



Senior Recital

Friday, May 1, 2026

3:30pm, Mixon Hall

Alexander Moiseev, composer

Jumper Cables

Alexander Moiseev
(b. 2004)

Zach Brandon, violin
Alexander Moiseev, piano

Concert Lecture:

Astrophotography Color Data as Art and Basis for Composition

Alexander Moiseev

Nebulosities

Alexander Moiseev

I - Orion

Rhianna Lingle, violin I
Eivissa Pla Sarolla, violin II
Joshua Felser, viola
Xinran Zhang, violoncello

~Brief Pause~

Winds and Wishes

Alexander Moiseev
(Caroline Friend, Librettist)

Act I

Act II

Morgan Potts, mezzo-soprano
Catherina Carrington, soprano
Collin DeMatteo, speaker
Hanyue Zhang, speaker
Jonah Miller, flute
Tao Ke, clarinet
Louis Roy, horn
Mitchell Beckman, percussion
Blake Armstrong, violin
Megan Kamysz, violoncello
John Foley, bass
Alexander Moiseev, conductor

Alexander Moiseev is a student of Dr. Keith Fitch.

Special thanks to Dr. Keith Fitch for supporting my compositional process, and my family, friends, and colleagues for giving me the support I need to be who I am.

Foreword from the Librettist

Zofia (spelled Sophia for her American name) Procyk was about sixteen years old when her family helped her and her childhood best friend cross the Atlantic to the United States. In 1899, the very turn of the century, rumors of war and military unrest spread throughout her home of Przemysl, Poland. For their family to continue, they remind each other to, "Love wisely, and you will live." Since it was forbidden for women to immigrate without a man, the Procyks arranged a family friend to meet them at Ellis Island. Her mother, Maria, convinced the women of the village to sew new clothes for the girls to keep warm and look fashionable.

After traveling for two months, driving to the German port included, the young girls arrived at Ellis Island. All on their own, without a male figure to help them. At the customs gate, Zofia was confirmed healthy to enter, but her friend contracted pink eye. This almost sent the girls back to Europe. Cases of trachoma, scarlet fever, and any lethal disease were taken seriously during health screens, and any immigrant that tested positive was sent back to their home country. Such stories exist in the hundreds, preventing Europeans from tasting the so-called American Dream. Luckily, Zofia and her friend were sent to a quarantine wing and released in three days.

The city of Przemysl, Poland was set with a fortress in the late 19th century. The Austro-Hungarian Empire hoped this garrison would lead to peace. Ironically, it made the city a target for Russian invasion. Later, this fortress would be used in World War I, facing much hardship and loss of life. Today, it is beautifully reconstructed and preserved.

From personal anecdotes and memories, Zofia (Later spelled to Sophia) Procyk Sowa was a very loving and gracious woman. Within two years living in America, she married a man named Alexander, and gave birth to many children, living the life she expected. What she did not expect was her survival in marriage. While she tried several times to escape domestic abuse, Zofia's primary goal was to love and protect her children. Later, her devoted daughter and son-in-law would help separate from her husband and live in peace. Every day, she prayed the rosary, so much so that small marks remained on her fingers when she was buried. Zofia never visited her country again, but she often wrote to her family. When it came to cooking, she brought all of the recipes from her childhood. Often, she worked with her hands, measuring flour by cupping her palms. Her granddaughter, Mary-Lou, recalls Zofia being unable to speak much English. She had a gentle but efficient personality. The house was hers to run, and she sought her children to live a devout Catholic life. She would often say her prayers in Polish and sing folk songs from her homeland. Zofia's family traditions were kept alive with her bravery.

I often wondered what made her keep going, why she never gave up or ran away in fear. It was because of her faith, hope, and love in God. To honor Zofia's legacy, this chamber opera is a wish of such virtues for immigrants and refugees seeking peace. It is a love letter for the immigrants of the past, that their trials were not in vain. It is a prayer for the future, to achieve neighborly peace.

-Caroline Friend, 2026

Cast

Zofia Procyk.....	Mezzo-Soprano
Hanna (Zofia best friend).....	Light Soprano
Maria (Zofia’s Mother)/Traveler/Nurse.....	Full Soprano
Walter (Zofia’s older brother)/Customs Officer.....	Baritone

Synopsis

Part One

Chapter 1...Przemsyl, Poland. 1899.

