

## About the Artists

Beginning with her solo debut at *Teatro Municipal de Bahía Blanca*, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the singing career of soprano **Sarah Wilson MacMillan** has encompassed three continents. In addition to return engagements in Argentina, a solo recital at *La Cultura Inglesa* in Sao Paulo, Brazil, was broadcast throughout the region. In the United States and the United Kingdom she has appeared in solo and chamber music recitals, as well as in opera performances, including as "Queen of the Night" (*The Magic Flute*), "Susanna" (*The Marriage of Figaro*), "The Blonde" (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*), "Ilia" (*Idomeneo*), and "Mrs. Heartmelt" (*The Impresario*). Her varied solo repertoire ranges from works by J.S. Bach to contemporary composers, such as Grammy winner Libby Larsen and Jacksonville's own Bob Moore. Before pursuing graduate studies at the Kansas City Conservatory of Music in Missouri, Ms. MacMillan completed her undergraduate work at Occidental College in Los Angeles, California, and now she is coached by Betti McDonald, the Director of the Institute for Musical Arts, in Orlando. Locally, Sarah performs in concert series throughout the First Coast, including recent engagements with the Mayo Clinic, Penney Farms Retirement Community, and the Cathedral Basilica in St. Augustine. She teaches under her married name, Sarah Sassen, and is a member of the North Florida Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

Tenor **Louis Poeltl** was a 1995 Regional Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and subsequently he appeared with the National Opera Company in 175 performances in over 40 states, in such diverse roles as "Fenton" and "Slender" in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, "Paolino" in *The Secret Marriage*, "Pozzo" and "Verada" in *El Capitan*, "Count Amalviva" in *The Barber of Seville*, and "Rodolfo" in *La Bohème*. He also sang the leading role of "Ollantay" in William Hollister's opera, *The Inca's Chosen Bride*, recorded with the Bulgarian National Symphony and Chorale. Mr. Poeltl has performed with numerous symphonies, and his appearances have included recitals and concerts throughout Europe. Most recently, Mr. Poeltl has brought his artistry to the concert stage in recitals throughout the Eastern United States. A native of Waterbury, Connecticut, Louis Poeltl holds a BA in Psychology from Central Connecticut State University, a Master's Degree in Counseling from Webster University, and is pursuing a PhD in Counseling at Barry University. He continues his professional musical studies with Betti McDonald, Founder and Director of the Institute for Musical Arts.

**Bonita Sonsini Wyke** has been an active part of the Jacksonville music community since 1985, and in working with many of the First Coast's leading vocalists, instrumentalists and musical ensembles she has earned the reputation as a musician of unsurpassed sensitivity, technical skill and artistry. Originally from Los Angeles, California, she has performed for more than thirty years as a collaborative pianist and harpsichordist for choral groups, and orchestral and instrumental ensembles. She has been the music director for a wide variety of stage productions, including opera, musical theater and ballet, and for several years was an integral participant in staged productions at Jacksonville University. While at JU she also performed with the Concert Choir and Chamber Singers, as well as for student and faculty recitals. She continues her mentoring of student musicians, collaborating with choral groups at Florida State College at Jacksonville, and with woodwind and brass players at the University of North Florida. A founding member of the San Marco Chamber Music Society, Ms. Sonsini Wyke is a seasoned chamber player, and especially enjoys four-hand piano literature.

# Intermezzo

**Sunday, February 12, 2012 @ 2:30 p.m.**

**Sarah Wilson MacMillan** soprano  
**Louis Poeltl** tenor  
**Bonita Sonsini Wyke** piano

**TRADITIONAL / BROWN : He's Got the Whole World in His Hand**  
**GERSHWIN : Summertime** (Porgy and Bess)  
**FLOYD : The Trees on the Mountains** (Susannah)  
Ms. MacMillan & Ms. Wyke

