginning with a changing of the guards, the narrator exclaims "Let it be good" three times before reflecting on "All that is in the future is covered in silence," a keen reminder that we all have a blank slate at the start of each new year. The piano accompaniment ends on an open octave in the bass as if leaving an open-ended question about the future to come.

English composer and viola player **Rebecca Clarke** (1886-1979) is recognized in the world of orchestral music. Although Clarke never completed a degree, she became well-known as a violist, one of the first female musicians in a fully professional ensemble. During her travels throughout Europe and America, she also gained fame as a composer through her Viola Sonata

(1919) and Piano Trio (1921). During World War II, Clarke settled in the United States and returned to composing. Most of her music remains unpublished.

Clarke is clear in her directions and markings for both the vocal and piano parts in her compositions. She is careful in her text setting and harmonic shifts to provide an insight into her view of the poetry she sets. In *A Dream*, originally from W.B. Yeats poem *A Dream of Death*, Clark first creates a dreamlike world through with a triplet and eighth note ostinato pattern of the piano accompaniment, shifting subtly on the word “wondr’ing” to a new tonal center and creating a hopeful feeling for the listener. In *June Twilight*, Clarke sets the word “dips” on a descending triplet pattern before resolving to a held middle C on the word “sets.” These tonal shifts confirm a profound understanding of the poetry.

*The Seal Man* rounds out today’s set and is a mini opera. In only a short five minutes, Clarke directly takes the prose from a small section of John Masefield’s *The Seal Man* and flips the story on its head, focusing on the female character over the story of the Seal Man. The piano accompaniment and vocal lines work as partners, oftentimes handing each other the spotlight to progress the story. Descriptive texts and drama are found doubled with heavy piano parts. Statements and character quotes are set in a careful quasi-recit style.

Facing a life filled with trials and tribulations, our first composer chose for herself the pseudonym **Poldowski** (1879-1932) to sign her compositions. Régine Wieniawski was an accomplished composer and pianist. Born in Brussels to an English mother and Polish father, she showed great promise on the piano at an early age. She gained popularity through public performances of her own works before moving to London at the age of 16. She is often remembered in the vocal world for her setting of 22 Verlaine poems, four of which are featured on today’s program.

Poet Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) was an accomplished and well-known writer of his time. In *Art poétique*, Verlaine described his artistic vision as, “*Music before everything...[I] prefer lines of uneven syllables, vaguer and dissolving better into air...For we still want shades, not plain color, nothing but shades!*” Poldowski artfully crafts this idea into her settings of Verlaine’s poems.

In all of today’s selections, the piano accompaniment acts as a collaborator with the voice – a mandolin in a fantastical outdoor world, distant bells resounding through green hills, or an off-kilter beating of the heart after a tryst with a lover. The syllabic vocal line focuses on clarity of text. In *Mandoline*, the declamatory nature of the line emphasizes the matter-of-factness of the narrator describing the scene before them. Most of the pieces are through-composed, giving importance to each stanza.

Upon continued discussion and performance of works by women composers, we can remain hopeful that the future will embrace them more generously than our three heroines.

## WITH VIOLETS

*Words by Kate Vannah (1855-1933)*

The violets I send to you  
Will close their blue eyes on your breast;  
I shall not be there, sweet, to see,  
Yet do I know my flowers will rest,  
Within that chaste, white nest.

O little flowers, she'll welcome you  
So tenderly, so warmly!  
Go. I know where you will die tonight.  
But you can never, never know  
The bliss of dying so.

If you could speak!  
Yet she will know  
What made your faces wet,  
Although I fain would follow you, and tell.  
There, go and die, yet never know  
To what a heav'n you go.

## DIE VIER BRÜDER The Four Brothers

*Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805)*

Vier Brüder ziehn jahraus, jahrein,  
Im gauzen Land spazieren;  
Doch jeder kommt für sich allein,  
Uns Gaben zuzuführen.

*Four brothers walking year out, year in,  
Wandering through the country;  
But each arrives on his own,  
Bringing us a gift.*

Der erste kommt mit leichtem Sinn,  
In reines Balu gehüllet,  
Streut Knospen, Blätter, Blüten hin,  
Die er mit Düften füllet.

*The first comes with a light mind,  
Wearing pure blue,  
He spreads buds, leaves, and blossoms,  
Filling them with perfume.*

Der zweite tritt schon ernster auf  
Mit Sonnenschein und Regen,  
Streut Blumen aus in seinem Lauf,  
Der Ernte reichen Segen.

*The second comes more seriously  
With sunshine and rain,  
He sprinkles the flowers as he passes,  
And offers rich blessings for the harvest.*

Der dritte naht mit Euberfluss  
Und füllet Küch' und Scheune,  
Bring uns zum süssesten Genuss  
Viel Aepfel, Nüss' und Weine.

