



UArkMusic

2026-2027 Season

GUEST ARTIST RECITAL

Dr. Alexandra Schoeny, soprano

Dr. Rachel AuBuchon, piano

Friday, October 2, 2026
Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall
7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

Fiançailles pour rire (1939)

Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)

- I. La dame d'Andre
- II. Dans l'herbe
- III. Il vole
- IV. Mon cadavre est doux comme un gant
- V. Violon
- VI. Fleurs

Hermit Songs (1953)

Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)

- I. At St. Patrick's Purgatory
- II. Church Bell at Night
- III. St. Ita's Vision
- IV. The Heavenly Banquet
- V. The Crucifixion
- VI. Sea-Snatch
- VII. Promiscuity
- VIII. The Monk and His Cat
- IX. The Praises of God
- X. The Desire for the Hermitage

Refuge (2026)

Griffin Candey
(b. 1988)

- I. After Parting
- II. I Am Not Yours
- III. The River
- IV. The Answer
- V. Refuge

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PROGRAM NOTES

This program is a survey of 20th and 21st century song cycles for soprano. So much of our literature is viewed through the lens of comparison to the “original” song cycle for women – *Frauenliebe-und-leben* by Robert Schumann and Adelbert von Chamisso. *Frauenliebe* contains some truly beautiful music for both singer and pianist. And yet, I have always been troubled by the fact that this woman’s life began the moment she saw her future husband and ended when he preceded her in death. Part of my job as a performer is to put the piece in the context of its time – when the cult of domesticity and the “Angel of the House” was the ideal for European women of a certain social standing. However, it is also my job as a performer and teacher to diversify the repertoire for women and ensure representation of a more complete version of womanhood.

Poulenc’s *Fiançailles pour rire* (1939) is a setting of poetry by his friend since 1934, Louise de Vilmorin. Each song is its own small world, bringing us to the terrestrial realities of marriage, relationship, memory, and the passing of time. “La dame d’Andre” is a gimlet-eyed assessment of an impending connection, while “Dans l’herbe” takes us to the scene of a tragic death. “Il vole” captures the feeling of a love flowing in only one direction, consuming the mundane with its fervor. “Mon cadavre est doux” speaks to the moment when a life comes to its end, literally or poetically. “Violon” is an evocation of a libertine evening accompanied by live music. The gentle, insistent nostalgia of “Fleurs” gives shape to memory in its bittersweet finality. All of these snapshots are more extroverted than the Schumann/von Chamisso cycle, reflecting the modern sensibilities of the poet, who married three times and led an international life in her own right and as the partner of powerful and aristocratic men.

Samuel Barber’s *Hermit Songs* were premiered by Leontyne Price in 1953. The cycle is a setting of fragments found in 8th-13th century Irish religious texts, some scribbled in the margins of manuscripts, others, like “The Heavenly Banquet,” attributed to saints – in this case, St. Brigid, the patron saint of Ireland and of beer. While the monastic life is often seen as a male calling, the ecstatic “St. Ita’s Vision” is a distinctly female experience, which supports Barber’s desire for a soprano voice to sing the cycle. By exploring the life of the spirit, Barber allows the voice of a woman to escape the bounds of relationship to men and to ascend to a more contemplative plane.

Griffin Candey’s *Refuge* is a cycle I commissioned after I moved to Missouri. It seemed only right that the poetry be of Missouri, and the verses by Sara Teasdale (b. 1884 in St. Louis, MO) express the complexities of womanhood in the modern era. Her collection, *Love Song* (1918), won the first Columbia Poetry Prize, which was later renamed the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. The New York Times Book Review stated that “Miss Teasdale is first, last, and always a singer.” As a singer privileged to say her words, I must agree. Can-

dey's music is evocative of natural themes while richly textured with a distinctly American sound. I am so grateful to have the opportunity to share these songs with you this evening.

I would like to thank my wonderful colleagues in the University of Missouri School of Music, my Arts and Humanities Research cohort, and the Office of the Provost for supporting the creation and presentation of these songs, both here and at several other universities in the SEC this fall. To my students, you inspire me daily. To my children, you are my sunny valley. Finally, to Dr. Rachel AuBuchon, this program would not have happened without you. Thank you for your magic.

- Dr. Alexandra Schoeny

Translations for Fiançailles pour rire

I. Andre's Woman

Andre does not know the woman
Whose hand he takes today.
Does she have a heart for the future
And for the evening a soul?

Returning from a country dance
Did she, in her loose gown,
Seek in the haystacks
A ring of random betrothal?

Did she fear, when the night came,
Watched by the shadows of the past
In her garden when winter
Entered by the wide avenue?

He loved her for her complexion
For her Sunday good humor.
Will she fade on the blank pages
Of his album of better days?

II. In the grass

I can say nothing more
Do nothing more for him.
He died for his fair one

He died a fair death
Outside
Under the tree of Justice
In utter silence
In open country
In the grass.

He died unnoticed
Crying out as he passed
Calling out
Calling for me
But I was far from him
And his voice carried no more
He died alone in the wood
Under his childhood tree
And I can say nothing more
Do nothing more for him.

III. Stealing Away

The sun as it sets
Is reflected in my polished table
It is the round cheese of the fable
In the beak of my scissors.

But where is the crow? Stealing away.

I want to sew but a magnet
Attracts to itself all my needles
In the square skittle-players
Pass the time in game after game.

But where is my love? Stealing away.

I have a thief for a lover
The crow steals and my lover steals
Thief of hearts breaks his word
And the cheese-thief is fled.

But where is happiness? Stealing away.

I cry under the weeping willow
I mix my tears with its leaves

I weep because I want to be wanted
And I do not please my thief.