**TOSTI : Ideale**  
**DE CURTIS : Torna a Surriento**  
**DI CAPUA : 'O sole mio**  
Mr. Poeltl & Ms. Wyke

**PUCCINI : O soave fanciulla** (La bohème)  
Ms. MacMillan, Mr. Poeltl & Ms. Wyke

### BRIEF INTERMISSION

**KANDER : Willkommen** (Cabaret)  
Mr. Poeltl & Ms. Wyke

**KOHN : American Folk Set** (Selections)  
Ten Thousand Miles Away — On the Other Shore — Wanderin' — Red Iron Ore  
Ms. MacMillan & Ms. Wyke

**SCHÖNBERG : Bring Him Home** (Les misérables)  
**SONDHEIM : Being Alive** (Company)  
Mr. Poeltl & Ms. Wyke

**LLOYD WEBBER : Another Suitcase in Another Hall** (Evita)  
**LLOYD WEBBER : Don't Cry for Me, Argentina** (Evita)  
**LLOYD WEBBER : Think of Me** (The Phantom of the Opera)  
Ms. MacMillan & Ms. Wyke

**LLOYD WEBBER : All I Ask of You** (The Phantom of the Opera)  
Ms. MacMillan, Mr. Poeltl & Ms. Wyke

## PROGRAM NOTES

by Ed Lein, Music Librarian

When **William Brown** (1938-2004) joined the faculty of the University of North Florida in 1972, he already had a national reputation as an operatic tenor, with credits including several world premieres, among them the televised production of John La Montaine's *The Sheperde's Playe* (1967), and Hugo Weisgall's *Nine Rivers from Jordan* (1968) with the New York City Opera. The Mississippi native earned his bachelor's degree from Jackson State University (1960), and his master's at Indiana University (1962). After a stint as soloist with the United States Navy Band and Chorus (1962-1966), he began his operatic career in earnest, performing repertoire ranging from Monteverdi and Mozart to the aforementioned contemporary works. But he also taught at Florida Presbyterian College (1970-1972), and completed his doctorate at Baltimore's Peabody Conservatory (1972). Dr. Brown remains one of very few African American men to have achieved national fame as an opera singer, and his career highlights include a 1977 concert with the New York Philharmonic featuring the works of African American composers, and a 1982 recording of Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts*, on a libretto by Gertrude Stein. In 1991, he received the North Carolina Award, the highest civilian award given by that state. Regarding her choice of William Brown's arrangement of ***He's Got the Whole World in His Hand***, Ms. MacMillan writes:

*Dr. Brown was my teacher and mentor for many years, and I would like to dedicate this song to him. I sang this at his memorial service at UNF.*

**George Gershwin** (1898-1937) wrote his first song in 1916 and his first Broadway musical in 1919, and remained a fixture of the New York stage for 14 successive years. In 1924 he enjoyed success in applying jazz idioms to concert works with *Rhapsody in Blue*, and until the end of his life he produced larger-scale works alongside songs for musicals and films. Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess*, with lyrics by DuBose Heyward and Ira Gershwin, premiered in 1935, and it has remained in the standard repertoire ever since. Gershwin began composing the opera's most memorable song, ***Summertime***, in December 1933, and he knew a good thing when he heard it—it appears twice in the opera's first act and reappears in the 2nd and 3rd acts as well. Indeed, *Summertime* is one of the most popular songs ever written: an international group of collectors of recordings of *Summertime* known as "The Summertime Connection" has tabulated over 47,000 public performances, of which more than 38,000 have been recorded!

**Carlisle Floyd** (b. 1926) finished his undergraduate studies in Piano Performance at Syracuse University in 1946. The next year he was accepted on the piano faculty at Florida State University, while continuing his studies at Syracuse University, completing his master's degree in 1949. At FSU Floyd began composing distinctly American operas on his own librettos, regarding them as music dramas rather than as operas in a more traditional sense. At the 1955 world premiere in Tallahassee of his second opera, *Susannah*, Floyd received an honorary doctorate from FSU, and in 1983 he was awarded another doctorate from Dickinson College. Floyd's many other honors include awards from the National Opera Institute, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the National Endowment for the Arts, and he also received a Medal of Arts from the White House in 2004.