Zofia and Walter prepare the house for dinner. Suddenly, their mother Maria screams. Maria tells Zofia the soldiers have taken their father, so they pack their small house and hide their most precious belongings. News of uprisings and military arrivals have spread through the village. Maria thinks of her daughter, devoted and strong, and tells herself to finally go through on her decision. She leaves the kitchen.

Chapter 2

Zofia notices how small the kitchen looks with no one inside. It was the biggest room in the world to her, even filled with her siblings. She thinks of her family and wishes for a future filled with love and peace, away from war (ARIA). Hanna, her best friend, eagerly runs inside. Zofia thinks the soldiers came to the village but Hanna assures her it is good news—she is leaving for America in three days to meet family and asks Zofia to join her. Both girls jump in excitement, dreaming of America’s beauty, innovation, and hope. Zofia however, feels guilt, as she does not dare leave her family behind. Hannah collapses in a chair.

Chapter 3

Zofia’s brother Walter walks in with a trunk and drops it on the kitchen table. Zofia and Hanna is confused. Maria tells the girls it is all arranged, both of them are going to America. Zofia asks if this plan came together, but Maria repeats they will travel together. Sixteen-year-olds are adults after all. Maria and Walter show the girls a trunk with new dresses, each handmade by the tailors in the village to wish them well on their new life. Hanna yearningly looks at Zofia. Walter brings Zofia aside and tells her father and mother desire for her future in America. He will take care of the family while she is gone. Zofia finally agrees to go. The four of them embrace and think about what they want for the future.

Part Two

Chapter 1...Steamship ship, 2 months later

Zofia and Hanna have been traveling for 2 months. Ship horns and whistles clock their hours. Languages they never heard fill their ears. Music from their land mixes with that of the Germans and the Slavs. Hanna coughs. Zofia looks out on the open water, overwhelmed by the vast beauty and abundance of opportunity before her. They deeply miss Poland, so they pray to the Virgin Mary, the Star of the Sea (ARIA).

Chapter 2...Ellis Island

A Traveler (offstage) shouts that the ship has reached America. The Statue of Liberty can be seen from the boat, and the girls eagerly embrace. Tears run down their face, as they've never seen a more beautiful sight and say the Blessed Mary brought liberty to them. The girls notice the infinite number of people surrounding them. As they walk to the customs officer, Hanna keeps coughing. The girls meet the Officer and Nurse, giving their names and their homelands. He screens Zofia and confirms her health, but finds Hanna sick--possibly infected with Trachoma (chlamydia). He orders them to go back to the ship where they will be sent to Poland. Hanna weeps in between coughs. Zofia boldly explains their situation to the Customs Officer, and assures him the cough means nothing. When all hope seems lost, the Nurse tells the Customs Officer she contracted pink eye. The girls are allowed to enter America but they both must quarantine for three days.

Chapter 3...Ellis Island Hospital Room

(Hanna is asleep on a hospital bed, and Zofia prays her rosary beside her. When she gets to the final prayer, the Hail Holy Queen, she takes time realizing she is living in these moments too) (ARIA). "And after this our exile" takes her in a deep pause, and she looks out the window, viewing the Statue of Liberty. Zofia realizes all of her hard work and she still can't enter America. It is not fair she suffered after coming all this way. She doesn't understand why God abandoned her. Zofia hears a bird tweeting, and realizes her wish of a family free from war is closer than she ever imagined. Zofia contemplates this journey as a preparation for her future. She will be the mother and the protector. She will be the guide for her children and asks the Lord for strength as she accepts her new life.

End of the opera.

Dedicated to the mothers of the Friend Family and Procyk lineage: Mary, Zofia, Cecilia, Mary-Lou, and Anna my mother.

PART ONE

Chapter 1

Przemsyl, Galicia, Poland. The end of winter, 1899. Afternoon. The lights gently brighten the scene and we find Sophia and Walter setting the table. (Dialogue with incidental music is underlined)

Maria: (Screams) Ah! No! Wait!

(Walter exits quickly. Maria enters and begins the packing the house.)

Maria: Soldiers! Hide the silver! Here, we don't want them to find these.

Zofia: Now?

Maria: Yes Zofia, now! Your father...

Zofia: No, they can't take him! He's too weak!

Maria *(aside to the Virgin Mother)*: I knew this day would come, but Mother, why must it be now?

Zofia: What about Kasimir? Lilia? Janek?

Maria: War is not kind to the innocent, Zofia.

Zofia *(regarding the family's icon of Mary)*: What about Our Lady?

Maria: Walter will hide her. Don't fret.

Zofia: Has he fetched the cow?

