This Time, It’s Personal!
Singers from the studio of
Dr. Kelly Montgomery in Concert
Joe Ritchie, piano
Dedicated to the ODU Vocal Alumni Reunion

He That Keepeth Israel
Adolphe Schlösser

Promises of the Storm
Marcel Khalife

Company
Seasons of Love from Rent
Soloists—Maria Stanley, Tracy James

New Yorkers struggle in their relationships, careers, and their ability to pay the rent as they feel the effects of the AIDS epidemic. Based on Giacomo Puccini’s opera La Boheme, Rent returns this year for its 20th anniversary in the form of a touring production. This ensemble number is often associated with World AIDS Day and Awareness Month because four of the main leads have AIDS. The lyrics encourage us to measure our lives in love, instead of time. Rent won four Tony Awards and a Pulitzer Prize for Drama for its message of hope in the face of fear. This song was chosen for this message.

He That Keepeth Israel was assigned to me during my second semester here at Old Dominion. I chose this piece because it was a breakthrough moment for me in my lessons working with this particular art song. I remember all the work it took to bring this piece to life, with the various phrasings and dynamics throughout it, and just the feeling of accomplishment after it was all said and done. I feel like this piece was made specifically for my voice, and I enjoy creating a moment of awe each time I perform it.

Promises of the Storm is the title song of a 1983 album recorded by acclaimed Lebanese musician and UNESCO Artist for Peace Marcel Khalife. The text of the piece is drawn from the writings of the Palestinian national poet Mahmoud Darwish. It employs the central metaphor of the storm as a portrayal of the ensuing tumult and strife of social and political revolutions. The text of the poem is also very carefully calculated, as was its necessity to be published amidst the scrutiny of government censors. The tradition or Arabic poetry has been one of invisible protest against persisting authority and repression of free speech. In this way, the (at times) nonsensical words of this and many other poems in the Arab tradition often employ double or even triple entendre. This song is of great personal significance to me as well. When my mother grew up in Damascus, it was one of the songs my grandmother would play for her. After moving to America, pressure to assimilate in light of catalytic political and societal events and changes pushed my mother, and much of her family with her, away from the traditions of her homeland. My singing of this song is a bridging of the gap of sorts. In its arrangement I have merged the very classical and ornamented vocal style of the Arab tradition with the piano accompaniment and setting of Western art song. This juxtaposition is much in the same fashion as myself, a dual identity straddling both worlds.
وعود من العاصفة
Promises of the Storm

وع... And so, let it be...
ولأني لآٍ أن أرفض الموت
And I can assure you that I will refuse death.
...وأن أحرق تأذني من كل الغصون الزائفة
And I will burn the tears of the bleeding songs,
وأن أعرج شجر الزيتون من كل الغصون الزائفة.
And strip the olive trees of all their counterfeit branches.
فإذا كنت أغني للفرح
I have been singing for joy
خلف أجفان العيون الخائفة
Somewhere beyond the eyelids of frightened eyes
فلأن العاصفة
For, the storm
وعندني بنين.. وبأنخاب جديدة وبأقواس قزح
Promised me new toasts of wine and rainbows.
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This song is personal to me because I’ve loved The Little Mermaid since I was 2. When I was 17, I received the CD as a Christmas gift. Of course, I loved most of the songs I heard, but when Beyond My Wildest Dreams played, my eyes lit up and I also had the biggest grin on my face. This song was on repeat on my mp3 player for a while! Another reason I chose this as a “personal” song because it reminds me of the days I first got to ODU. I was stuck in community college for so long. When I finally came to ODU, I was able to study what I really wanted to study – Music Education. Everything felt “Beyond My Wildest Dreams” and I hold on to that feeling as finish up my time here at ODU.

Maria Stanley, soprano

Beyond My Wildest Dreams from The Little Mermaid

Maids: Tina Bow, Shannon Schubert
Carlotta: Tracy James

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INTERMISSION

Alexis Gravely, soprano

Psalms 42

This song holds great value in my life, especially now. The significance of the song isn’t necessarily that it’s based on the book of Psalms but it speaks volumes to many areas of my life. It reminds me of my relationship with God and is part of what He is to me. There have been moments where I’ve found myself running out of options and this song is a reminder when life’s calamities become so overbearing, God is able to fill my soul with living water. This song is the epitome of strength to me especially during stressful moments. I know that when my strength is weak, I can always go to the one that strengthens me!

Caitlyn Kidd, soprano

Mary, Did You Know?

Buddy Greene

This song means a lot to me because my faith is very important to me. Gospel music is what made me realize that I wanted to pursue music as a career. I had a realization that I had something special and I needed to continue using it. Music is something that continues to make me happy and gospel music especially is something that continues to allow me to express myself. This song shows exactly how strong my creator is and how important he is to me.

Company

John Debeny & Joseph Trapanese

This is Me from The Greatest Showman Musical Film

Lettie—Aliya Reed

This recent movie musical is loosely based on the life of entrepreneur P.T. Barnum. Its thematic focus is the importance of family taking precedence before business. Barnum was an entrepreneur and showman known for blurring the lines between imagination and reality in his commercialization of human anomalies. These unusual people were popularly known as Freaks for over 60 years. The remnants of these original human anomalies today live in a small community in Florida during the winter, traveling and struggling for work predominately associated with carnivals the rest of the year. The origins and traditions of viewing those deemed exotic or unusual began in early European and American museums. As circuses gained in popularity, they became a permanent and integral feature of circus sideshows, most notably, The Barnum and Bailey Circus. This is Me was chosen for it’s anthem-like style and strong message that encourages the belief in oneself, no matter what you look like or where you come from.
Senior Recognition

Tracy James—Music Education
Shannon Schubert—Music Education
Maria Stanley—Music Education

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Special Thanks to Mr. Joe Ritchie
for his undying dedication to the art,
and our studio

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