Following its New York premiere, *Susannah* won the 1956 New York Music Critics Circle Award for Best New Opera, and it was selected to represent American music and culture at the 1958 World's Fair, in Brussels. The two-act work is often cited as the second-most frequently staged American opera, after *Porgy and Bess*—but it is unlikely that these counts include Menotti's perennial, one-act Christmas opera, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, which receives numerous productions each December.

Inspired by the Apocryphal story of *Susannah and the Elders*, Floyd's McCarthy-era drama tells the

tragic tale of a young girl whose life is ruined by the deceitful gossip spread by the women in her church, who are jealous of Susannah's beauty and the attention the menfolk pay her. Her problem is compounded by the guilt of the Church Elders, manifested as outrage, when they discover her bathing in a secluded stream. Encouraged by the false rumors of her loose morals, a travelling preacher, Olin Blitch, forces himself on Susannah. When he discovers that Susannah was indeed an innocent, Blitch is overcome with remorse and tries to convince the townspeople to "forgive" her. Of course they will not, as it would mean they must admit to their own sins of envy and lust. When Susannah's brother discovers what has happened, he shoots and kills Blitch, and then disappears, never to return—and Susannah's fate as an embittered outcast is sealed.

Floyd's musical palate is heavily colored by the hymnody, folk music, and fiddle tunes indigenous to the opera's rural Tennessee setting, and its backwoods feeling is reinforced by the use of regional dialect. In the soaring 2nd-Act aria, ***The Trees on the Mountain***, Susannah sings a melancholy song her deceased mother taught her, that compares the bleak isolation of a young woman with the harshness of impending winter. The song obviously mirrors Susannah's own situation, and it becomes the musical focal point of the opera. Despite the wholly operatic technique the aria demands of the heroine, Floyd's original lyrics and music achieve the direct, emotional impact of an Appalachian folksong.

In the earliest days of his career as a singer-songwriter, Italian composer **Francesco Paolo Tosti** (1846-1916) had a difficult time making a living, reportedly living on oranges and stale bread for weeks at a time. But his talents eventually lead him into the highest reaches of fashionable society, and he became singing master first to the Queen of Italy, and then, in 1880, to the British Royal family. By the mid-1880s he had become the most popular songwriter in Britain, and he received a professorship at the Royal Academy of Music in 1894. Tosti became a British citizen in 1906, and was knighted by King Edward VII in 1908, but he returned to his homeland in 1913 and spent his remaining years in Rome. Although he never wrote an opera, his finely crafted melodies became a favorite of opera stars during the early years of the recorded era.

### Ideale (The Ideal One)

Text: Carmelo Errico (1848-1892) — English version: Edward Lein, ©2012

Io ti seguì come iride di pace  
Lungo le vie del cielo:  
Io ti seguì come un'amica face  
De la notte nel velo.

E ti sentii ne la luce, ne l'aria,  
Nel profumo dei fiori;  
E fu piena la stanza solitaria  
Di te, dei tuoi splendori.

In te rapito, al suon de la tua voce,  
Lungamente sognai;  
E de la terra ogni affanno, ogni croce,  
In quel giorno scordai.

Torna, caro ideal, torna un istante  
A sorridermi ancora,  
E a me risplenderà, nel tuo sembiante,  
Una novella aurora.

Like a rainbow serene, I followed you forth  
Along highest heaven's trail:  
I followed there, you, like a kindly torch  
Bright'ning night's darkening veil.

And I sensed you in moonlight, and in the air,  
In the scent of the flower's bloom;  
And you, and all your splendors fair  
Filled full each empty room.

So enraptured was I that your voice's song  
Did my dreams ever long purvey;  
And the world's every sorrow, each suffered wrong,  
Were forgotten that day.

Return! my ideal love, for just a brief time,  
To smile upon me, just once more--  
And upon me your countenance shall shine  
As no dawn has shone before.

