

Hello kind friends and welcome to my Graduating Master's recital! Thank you for joining me for some music, art, and joy.

For this culminating recital, I wanted to present a portrait of myself as an artist, showcase what I've learned in these meaningful two years, and highlight interdisciplinary art forms that work together to inspire and better me.

I love how poetry, visual art, and music can be combined and work together to be greater than the sum of their individuality. I love how human creativity can be so different and yet retain so much commonality. I wanted to offer many avenues of artistic expression as an opportunity to interpret the same story or concept in different ways. The "soul's expression" through the interaction of art forms helps to show us both the power of individual creativity and the beauty of community and collaboration.

In the past, when searching for and selecting repertoire, I have looked for music and melody first. It makes sense, I'm a musician, and music inspires and uplifts me - certain tonalities call to me and my artistic senses more than others.

However, for this recital, I took a different approach - I reversed my process and started with poetry.

I have a deep passion for the written word and I love to gain insight from the perspective of deep thinkers. I take what resonates and try to use meaningful thoughts to help me live in a more purposeful and loving way. Poetry helps me to view my world through a lens of gratitude and to notice more opportunities for growth through a broadened perspective. Poetry lends itself beautifully to combined expression through music - both a poem and a melody intertwined with one another in communion, expressing nuances and aspects of one another neither could reveal in the same way alone. It's one of the most harmonious artistic marriages.

I began with the work of some of my favorite poets: three women mystics, noticers, and change makers, and found musical settings that speak to me.

The three poets I have chosen to feature, Mary Oliver, E. B. Browning, and Emily Dickinson, all write thoughtfully on nature's beauty and wisdom, spirituality, and the nature of love, which are all deeply important to me.

So, my three middle sets are a celebration of the words of those women and their relationship with music, my art form.

The adjacent sets are examples of other musics that have helped me grow in expression and musicianship, to present a broader portrait of myself as an artist.

The first is “haunted” German Lied – dark and dramatic folktales set to music. This type of art song has taught me so much and I wanted to celebrate it here in my culminating recital with a couple old favorites and a few new pieces I’ve always wanted to sing.

The second, arias from *La Fille du Regiment*. Marie is a character that has proverbially held my hand in my journey to confidence on stage and in deeper acting work, so I wanted to celebrate her too, and my first steps into romantic opera. It’s a grand comic opera, but her character still resonates with me, empowers me, and fills me with joy, as I hope she will do for others too.

And my conclusion, two collaborative vocal pieces arranged by the Wailin Jennys, is a love letter to the comfort and love that folk music has brought me. The texts of these pieces combined with close collaboration between women vocalists, too, is in homage to the women, dear friends, and family that have supported me on my journey, and who I hope I have supported too.

Each musical piece is paired with one or more pieces of visual art that I feel expresses the text and feeling of the music, and helps me understand the music more deeply. I encourage you as an audience to determine which art pieces herein best express the different texts and music to you. I have provided many examples here that I am familiar with and love, but don’t stop here! Please explore all the art you know and love as well as that you have never explored, and use it to illuminate your understanding of music and yourself.

I hope you leave today thinking more deeply about how all humans and their art can illuminate truth and beauty in their unique and beloved individuality, as well as work together to build something greater than themselves.

Thank you, and all my love -

Sophie