

Martha Lopez, soprano
Lurray Myers, piano
Joseph Shields, guitar

Saturday, November 4, 2017
7:30 p.m.

Program

Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835)

Sei ariette

1. *Malinconia, ninfa gentile* (1:58)
2. *Ma rendi pur contento*(2:16)
3. *Per pietà, bell'idol mio* (2:45)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

4. *Wie Melodien zieht es mir*, Opus 105, No. 1 (2:01)
5. *Feldeinsamkeit*, Opus 86, No. 2 (2:45)
6. *Botschaft*, Opus 47 No. 1 (2:16)

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

7. *Vocalise*, Opus 34, No. 14 (5:33)

Intermission

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Airs Chantés

8. *Air Romantique* (2:06)
9. *Air Champêtre* (1:31)
10. *Air Grave* (2:26)
11. *Air Vif* (1:35)

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

Siete Canciones Populares Españolas

12. *El paño moruno* (1:19)
13. *Seguidilla murciana* (1:33)
14. *Asturiana*(2:10)
15. *Jota*(3:44)
16. *Nana*(1:44)
17. *Canción*(1:15)
18. *Polo*(2:01)

Rex Willis (1956)

19. *Fortuna* (3:59)

About the Artists

Martha A. Lopez is a lyric-coloratura soprano, performer, educator and versatile musician. First trained as a classical pianist, she earned her Bachelor's degree in Music from Stetson University in 1997. After Martha earned her Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance in 2006 at the University of South Florida, Tampa. After Graduate school, Martha continued her vocal studies in New York with Shirlee Emmons and Rosa Vento. Martha has been heard in recitals, concerts and opera in Florida, Illinois, Texas and Wisconsin. She has appeared as a guest artist with the Sarasota Pops Orchestra, North Port Symphony and Saint Petersburg Opera. Martha has released three recordings: *Encanto: Art Songs of Spain and Latin America*, *Seven Sacred Songs* and *It's for You...for Christmas*. Martha serves on the music faculty at the State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota and is also the Director of Music at Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Community in Lakewood Ranch, Florida.

Lurray Myers, piano, holds a Master of Music in Accompanying from the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles. For several years she served as Staff Accompanist for the Conservatory of Music, University of Missouri at Kansas City, and spent various summers playing for the Blossom Festival sponsored by the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra at Kent State University, Kent, OH, the Phyllis Curtin Seminars at Tanglewood, MA, Lyric Opera and Starlight Theater in Kansas City, MO, and Community Concerts touring the Midwest. In Sarasota, she served as a Music Director for an apprentice production for the Sarasota Opera, as Associate Director and Director of the Sarasota Girls' Choir, as accompanist for Gloria Musicae, Florida Voices, the Gulf Coast Men's Chorus, the Fellowship of Methodists in Music and Other Worship Arts workshops, and Master Classes with Roberta Peters and Anna Moffo sponsored by the Sarasota Opera Guild. Since 1991 she has been Staff Accompanist for the music department at State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota and since 1987 has served as church organist in the area, currently at Saints Peter and Paul, The Apostles, Catholic Church in Bradenton.

Award-winning guitarist/composer **Joseph Shields** has performed as recitalist and chamber musician throughout the United States including Los Angeles, New York's 92 nd Street Y, St. Paul's Chapel, Advent Lutheran and Christ, St. Stephen's Church, the National Liberty Museum in Philadelphia and has been a featured performer for GuitarSarasota, the Long Island Guitar Festival, the Cherry Blossom Festival in Macon, GA and lecturer at the Stetson International Guitar Workshop. He was awarded the Eliot Fisk Prize "to an outstanding guitarist" by Yale University where he was heralded for his "exciting and virtuosic playing". Mr. Shields also won the top prize in the 1998 Belle and Lynum Jackson Competition for excellence in music performance held annually at Marshall University. Having begun his formal studies with celebrated guitarist and composer Rex Willis, Joseph Shields holds degrees from Yale, Marshall and Stetson Universities. He has served on the faculties of both Shawnee State and Marshall University. After eighteen years in New Haven, CT, Mr. Shields has recently returned to his hometown of Sarasota, FL with his wife and their four children where he maintains an active career as a performer, composer, teacher and lecturer.

Program Notes

Born in Catania, Sicily, **Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835)** is best known for his ten operas. Most of his pieces for voice and piano were written before 1825, when his first opera premiered.

Malinconia, ninfa gentile, Ma rendi pur contento and ***Per pietà bell' idol mio*** were published in the collection *Sei Ariette di Camera* in 1829. The collection is dedicated to Marianna Pollini, the wife of Francesco Pollini, a piano teacher at the Milan Conservatory. The childless couple esteemed Bellini as a son and nursed him through a variety of illnesses.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) was born in Hamburg, Germany, but spent most of his professional life in Vienna, Austria. Brahms wrote symphonies, concerti, piano works, choral compositions and more than 200 art songs.

Russian composer **Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)** composed the ***Vocalise*** in 1915. This freely moving melody without words is written in simple binary form with a short coda. It has its' basis in an initial motif sung in the style of the Russian Znamenny chant, with its free meter and rhythm. The *Vocalise* is one of Rachmaninoff's most famous compositions.

Airs Chantés are set to the poetry of Jean Moréas. When Parisian composer **Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)** composed these pieces, he went out of his way to make his contempt towards the poetry of Jean Moréas known. He chose to set four of Moréas' sonnets as a challenge to himself and also to tease his friend François Hepp, who admired the poet. Poulenc joked that the poetry was "suitable for mutilation." Despite Poulenc's harsh criticism of Moréas, the poet was quite popular in France during that time.

Siete Canciones Populares Españolas were written by Spanish composer, **Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)**. In 1907, de Falla moved to Paris, a city thriving with the collaboration of artists, musicians and poets. He befriended many leading composers such as Dukas, Albéniz, Debussy, Fauré and Ravel. The following year, de Falla composed the *Siete Canciones*, many based on popular Spanish folk songs.

Fortuna by **Rex Willis (1956)** was composed in the summer of 2009 and premiered the same year in recital with Martha Lopez, soprano and Rex Willis, guitar. ***Fortuna*** is based on a poem written by Martha Lopez. A published composer, Willis has had his music performed all over the world. Willis' original music has been reviewed in the top classical guitar publications as "accessible . . . skillful . . . powerful . . . seductive . . . an absolute gem of a piece . . . highly desirable". Willis received a world premiere for Guitar Octet in June 2014 at the prestigious GFA Annual Convention at Cal State University Fullerton. He has composed the film scores for several award winning independent movies including two for One Day Films of Tampa. He composed the score for the musical *¡Ybor!* and wrote the book, lyrics, and music for a new musical *Something for Nothing*. Willis serves on the music faculty at the State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota.