In the broadest terms, the genre of **Canzoni Napoletana**, or **Neapolitan songs**, consists of a large body of popular vocal music, with the distinguishing feature of having texts in the Southern Italian dialect centering around Naples. The genre became firmly established during the 1830s as the result of an annual songwriting competition in Naples, but there are songs in the dialect dating back perhaps into the 1100s. Although the competition ceased as an annual event in 1950, there are still a few singer-songwriters who carry on the tradition. In the early part of the 20th Century the famous tenor Enrico Caruso popularized them, in the U.S. and elsewhere, by singing them as encore pieces, and a decade later "The Three Tenors" (Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo and José Carreras) helped keep them in our collective consciousness. As with the majority of popular songs, regardless of the language, most Neapolitan songs are about love, either lamenting unrequited or lost love, or joyously celebrating it. In addition to *Santa Lucia* and *Funiculi, Funiculà*, the best-known Neapolitan songs in America likely are **Torna a Surriento (Come Back to Sorrento)** -- the lamenting variety — and **'O sole mio (That Sun is All Mine)** — the celebratory kind. They have been recorded numerous times, and the tunes for these last two were given entirely new English lyrics and released as chart-topping hits by Elvis Presley, respectively as *Surrender* (1961), and *It's Now or Never* (1960), his best-selling single, ever.

**Torna a Surriento (Come Back to Sorrento)** Music: **Ernesto De Curtis** (1875-1937)  
Text (Neapolitan dialect): Giambattista De Curtis (1860-1926) — English version: Edward Lein, ©2012

Vide 'o mare quant'è bello.  
Spira tanta sentimento,  
Comme tu, a chi tiene mente,  
Ca, scetato, 'o faje sunnà.

Guarda, guá' chisti ciardine.  
Siente sié' sti sciure 'arancio  
Un profumo accussí fino,  
Dint' 'o core se ne na.

**[Refrain:]**

E tu dice, "Io parto, addio!"  
T'alluntane da stu core.  
Da la terra de 'll ammore  
Tiene 'o core en un turná?  
Ma nun me lassá!  
Nun darne stu turmiento!  
Torna a Surriento,  
Famme campá!

Vide 'o mare di Surriento,  
Che tesore tene 'nfunno!  
Chi a girato tutt' 'o munno  
Nun ll'ha visto comm'a ccá!

Guarda, attuorno, sti Serene,  
Ca te guardano 'ncantate,  
E te vono tantu bene  
Te vulessero vasá!

**[Repeat Refrain]**

See the sea, so immensely lovely.  
It inspires the deepest feelings,  
Just like one who pulls your heartstrings;  
It lets you dream while you're awake.

Look there, gaze into the garden.  
Smell the scent of oranges in bloom:  
Such a fine and fragrant perfume ...  
It's so dear your heart might break.

**[Refrain:]**

And yet you say, "Farewell! Now I'll go,"  
Forsaking this sore heart of mine.  
You'd leave this land of love behind ...  
Lest you return, won't your own heart break?  
Do not forsake me!  
Please do not torment me so!  
Come back to Sorrento,  
Or death take me!

See the sea of dear Sorrento,  
There hidden treasures lie, deep down!  
One might travel the whole world round  
And not see the likes of this!

Look there, gaze upon these mermaids  
Who gaze back at you, enchanted,  
And their love for you is so great  
They might offer you their kiss!

**[Repeat Refrain]**

**'O sole mio (That Sun is All Mine)**

Music: **Eduardo di Capua** (1865-1917)

Text (in Neapolitan dialect): Giovanni Capurro (1859-1920)

English version: Edward Lein, ©2012

Che bella cosa na jurnata 'e sole,  
n'aria serena doppo na tempesta!  
Pe' ll'aria fresca pare gia' na festa ...  
Che bella cosa na jurnata 'e sole!

Ma n'atu sole cchiu' bello, oi ne';  
'O sole mio, sta 'nfronte a te!  
'O sole, 'o sole mio,  
Sta 'nfronte a te, sta 'nfronte a te!

Quanno fa notte e 'o sole se ne scenne,  
me vene quase 'na malincunia;  
sotto 'a fenesta toia restarria,  
quanno fa notte e 'o sole se ne scenne.

Ma n'atu sole cchiu' bello, oi ne';  
'O sole mio sta 'nfronte a te!  
'O sole, 'o sole mio,  
Sta 'nfronte a te, sta 'nfronte a te!