*The third bursts with abundance  
And fills kitchens and barns,  
He brings to use for sweetest consumption  
Many apples, nuts, and wines.*

Verdriesslich braust der vierte her,  
In nacht und Graus gehüllet,  
Sieht Feld und Wald und Wiesen leer,  
Die er mit Schnee er füllet.

*Drowsily the fourth roars in,  
Wrapped in darkness and Horror,  
He empties the fields, woods, and meadows,  
Which he fills with snow.*

Wer sagt mir, wer die Brüder sind,  
Die so einander jagen?  
Leicht räth sie wohl ein jedes Kind,

*Who can tell me, who the brothers are,  
That chase each other?  
Every child can likely guess,*

Drum brauch ich's nicht zu sagen.

*Therefore I need not say.*

**Translation by Josephine Stracek**

ARIETTE

*Words by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)*

As the moon's soft splendor  
O'er the faint, cold starlight of heaven  
Is thrown,  
So thy voice most tender  
To the strings without soul has given  
Its own.

The stars will awaken,  
Though the moon sleep a full hour later  
Tonight:  
No leaf will be shaken  
Whilst the dews of thy melody scatter  
Delight.

Though the sound overpowers,  
Sing again,  
With thy sweet voice revealing  
A tone of some world far from ours,  
Where music and moonlight and feeling  
Are one.

VTEŘINY, op. 18 Seconds

I. BÍLÝM ŠÁTKEM MÁVÁ, KDO SE LOUČÍ

**A white scarf is waved by the person saying goodbye**

*Jaroslav Seifert (1901-1986)*

Bílým šátkem mává,  
kdo se loučí,  
Každého dne se něco končí,  
Něco překrásného se končí.

*A white scarf is waved,  
by those who say goodbye,  
Something ends every day,  
Something beautiful ends.*

S nadějí i bez naděje  
Věčně vracíme se domu.

*With hope and without hope  
We always return home.*

Šetří si slzy a úsměj se uplakanýma očima,  
Každého dne se něco počíná,  
Něco překrásného se počíná, se počíná.

*Save your tears and smile through teary eyes,  
Something is done every day,  
Something beautiful is beginning, is beginning.*

**Translation by Josephine Stracek**

II. RODNÝ KRAJ Home Region

*Jan Čarek (1898-1966)*

Co nejkrásnějšího jsem měl,  
Tobě jsem dal.

*I had the most beautiful thing,  
I had you.*

Potůčků ptačí zpěv,  
Líbezných pílí lásku,  
Tvé duši světlo hvězd.

*Birds are singing,  
Diligent love,  
Light from your soul.*

Co nejkrásnějšího jsem měl,  
Tobě jsem dal, synu můj!

*I had the most beautiful thing,  
I was given you, my son!*

Až dospěl čas  
A okouzlit tě svět,  
Co moří spatřil jsi,  
Hor vyšších než jsou mě,  
Nebeské zálivy,  
Kde fíky horké sluncem  
Padají oslíkům na útlá kopýtká.

*The time came  
And the world enchanted you,  
You have seen the seas,  
Mountains higher than mine,  
Heavenly bays,  
Where the figs in the hot sun  
Fall on the donkeys' small hooves.*

Co ká moh tobě dát?  
Režných klasů zář,  
Chudý příkop svůj,  
Mateřidoušku svou,  
Co já moh tobě dát?

*What can I give you?  
The glow of the ears of corn,  
This poor ditch,  
My mother-in-law,  
What can I give you?*

Koroptví hejna vzbouzeje,  
Až jednou se ke mně vrátíš,  
Hlavě tvé dám klid,  
Ó synu můj, synu můj.

*Partridge flocks awaken,  
When you come back to me one day,  
You shall have your own peace,  
Oh son of mine, son of mine.*

**Translation by Josephine Stracek**

### III. PÍSEŇ MILOSTNÁ Love Song

*Folk Text*

Tři sta ptáčků štěbetálo  
V tom lesíku javorovém.  
Co to oni povídali,  
Aj se hory zelenaly?

*Three hundred birds chirped  
In the maple grove.  
What were they saying,  
Even the mountains turned green?*

Svítilo se po všem dvoře,  
Po všem dvoře až v komoře.  
V té komoře bílé lože,  
Na tom loži milá leží,  
Zlatý prsten v ruce drží.

*There was a light all around the yard,  
All over the yard and into the chamber.  
There is a white bed in that chamber,  
My love lies on the bed,  
Holding a gold ring in their hand.*

Kdo ten prsten snímat bude?  
A kdož jinej než můj milej.