Maria: We won't be taking it.

Zofia: I thought...

Maria: If these rumors are true, then we must flee quickly...or at least be ready.

Zofia: I'll rope her myself, I'm strong enough.

Maria: Oh, Zofia.

Zofia: The city is getting more soldiers, isn't that good?

Maria: Where are your brothers?

Zofia: It's not fair. You should keep your home, Mama.

Maria: Times are different. (*pulls her aside*) Listen. The house is dust and love is life. Love wisely...

Zofia and Maria: And you will live.

Maria: Find your brother. Now.

(*Zofia Exits*)

(ARIA)

Maria: "I'll rope her myself" Ah. Walter should have told her we sold it. Only sixteen, now, and she can fly wherever she wants. I can't recall the first time I found her chirping. My little bird! Singing through the valley, jumping between trees, sleeping in a warm nest. You flew from your branch, then perched in the kitchen. Now you must leave your home. No child should live like this! How can a mother let her hatchling touch that thin blue line? No—It's time, Mary. It's time.

(*Maria exits*)

Chapter 2

(*Zofia enters with her books and letters*)

Zofia (spoken): Mama! I can't find Walter! Mama? (Realizing she's gone) I thought the bigger and that the ceilings were taller. I thought I could never reach the shelf. Papa was so tall... at least we embraced....

(RECIT)

(*Prays before the icon*) Oh Mother! This was supposed to be a happy time! The emperor said so! Why do we not have peace? Why do I want to find it elsewhere?

(ARIA)

I have this wish. A wish of a new world! I want smiling sunbeams to open my eyes. Then, I have a wish for my frozen feet to melt in the light. I want freshly-doused grass, blushed by poppies, untouched by brothers' blood. Then, oh then! To find steel towers scraping the sky. The streets lit so brightly, it makes the day never end! If only I could see that, and not a dream! Can a world exist?

I want to find this new world myself, but how can I leave them? How can I leave her?

(Hanna enters)

Hanna: Zofia! Zofia! You'll never guess!

Zofia: Hanna?

Hanna: We're leaving!

Zofia: Mother was right! Run! Why are you here?

Hanna: No! Ah ha! You and I!

Zofia: What are you talking about?

Hanna: In three days! We leave for America!

Zofia: I don't understand...

Hanna: Did you hear me? America!

Zofia and Hanna: The New World itself!

Zofia: Oh, Hanna! *(Changes mood)* What of your family?

Hanna: They wish to stay. I can't travel alone, so you're sailing with me. I have my uncle waiting for us!

Zofia: Sailing? We're going by boat?

Hanna: The first time we see the ocean!

Zofia: The first time any of us leave...

Hanna: ...to America! Hopes, dreams, and futures ready to be written!

Zofia: Hanna, you mean to leave our families? Our homes? Our futures that our grandparents fought for?

Hanna: Some future.

Zofia: Our parents. Our brothers. Our sisters!

Hanna: Hush. Don't think that way. This is our chance to shape the future ourselves.

Zofia: Our lives are here!

Hanna: Our lives are there! Zofia...

Zofia: Hanna!

Hanna: You don't expect to live as another housewife? Another mother of seven? Another farmer with a day that repeats?

Zofia: What else could we do?

Hanna: My uncle wrote with such excitement! Zofia, we can finally live the lives we want! And...we'll grow rich enough to sail to Poland every year!

Zofia: Think plainly now. We may never see our families again. I just lost Father to the border!

Hanna: The fortress is getting stronger every day. My family can't survive with me here.

Zofia: Mine is ready to run! You forgot you're the only one here with family across the sea!

Hanna: Isn't that what you want? Isn't that what you dream? Zofia, you may never get this chance again!

Zofia: Not if my mother can't be next to me!

Hanna (*together spoken*): Zofia! Be brave for once! I know you want something more. If you're not reckless now, you'll never be!

Zofia (*together spoken*): Hanna! Be smart for once! I know you want something more. If you're not careful now, you'll never be!

Zofia: I cannot go Hanna! Not with my father gone!

(Hanna collapses on the chair. The girls can't look at each other.)

Chapter 3

(Maria and Walter enter. Walter carries a trunk and places it on the table.)

Walter: Well, you're eager to leave!

Zofia: Walter! I thought they took you too!

Maria: If we send you girls away with those faces...

Zofia: Mother, what do you mean?

Maria: What do you think? (*Presents a new dress*)

Zofia: Ah!

Maria: Now if you don't like that one...