How lovely a thing is a day in the sun,  
When calm breezes follow a stormy squall!  
The fresh, balmy air feels just like a festival ...  
How lovely a thing is a day in the sun!

But another sun shines with still lovelier rays;  
That sun is all mine: it glows from your face!  
O that sun, that sun is all mine,  
It glows from your face, it glows from your face!

When twilight descends and the sunlight is gone,  
My spirits tend, sadly, to sink down low;  
But I'd wait then gladly, under your window,  
When nighttime descends, and the sunshine is gone.

For another sun shines yet with lovelier rays;  
This sunshine is mine: it's the glow on your face!  
This sunshine, this sunshine is mine,  
It glows from your face, it glows from your face!

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**Giacomo Puccini** (1858–1924) came from a long line of Italian church musicians, and it was assumed he'd inherit the "family business" in Tuscany. But a fateful trek from Lucca to Pisa to see Verdi's *Aida* convinced Puccini to give up organ pedals for footlights, and he became the only real successor of Verdi in the realm of Italian opera. Puccini is reckoned to be *the* most popular opera composer in America, with his *Madama Butterfly* (1904) and *La bohème* (*The Bohemian*, 1896) ranking as the two most-performed operas in the United States.

The story of *La bohème* comes from the semi-autobiographical novel, *Scènes de la vie de bohème* (*Scenes in the Life of a Bohemian*), by Henri Murger (1822-1861), and it loosely serves as the model for the Broadway musical, *Rent*. The sad tale centers around the on-again, off-again romantic relationship between Rodolfo, a struggling writer, and the delicate Mimi, who ekes out a meager living making needlework flowers. As the curtain opens it is Christmas Eve, and Rodolfo and his roommate are getting ready for a jolly night out with their friends. Rodolfo decides to finish a bit of work on his own first, but his solitude is interrupted by a neighbor, Mimi, whose candle has gone out on the stairway. Rodolfo is taken with her beauty, so, as his friends call for him from outside to hurry along, he hangs behind to get better acquainted with the distressed damsel. Alone, the pair share their life stories, with some of the most beautiful music ever written for the stage—so, really—how could they not fall in love? In their duet, **O soave fanciulla**, which ends the first of the operas four acts, Rodolfo begins his seduction routine, reciting lines he may well have used many times before. Only, this time, he realizes he actually means what he's saying.

### O soave fanciulla (O Lovliest of Maidens)

Libretto: Luigi Illica (1857-1919) and Giuseppe Giacosa (1847-1906)

English translation: Edward Lein, ©2012

#### Rodolfo:

**O soave fanciulla, o dolce viso  
di mite circonfuso alba lunar  
in te, vivo ravviso il sogno  
ch'io vorrei sempre sognar!**

#### Mimi:

*(Ah! tu sol comandi, amor!)*

**Fremont già nell'anima  
le dolcezze estreme,  
nel bacio fremente amor!**

*(Oh! come dolci scendono le sue lusinghe al  
core... Tu sol comandi, amore!)*

*No, per pietà!*

**Sei mia!**

*V'aspettan gli amici...*

**Già mi mandi via?**

*Vorrei dir ... ma non oso ...*

**Di.**

*Se venissi con voi?*

**Che? Mimi?!**

**Sarebbe così dolce restar qui.**

**C'è freddo fuori.**

*Vi starò vicina!*

**E al ritorno?**

*Curioso!*

**Dammi il braccio, mia piccina.**

*Obbedisco, signor!*

**Che m'ami di'!**

*Io t'amo!*

**Amore! Amor! Amor!**

#### Rodolfo:

**O loveliest of maidens, O sweetest vision,  
Bathed in the soft glow of a moonbeam;  
In you, I see a dream come to life--  
A dream I pray always to dream!**

#### Mimi:

*(Ah! You alone command us, O Love!)*

**In the depth of my soul**

**I tremble with the height of passion.**

**Your kisses thrill Love itself!**

*(Oh! How sweetly does his flattery fall upon my  
heart... You alone command me, Beloved!)*