*Who will take the ring?  
Who else but my beloved.*

**Translation by Josephine Stracek**

### IV. VELIKONOCE Easter

*Fráňa Šrámek (1877-1952)*

Aleluja  
Po nebi, po zemi světlo proudí,

*Alleluia  
Light flows across the sky and the earth,*

Stříbrná s modrou vyzvánějí.  
Daleký, daleký, šate bílý,  
Ulétáš křídly andělskými.  
Postříben, pokropen jehnědami  
Sám a sám usednu pod jívami.  
Písnička smutná je,  
Ale je má  
Písnička smutná je  
Aleluja.

*Silver with a blue ring.  
Far, far, dressed in white,  
You fly with angelic wings.  
Consumed, sprinkled with dogwoods  
Alone and alone I will sit under its lifeforce.  
The song is sad,  
But he has them  
The song is sad  
Alleluia*

**Translation by Josephine Stracek**

## V. POSMRTNÁ VARIACE **Posthumous Variations**

### VI. LÉTA MLČÍ, LÉTA JDOU **The years are silent, the years go by**

*Fráňa Velkoborský (1900-1958)*

Léta mlčí, léta jdou,  
Hrob svůj poklad skrývá,  
Smrt si zpívá za vodou,  
Když se připozdívá.

*The years are silent, the years go by,  
The grave conceals its treasures,  
Death sings behind the water,  
When he gets late.*

Jas přiletí oblohou,  
Stáří prstem kýva,  
Léta mlčí, léta jdou,  
Píseň nedoznívá,

*Brightness will fly through the sky,  
Old age shakes its finger,  
The years are silent, the years go by,  
The song doesn't fade away.*

**Translation by Josephine Stracek**

### VII. MŮJ MILÝ ČLOVĚČE **My dear man**

*Folk Text*

Můj milý člověče,  
Blížít' se k svítání,  
Slyšíš milé kohoutky,  
Jak vesele chválí svého Stvořitele,  
Pána andělského,  
Ano i ti ptáčkové již velebí jeho.

*My dear man,  
It is getting close to dawn,  
Can you hear the sweet sounds,  
How joyfully they praise the Creator,  
Angel lord,  
Yes even the little birds praise him.*

At' pro Krista Pána Tobě požehná,  
S svými vyvolenými  
Věčnou radost dá.

*And for Christ's sake he will bless you,  
With his elect  
He will give eternal joy.*

Oko nevidělo,  
Ucho nedlyšelo,  
Ni člověku na srdce  
Kdy jesti vstoupilo,  
Jaká radost' čeká každého věrného,  
Kterýž právě miloval Pána Boha svého.

*Eye did not see,  
Ear did not hear,  
Not in a person's heart  
Does it fully feel,  
What joy awaits every faithful one,  
Who justly loved the Lord his God.*

**Translation by Josephine Stracek**



VIII. NOVOROČNÍ New Year's  
*Josef Hora (1891-1945)*

Když stráže své čas vyměňuje  
V nového roku znamení,  
Necht' dobré je,  
Co v budoucnu je  
Pokryto v jeho mlčení.

*When the guards exchange their time  
In the new year,  
Let them be good,  
All that is in the future  
Is covered in silence.*

**Translation by Josephine Stracek**

A DREAM  
*W. B. Yeats (1865-1939)*

I dreamed that one had died in a strange place  
Near no accustomed hand;  
And they had nailed the boards above her face,  
The peasants of that land,  
And, wond'ring, planted by her solitude  
A cypress and a yew:  
I came, and wrote upon a cross of wood,  
Man has no more to do:  
*She was more beautiful than thy first love,  
This lady by the trees:*  
And gazed upon the mournful stars above,  
And heard the mournful breeze.

JUNE TWILIGHT  
*John Masefield (1878-1967)*

The twilight comes;  
the sun dips down and sets,  
The boys if done  
play at the nets.

In a warm golden glow  
The woods are steeped.  
The shadows grow;  
The bat has cheeped.

Sweet smells the new mown hay;  
The mowers pass  
Home, each his way,  
through the grass.

The night wind stirs the fern,  
A nightjar spins;  
The windows burn  
In the inns.

Dusky it grows. The moon!  
The dews descended.  
Love, can this beauty in our hearts end?

THE SEAL MAN

*John Masefield*

And he came by her cabin to the west of the road, calling.  
There was a strong love came up in her at that,  
and she put down her sewing on the table, and "Mother," she says,  
"There's no lock, and no key, and no bolt, and no door.  
There's no iron, nor no stone, not anything at all  
will keep me this night from the man I love."  
And she went out into the moonlight to him,  
there by the bus where the flow'rs is pretty, beyond the river.  
And he says to her, "You are all of the beauty of the world,  
will you come where I go, over the waves of the sea?"  
And she says to him: "My treasure and my strength," she says,  
"I will follow you on the frozen hills, my feet bleeding."  
Then they went down into the sea together,  
and the moon made a track on the sea, and they walked down it;  
it was like a flame before them. There was no fear at all on her;  
only a great love like the love of the Old Ones,  
that was stronger than the touch of the fool.  
She had a little white throat, and little cheeks like flowers,  
and she went down into the sea with her man,  
who wasn't a man at all.  
She was drowned, of course.  
It's like he never thought she wouldn't bear the sea like himself.  
She was drowned, drowned.