(*Walter pulls out a second dress*)

Hanna: There's so many! And they're new!

Zofia: When did you make them?

Maria: I didn't.

Walter: Mama went to every woman in the village.

Zofia: How could you afford these?

Maria: It was time to sell her, Zofia.

Walter: She'll make a fine cow for the soldiers. (*To Hanna*) Don't worry, Hanna. You get your own trunk as well.

Hanna: Ah!

Maria: When you set foot in America, you must find a church, then a husband.

Zofia (*dumbfounded*): Mother, I can't. I can't leave you. Not when the world is so uncertain.

Maria: The world is always uncertain, but we are Procyks with headstrong blood. It's time our little bird leaves the nest.

Walter: (*pulls Zofia aside*) Zofia, you must leave. We're blessed enough I haven't been called to fight, at least this time. You will find a better life there, and you know it.

Zofia: What if I don't? What if I never hold Father again? (*Pauses with guilt and pulls Walter closer*)
What if I don't want to come back?

Walter: (*smiling*) If the door doesn't knock, we'll know it's you. As for Father, he will defend us. Don't be scared, Zofia; I've made my choice.

(Zofia embraces Walter)

Zofia: Oh Walter, thank you! I know you will protect them!

Hanna: Zofia?

(Determined now. She has the assurance of her brother and connections in America)

Zofia: Mama, I'll write to you every day! When, Ha! When I start work I'll send half my salary to you! I'll tell you of all the people I meet.

Hanna: And the buildings!

Walter: And the English!

Hanna: Hopes, dreams, and futures ready to be written!

Zofia: Like Krak, I seize my fate and kill the dragon before me!

Hanna: The whole world beckons me! Working boys with dashing faces.

Maria: Freshly-doused grass, blushed by poppies.

Walter: Untouched by brothers' blood. Peace is no more my fare.

Zofia: Then, I turn, and I see steel towers scraping the sky. Streets lit so brightly, it makes the day never end!

All: A future lit so brightly, it makes the day never end!

Zofia: My new world is there!

Walter: *(salutes)* Three days, Americans!

(Laughs and fade to black)

PART TWO

Chapter 1

A steamship filled with immigrants, Spring, 1899

(Zofia and Hanna have been traveling for two months on a steamship. Poles, Slavs and Germans are sailing with them, and they process just how many people are eager to sail to America. Some healthy, many growing ill in large numbers...)

Zofia: Uh

Hanna: Oh

Traveler: Get me off this ship!

Zofia and Hanna: Oh!

Traveler: **Vomit sound**

Zofia and Hanna: Oh

Traveler: I'm gonna be sick!

Zofia and Hanna: So am I!

Hanna: 2 months

Zofia: Crowded

Hanna: Huddled

Zofia: Sweating

Hannah: Shivering

Customs Officer: A humble breakfast in 10!

Zofia and Hanna: Humble indeed.

Zofia: Coughing

Hanna: Busted

Zofia: Pooped

Zofia and Hanna: Everywhere!

Customs Officer: Wash it well!

Zofia: So many people in one space!

Hanna: Never have I felt so small.

Zofia: Never have I hoped so great!

Zofia and Hanna: That view that blankets the earth! A bumpy horizon growing longer each mile. What lies out there?! What lies out there?

Hanna: It's true; such a long line can't keep quiet. It calls to something greater.

Zofia: Bump after bump

Zofia and Hanna: ...and somehow we're painting the lines ourselves.

Customs Officer: Ich bin müde!

Hanna and Zofia: Germans...

Zofia: Hanna, this water—there's so much of it. Imagine living in a world only filled with water.

Hanna: I've lived it for fifty days, Zofia. Oh, I wish we saw land. (*Coughs*)

Zofia: Breathe in the salt. It will help your coughing.

Hanna: Shush! Do you have to be so loud?

Zofia: But I'm right! All we see—

Hanna (*Spoken, cuts her off*):—I can't. Uh, my eye itches too much. I miss my fields...

Zofia: The meadows and the valleys...

Hannah: The rolling hills...

Zofia: The bird by my window...

Hanna: Mama's cabbage broth...

Zofia: Papa's cozy arms...

Hanna: The fog below the trees...

Zofia: No! Hanna, we can miss our country, but not the fog. Not the grayness of war.

Zofia and Hanna: The sun is what we chase. At night, it's the star...