*No, I beg you!*

**Be mine!**

*You're expected by your friends ...*

**Already I'm sent away?**

*I'd rather say... but I dare not ...*

**Say ...**

*Might I go along with you?*

**What? Mimi?!**

**It would be so much sweeter to stay here.**

**It's freezing outside.**

*I shall stay close to you!*

**And when we return?**

*You'd like to know!*

**Let me take your arm, my dear little one.**

*I shall oblige, kind sir!*

**Tell me you love me!**

*I love you!*

**My darling! My love! My love!**

**Steven Mark Kohn** (b.1957) is Director of the Electronic Music Studio on the composition faculty at the Cleveland Institute of Music, the same school where he received his Master's degree in Composition in 1982, under esteemed composer Donald Erb. In addition to classical compositions and music for the stage, Kohn has written numerous jingles for television commercials, as well as soundtracks for a number of award-winning children's films and television specials, including the Emmy-nominated *Runaway Ralph*. There are now three volumes comprising his **American Folk Set**, for voice and piano, which, as one would expect, are arrangements of American folksongs.

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Set in the early 19th Century leading into the Paris Uprising of 1832, *Les misérables* (*The Wretches*), won eight Tony Awards including Best Musical. Based on the novel by Victor Hugo, it started out as a concept album in 1980, with music by composer **Claude-Michel Schönberg** (b.1944), and French lyrics by **Alain Boublil** (b.1941) and **Jean-Marc Natel** (b.1942). It was later adapted for the British stage with an English libretto by **Herbert Kretzmer** (b.1925), but the 1985 London production was not a great success, running for only three months. That all changed following its 1987 Broadway premiere, and it became the third-longest running production in Broadway history (after *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Cats*). **Bring Him Home** is sung by the central character, Jean Valjean, an escaped convict who had been jailed for 19 years, originally for stealing a loaf of bread to feed his family. Revolution is in the air, and the song is a prayer for safe passage through the impending violence, offered on behalf of Marius, a student in love with Cossette, the young peasant woman Valjean has sworn to protect.

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Described by *The New York Times* as the greatest artist working in musical theater, **Stephen Sondheim** (b.1930) certainly has won enough awards to help back up the statement, including eight Tony awards (more than any other individual), an Academy Award, multiple Grammys, and the Pulitzer Prize. After *Company* opened on Broadway in 1970, Sondheim's musical won six of the unprecedented 14 nominations for Tony Awards it had received. Set amid a surprise 35th birthday party for Robert, a confirmed bachelor, the show unfolds as a string of flashbacks that examine the pros and cons of married life. In the show's final song, **Being Alive**, Robert realizes that, despite his commitment issues, his life will never be complete until he finds the right "someone" to share it with.

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With his 1970 rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar*, **Andrew Lloyd Webber** (b.1948) catapulted to international fame and has become a fixture of musical theater, music publishing, the recording industry, and motion pictures, winning virtually every major award open to him (Tony, International Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Golden Globe, etc.) along the way, plus a British knighthood and peerage.

Hoping to repeat the success of *Superstar*, Lloyd Webber again collaborated with lyricist **Time Rice** (b.1944), producing the rock opera *Evita*, based on the life of Eva Duarte Perón (1919-1952), the First Lady to Argentine President Juan Perón.