But where is love? Stealing away.

Find the reason in my nonsense
And along the backroads
Bring me back my wandering love
Who takes my heart and my senses.

I want my thief to steal me.

IV. My corpse is soft as a glove

My corpse is soft as a glove
Soft as a glove on icy skin
And my hidden pupils
Make two white pebbles of my eyes.

Two white pebbles in my face
Two mutes in the silence
Still darkened by a secret
Laden with the weight of things seen.

My fingers that roamed so often
Are joined in a saintly pose
Resting on the hollow of my sorrows
At the center of my arrested heart.

And my two feet are mountains,
The last two hills I saw
At the very moment I lost the race
That the years always win.

Your memory of me is true
Children, bear it away swiftly.
Go, go, my life is over.
My corpse is soft as a glove.

V. Violin

Loving couple of misheard sounds
The violin and its player please me
Ah! I love these wailings stretched

On the string of disquiet.
To the sounds of strung-up chords
At the hour when Justice is silent
The heart, shaped like a strawberry,
Gives itself to love like an unknown fruit.

VI. Flowers

Promised flowers, flowers held in your arms
Flowers from a step's parenthesis
Who brought you these winter flowers
Sprinkled with the sea's sand?
Sand of your kisses, flowers of faded loves
Your lovely eyes are ashes
And in the hearth
A heart ribboned with regrets
Burns with its sacred images.

PERSONNEL

Dr. Alexandra Schoeny

In repertoire spanning Monteverdi to Gregory Spears, Cincinnati native Alexandra Schoeny is known for her versatility and engaging stage presence. With a voice hailed as “hauntingly beautiful” by Opera News, she is equally praised for her convincing character portrayals as she “embodies melodrama with flair,” (Broadway World).

Alexandra has performed with ensembles including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and May Festival Chorus, Cincinnati Opera, Cincinnati Ballet, Het Residentie-Orkest (The Hague), het Nederlands Jeugd-Orkest, the Omaha Symphony, the Reno Philharmonic, the Eugene Symphony, and in venues including Het Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Das Konzerthaus (Berlin), the Palace of Versailles, the Kimmel Center, and the Mann Center in Philadelphia.

Upcoming appearances include Britten’s *Rejoice in the Lamb* in Columbia, MO, a tour of SEC universities to premiere Griffin Candey’s new song cycle, *Refuge*, settings of poems by Sara Teasdale, and a return of *Christmas with The Union*, a choral-orchestral celebration of the holiday season.

Along with her colleague, conductor Trevor Kroeger, Alexandra founded *Breath Collective*, a production company, to create immersive and relevant musical experiences that bring artists and communities together. In her role as Founder and Co-President, Alexandra is deeply involved in the creative process for the organization’s innovative programming.

Alexandra attended the College-Conservatory of Music where she received her DMA in voice with a cognate in stage direction, the Royal Conservatoire of the Hague (M. Opera), the Royal Academy of Music (M.Mus, DipRAM), and Northwestern University (B.M). She is an alumna of Aspen Music Festival, English National Opera OperaWorks, the Britten-Pears Programme, and the Lincoln Chapman Young Artists’ Preparatory Program.

Operatic roles include: Micäela, Donna Anna, Erste Dame, Pamina, Zerlina, Dircé (Medée), Sofia (Il Signor Bruschino), Clarina (La cambiale di matrimonio), Adina (L’elisir d’amore), Thérèse (Les mamelles de Tirésias), Marie-Christine (Galileo Galilei), Frasquita, Mrs. Julian (Owen Wingrave), Miss Lightfoot (Fellow Travelers), Nella (Gianni Schicchi). Oratorio appearances include Messiah, Ein Deutsches Requiem, Mozart’s Requiem, Faure’s Requiem, Lord Nelson Mass, Theresienmesse, St. Matthew Passion, Mass in b-mi-

nor, Carmina Burana, Finzi's In Terra Pax, Mahler's Symphony No. 4, and Barber's Knoxville: Summer of 1915.

Alexandra is Assistant Professor of Voice at the University of Missouri. She can be heard as Miss Lightfoot on the original cast recording of Gregory Spears' Fellow Travelers on the Fanfare Cincinnati label.

Dr. Rachel AuBuchon

Pianist Rachel AuBuchon has the heart of a collaborator. Whether assisting choirs in her youth, playing numerous recitals of chamber music, being part of creative opera production, elevating new composers' voices in performance, or simply spending hours in rehearsal, her passion for creating with others abides.

Rachel's recent engagements include a series of virtual recitals with Lauren Auge, soprano, a production of Il Trovatore with KC Festival Opera, and Landlocked Opera's production of The Magic Flute. Her love of vocal literature led her to participate in the CoOPERative program and serve as a staff accompanist for the national NATS conference for multiple years. She also participated in the inaugural year for collaborative pianists at the NATS intern program under the mentorship of Warren Jones. Other notable performances include the North American Saxophone Conference with Trio Chymera, and the World Saxophone Congress with Leo Saguiguit. An avid supporter of new music, Dr. AuBuchon participated in the International Composers Festival in Columbia Missouri, served as a rehearsal pianist for the first UMKC Sounding Board event, and brought to life performances of students' opera works at UNCG's Opera at the Carolina.

Rachel served on the faculty of Stephens College, Truman State University, and UMKC, and now makes a return to the University of Missouri at Columbia. She holds degrees from Truman State University, University of Missouri at Columbia, and University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her journey in learning and musical artistry includes study with David McKamie, Janice Wenger, Natalia Bolshakova, Paul Crabb, James Douglass, and countless talented musicians with whom she has had the privilege to collaborate.