



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Jane Wald

Executive Director of the Emily Dickinson Museum

t. 413/542-5084

f. 413/542-2152

jhwald@emilydickinsonmuseum.org

Emily Dickinson Museum presents concert “I told my Soul to Sing’: Emily Dickinson and the American Art Song”

AMHERST Mass. - On Wednesday, June 30, at 7 p.m., the Emily Dickinson Museum will present “I told my Soul to Sing’: Emily Dickinson and the American Art Song,” an evening of Dickinson’s poetry in music, with soprano Karen Smith Emerson and pianist Nicole Panizza. The lecture and recital will take place at the Amherst Woman’s Club at 35 Triangle Street; a reception will follow. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors and students.

The program will highlight musical treatments of Dickinson’s work by focusing on eight Dickinson poems, including “Heart, we will forget Him,” “I never saw a Moor,” and “I taste a liquor never brewed.” Each poem will be performed in at least two song settings by different composers. Featured composers include Ernst Bacon, Aaron Copland, John Duke, Arthur Farwell, and Lori Laitman. Ms. Panizza will introduce the program with an overview of Dickinson’s poetry as it has been set to music. Then Ms. Smith Emerson will join her to perform the works.

Nicole Panizza is a Doctor of Music candidate at the Royal College of Music, London. Her current research investigates, through both scholarly and practice-based methodology, American art song settings of the poetry and letters of Emily Dickinson. She is currently in the United States on an International Fulbright Fellowship at Harvard University and the Manhattan School of Music. Ms. Panizza has written, “For Emily Dickinson, music was the ground and goal of lived experience. It is no surprise then that her poems have inspired numerous composers to create settings for her texts [shortly after their] initial publication [in the 1890s] right through to the present day.”

Originally from Australia, Ms. Panizza is particularly excited to present a program of Dickinson-inspired works in the poet’s home town. Ms. Panizza studied at the Elder Conservatorium of Music, University of Adelaide, and began her Doctorate of Music through the Royal College of Music, London, in 2005. She currently holds the position of Staff Coach/Accompanist at the Cork School of Music in Ireland and Vocal Coach, Faculty of Vocal Studies, at the Royal College of Music. She will be a guest panelist at the forthcoming Emily Dickinson International Society conference, Oxford University in August 2010.

Karen Smith Emerson is the Elsie Irwin Sweeney Professor of Music at Smith College. Ms. Emerson’s extensive concert career has included performances as soloist with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Marlboro Festival, the Philadelphia and Rochester Bach festivals, the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival, and with the New Jersey, Syracuse, and Springfield symphonies. Especially versatile in opera, Ms. Emerson’s roles have ranged from Zerbinetta (Ariadne auf Naxos), Adina (L’Elisir d’Amore) and Adele (Die Fledermaus), to Pamina (Die Zauberflöte), with such companies as the Central City, Lake George, Opera Festival of New Jersey, Berkshire and Eugene operas. Emerson has produced two solo CDs, Songs of the Nightingale on the Centaur label and The Unquiet Heart: American Song Cycles on the Albany label.

For more information about the performance, please call 413-542-8429 or e-mail info@emilydickinsonmuseum.org.

The Emily Dickinson Museum, comprising the Dickinson Homestead and The Evergreens, is devoted to the story and legacy of poet Emily Dickinson and her family. Both properties are owned by the Trustees of Amherst College. The Museum is overseen by a separate Board of Governors charged with raising its operating and capital funds. The Homestead was the birthplace and residence of the poet (1830-1886). The Evergreens was the 1856 home of the poet’s brother and sister-in-law, Austin and Susan Dickinson. The official museum website is www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org. Regular season hours are Wednesday through Sunday 11 a.m. until 4 p.m., with extended summer hours, June through August, Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

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