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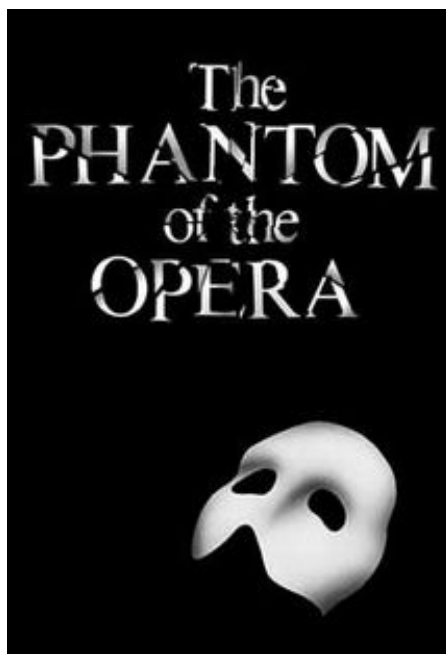
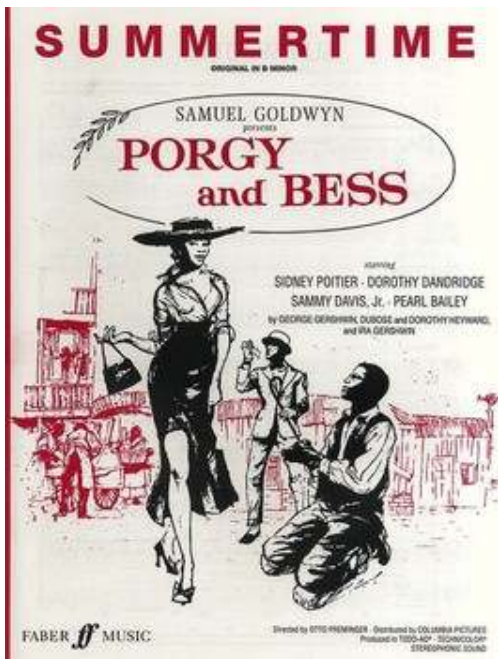
"There was a cabaret, and there was a master of ceremonies ... and there was a city called Berlin, in a country called Germany ... and it was the end of the world." In *Cabaret*, the 1966 Broadway musical which also became a big-screen sensation in 1972, these lines are uttered near the end of the show by the character Clifford Bradshaw, as he begins to recount the events that have just transpired on stage. An American writer travelling through Germany in the 1930s, Cliff will write about Sally Bowles, the young British cabaret singer who broke his heart amid the Nazi nightmare that was unfolding before their eyes. With music by **John Kander** (b.1927) and lyrics by **Fred Ebb** (1928-2004), the musical opens with the instantly identifiable **Willkommen** (*Welcome*), featuring the aforementioned Master of Ceremonies (or "Emcee" as he's identified in the score), who flirtatiously welcomes an international crowd to the Kit Kat Klub. The song also closes the musical, but at the end its original playfulness becomes harsh and sadistic, the transformation reflecting the changes that accompanied Hitler's rise to power.

Before the London and Broadway stage productions in 1978 and 1979 respectively, *Evita* was first released as a concept album in 1976, and two decades later, in 1996, it became a major motion picture starring Madonna. In the original stage production, ***Another Suitcase in Another Hall*** was sung by an unnamed mistress of Juan Perón, after she is sent packing by Juan's future wife. But for the film version, Eva sings it herself after a failed romance that nonetheless brought her to live in Buenos Aires. In ***Don't Cry for Me Argentina***, Eva addresses her public for the first time after she and her new husband set up housekeeping in the Presidential residence. The sweeping melody, which borrows thematic material from the last movement of the Brahms *Violin Concerto*, became an international hit, and is the song most closely identified with the musical.

For *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986), based on a French novel by Gaston Leroux (1868-1927), Lloyd Webber collaborated primarily with lyricist **Charles Hart** (b.1961). The musical is ranked as the longest-running show in Broadway history and the top-grossing theatrical entertainment of all time. The title character is a disfigured musical genius (read: psycho) who haunts the sewers beneath the Paris Opéra, and the story details his obsession with Christine, an aspiring young soprano. Christine sings ***Think of Me*** as an audition number for the Opéra, and as she sings she is recognized by Raoul, a friend from her childhood. Christine has secretly been taking voice lessons with the mysterious Phantom, and she soon willingly visits his underground hideout. But when the deranged "Angel of Music," as Christine calls him, murders the stage manager and becomes instead an angel of death, Christine escapes to the rooftops with Raoul, and there she accepts her childhood sweetheart's offer of love and protection, in ***All I Ask of You***.



Above: **William Brown; George Gershwin; Carlisle Floyd**  
Below: **Francesco Paolo Tosti; Ernesto De Curtis; Eduardo di Capua**



Above: **Giacomo Puccini; John Kander; Steven Mark Kohn**  
Below: **Claude-Michel Schönberg; Stephen Sondheim; Andrew Lloyd Webber**