(*Girls make the Sign of the Cross and pray. As Hanna sings, Zofia doses off*)

(ARIA)

Hanna: Ave maris stella, Dei mater alma, Atque semper virgo, Felix caeli porta. Light our way to the new world. Show us your lantern. Nurture our hope, Sweet Mother, for our future is in the hands of your Son. Amen.

(Hanna and Zofia both fall asleep)

Chapter 2

Ellis Island, New York Bay

Customs Officer.: Land ho!

(The girls wake up)

Hanna: Zofia?

Zofia: We're here!

Zofia and Hanna.: We're here! We're here!

Hanna: Oh she's so beautiful! The lady of America! Mary must have sent her! *(Hanna coughs and scratches her eye)*

Zofia: Hanna, don't scratch it!

Hanna: It itches so badly.

Zofia: We just need to get off the boat and find your uncle!

Hanna: Oh, Zofia! We're here, we're truly here! I see the buildings! Oh, so many boys— Achoo!

(Zofia and Hanna approach a Customs Officer. The girls know little English, but the island anticipated the need for a Polish-speaking Officer)

Customs Officer: Where is your husband?

Zofia: Thank Heaven! I understand you! I have none, sir. Neither of us are married.

Hanna: My uncle requested my arrival and he awaits us in the city! *(Hanna hands a paper to the Customs Officer)*

Customs Officer: Name?

Zofia: Procyk, Zofia

Customs Officer: City and country?

Zofia: Przemsyl, from Galicia. *(Pause)* From Polska.

(Customs Officer evaluates her health)

Customs Officer: Your health is proven. Step aside.

(Hanna sneezes and coughs on the Customs Officer)

(To Hanna) You! Miss, you cannot enter!

Hanna: What? Achoo!

Customs Officer: Just look at your swollen face! Any cases with those eyes never make it in!

Zofia: No! Isn't there any way to--

Customs Officer: I'm afraid you must leave for Germany today.

Zofia: Sir! Please! I beg you! My friend and I have left our families! We heard of your people! There is a reason the good Lord sent us. Yes, my friend coughs, but how do you know this isn't deadly?

Customs Officer: Many cases of trachoma enter these gates, but not one of them goes through!

Hanna: I have never kissed anyone! Well, not recently...

Zofia: We are not leaving. We cannot! We came for the United States and we will enter our new home!

Customs Officer: I've seen too many delusional Poles. Nurse!

Zofia: No! Don't tear us apart! Hanna, what have you done?

(Nurse enters)

Hanna: Please! Don't let us leave!

Nurse: Sir?

Hanna: Ah! Zofia, don't let them do this! Achoo!

Nurse: Child, be still! Why, Sir.

Customs Officer: Get them off the port!

Nurse: But her eyes!

Customs Officer: Red and swollen! I can't look at them another second—

Nurse: It's pink eye, sir!

Customs Officer, Hanna and Zofia: What?

Nurse: Yes. Those crusty little tears mean one thing. *(To Hanna)* Have you touched anyone?

Hanna: Only my friend.

Customs Officer: And this paper! *(Drops the paper, like a hypochondriac)* Oh! Follow her for heaven's sake! Make it clear to them. Young lady, you cannot enter until we confirm you are not contagious!

(The nurse leaves and takes Hanna by the shoulders who looks back at Zofia in fear. Just when they tasted freedom, the girls are forbidden to enter the country. Zofia carries both trunks into the hospital room.)

Chapter 3

Quarantine Wing Hospital Room, Ellis Island.

(Nurse covers Hanna in a blanket and exits. Zofia remains sitting on the bed clutching her rosary.)

Hanna: Achoo!

Zofia: *(Finishing her Rosary...Spoken)*: "Turn then, oh most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us. And after this our exile...*(She looks out the window and sees the Statue of Liberty)*

(SPOKEN RECIT)

And after this our exile...After our exile"...Why must we wait, Mother? Quarantined in this room for three more days? *(Pauses)* We're here. I prayed my rosaries. I wrote my letters for Mama, and I kept Hanna out of trouble. *(Clasps her heart)* And my home is still bleeding. Why couldn't my country heal? Why couldn't my home be at peace? My Good Lord, why have you grounded me?

(Zofia hears a bird tweeting. Her wish and dearest dream of a family free from war is closer than she ever imagined.)

(ARIA)

Ah! "Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they?" I see, Lord! I see! So, please, show me the meadow! Show me the steel towers! Show me the new world I've painted in my head! For Mama, for Papa, for Hanna, for You--Ah! Be the wind under my wings as I fly for my family. As I fly for my home!

END OF OPERA