**MANDOLINE Mandolin**

*Paul Verlaine (1844-1896)*

Les donneurs de sérénades  
Et les belles écouteuses  
Échangent des propos fades  
Sous les ramures chanteuses.

*The performers of serenades  
And their lovely listeners  
Exchange insipid comments  
Beneath the singing branches.*

C'est Tircis et c'est Aminte,  
Et c'est l'éternel Clitandre,  
Et c'est Damis qui pour mainte  
Cruelle fait maint vers tendre.

*Tircis and Aminte are there,  
And there is the eternal Clitandre,  
And there is Damis who for many a cruel woman  
Wrote tender verses.*

Leurs courtes vestes de soie,  
Leurs longues robes à queues,  
Leur élégance, leur joie  
Et leurs molles ombres bleues

*Their short silk jackets,  
Their gowns with long trains,  
Their elegance, their joy  
And their soft blue shadows*

Tourbillonnent dans l'extase  
D'une lune rose et grise,  
Et la mandoline jase  
Parmi les frissons de brise.

*Whirling in ecstasy  
Of a pink and grey moon,  
And the mandolins chatters  
Amid the shivering of the breeze.*

**Translation by Josephine Stracek**

**EN SOURDINE Muted**

*Paul Verlaine*

Calmes dans le demijour  
Que les branches hautes font,  
Pénétrons bien notre amour  
De ce silence profond.

*Calm in the twilight  
Cast by the high branches,  
Let us deeply sit in our love  
In this profound silence.*

Fondons nos âmes, nos coeurs  
Et nos sens extasiés,  
Parmi les vagues langueurs  
Des pins et des arbousiers.

*Let us join our souls, our hearts  
And our enraptures senses,  
With the vague languor  
Of the pines and the shrubs.*

Ferme tes yeux à demi,  
Croise tes bras sur ton sein,  
Et de ton coeur endormi  
Chasse à jamais tout dessein.

*Half close your eyes,  
Cross your arms over your breast,  
And from your sleeping heart  
Forever rid yourself of all thought.*

Laissons-nous persuader  
Au souffle berceur et doux  
Qui vient à tes pieds rider  
Les ondes de gazon roux.

*Let us surrender  
To the gently rocking of the breeze  
That comes rippling at your feet  
In waves across the green grass.*

Et quand, solennel, le soir  
Des chênes noir tombera,  
Voix de notre désespoir,  
Le rossignol chantera.

*And when, solemnly, the evening comes  
Black shadows will fall from the oaks,  
And the voice of our despair,  
The nightingale will sing.*

**Translation by Josephine Stracek**

### **BRUXELLES Brussels**

*Paul Verlaine*

La fuite est verdâtre et rose  
Des collines et des rampes,  
Dans un demi-jour de lampes  
Qui vient brouiller toute chose.

*Slopes and hills fade away  
In greenish pink colors  
In the half-light of lamps  
Which blurs everything together.*

L'or sur les humbles abîmes,  
Tout doucement s'ensanglante,  
Des petits arbres sans cimes,  
Où quelque oiseau faible chante.

*Gold, in the humble abysses,  
Slowly turns blood-red.  
Among the tops of the small trees  
A bird sings faintly.*

Triste à peine tant s'effacent  
Ces apparences d'automne.  
Toutes mes langueurs rêvassent,  
Que berce l'air monotone.

*Sadly fades away  
The appearance of autumn,  
All of my languor is reliving,  
Rocking in the monotonous air.*

**Translation by Josephine  
Stracek**

### **CYTHÈRE Cythera**

*Paul Verlaine*

Un pavillon à claires-voies  
Abrite doucement nos joies

*The latticed arbour  
Gently guards our joys*

Qu'éventent des rosiers amis;      *As the friendly rose-trees cool;*

L'odeur des roses, faible, grâce      *The smell of the roses, although weak, is graceful*  
Au vent léger d'été qui passe,      *Upon the light summer wind as it passes,*  
Se mêle aux parfums qu'elle a mis;      *Mixed in with her perfume;*

Comme ses yeux l'avaient promis,      *Coming to her eyes as a promise,*  
Son courage est grand et sa lèvre      *Her courage is great and her lip*  
Communique une exquise fièvre;      *Communicates an exquisite fever;*

Et l'Amour comblant tout, hormis      *And Love fills everything, apart from*  
La Faim, sorbets et confitures      *Hunger, so they eat sorbets and candies*  
Nous préservent des courbatures.      *To preserve them from their aches.*

**Translation by Josephine Stracek**