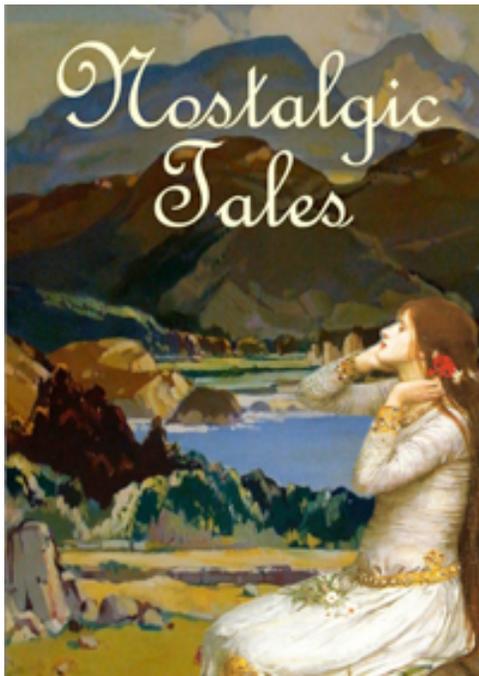


Preview

Concert at St. Paul, Cleveland Heights to feature music by Margi Griebing-Haigh played by family & friends

by Mike Telin



Summer is a time when people take time to reunite with families and friends, doing whatever it is they enjoy doing together. On Tuesday, July 23 beginning at 12:00 noon in Tucker Hall at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cleveland Heights, a 70-minute free chamber music concert will be presented featuring the music of composer Margi Griebing-Haigh.

The idea to put the concert together came when Griebing-Haigh and her husband, Cleveland Orchestra first assistant principal bassist Scott Haigh learned that their daughter Gabrielle would be home on break from Clare College, Cambridge where she has been studying Classics as well as singing in the renowned Clare College Choir. “Gabrielle has been having a fair amount of success in Cambridge, getting to perform solo parts in concert on tour and in recordings, so I thought since she was home it would be very nice to do recital as a family.”

Gabrielle Haigh, who plans to focus more of her attention on voice when she returns to Clare College in the fall, will be featured in *Sonnets of Resignation* (poetry by Edna St. Vincent Millay), written for her by her mother in 2011 and premiered in Cambridge this past winter. Although Griebing-Haigh has composed a number of pieces based on the poetry of Millay, “These are the first songs I have specifically written for Gabby. They’re not fluffy pieces and really are a little philosophical. For example, the first sonnet is about how you would you react if you discovered that your lover had died by reading it in a newspaper while riding the subway. That kind of gives you the idea.”

What was it like to hear her daughter, for whom she had written the piece, perform her music? “It was absolutely and incredibly wonderful for me. To be sitting in the Clare College Chapel listening to her sing them for the first time, it was pretty magical.”

Two pieces on the program were written for her husband and premiered during the Double Bass Convention at the Eastman School of Music this past June. The first, *Bocadillos Iberianos* (2005), inspired by their travels during their honeymoon, has been performed

by Cleveland Orchestra bassoonist Barrick Stees. “It works beautifully on bassoon but it works differently if not better on bass because it was conceived for the instrument and is full of things that the bassoon can’t quite do in the same way.”

The second, *The White Trout* (2012), a humorous/dramatic Irish folk tale for narrator David Gooding, soprano, piccolo, harp, bass and piano, was commissioned by Peter Gallagher, a former student of Scott Haigh’s turned businessman. “Peter Gallagher is of Irish decent and since I had had success with [my other compositions with narrator] like *Babar the Elephant* as well as with a Norwegian folk tale, I thought let’s go with an Irish tale. That had a lot to do with the choice of instrumentation; the piccolo sounding like a penny whistle and the harp — and of course I needed a bass. But in this case the soprano is used more like an instrument. She vocalizes a good deal and only has little bits of melodic material that she sings in Gaelic. It’s like a fairy tale, both funny and tragic and I’m looking forward to see how David Gooding approaches the part but I’m sure he’s going to have fun with it.”

From a Train Window (2012) for violin, viola and cello, was commissioned by former Cleveland Orchestra cellist Diane Mather. “It was titled after it was written,” says Griebing-Haigh. “I was not imagining a trip on a train, but there was something about the juxtaposition of the motifs as they come and go that reminded me of the feeling you get while riding a train — you see hedges out the window then all of a sudden there is a building. Things just pop into your peripheral vision.

The concert also brings together many local musician friends including pianist Randall Fusco with whom Griebing-Haigh was in school at Eastman. She chuckles when recalling that they first met while working in the cafeteria, but later both found themselves living in Cleveland. “I can’t quite remember how and when we first started working together, but he has accompanied Scott, Gabby and myself and played an enormous amount of my chamber music. There are so many great pianists in town who I love working with, but he has done so much for us and has become a very good friend.”

Griebing-Haigh says she feels incredibly fortunate to have the lineup of musicians that she has for this concert. “Every time I put a concert like this together people are so nice. I can’t underline that enough. I have always had phenomenally good luck with people saying yes.” Performers include Kyra Kester, piccolo and Cleveland Orchestra members Emma Shook, violin, Mark Jackobs, viola, Charles Bernard, cello and Trina Struble-Broune, harp.

A free will offering will be collected and if they choose, people can designate it to the Kent/Blossom Music Festival Scholarship Fund or to the Clare College Choir which is planning a tour to the US next year.

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