

# Katherine Eberle, mezzo-soprano, piano

## “Pauline Viardot: Singer, Composer, Forgotten Muse”

### Program

<i>En Mer</i>	Pauline Viardot
<i>Berceuse Cosaque</i>	Pauline Viardot
<i>Der Jüngling und das Mädchen</i>	Pauline Viardot
<i>L’Absence</i>	Pauline Viardot
<i>None but the Lonely Heart</i> (excerpt)	Peter Tchaikovsky
<i>Der Doppelgänger</i> (excerpt)	Franz Schubert
<i>Madrid</i>	Pauline Viardot
<i>Ici-bas</i>	Pauline Viardot

This performance was partially supported by the Arts and Humanities Initiative through the Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of Iowa

### **Biographies**

**Pauline Viardot** was an operatic performer and composer who lived from 1821-1910 in Paris, and whose art songs have become an important part of the repertoire. Eberle portrays Viardot in an original performance, featuring a monologue by playwright Maggie Conroy, interspersed with songs by the composer. Eberle sings and accompanies herself on piano, as she tells of Viardot’s work and lifelong interaction with famous writers and composers of her time. This one-woman show offers a unique real time experience of an important historical figure, revealing the impact performers and composers had on society during their lifetimes and their impact on us today.

Born to Spanish parents, Pauline was trained by her father, Manuel Garcia. He was a tenor, for whom Rossini wrote the role of Almaviva in *Il barbiere de Siviglia*. Her sister was Maria Malibran, who was famous for her operatic performances and who died at the height of her career. Pauline’s brother, also named Manuel, went on to become a respected vocal pedagogue, and is said to have invented the laryngoscope, a small mirror used to expose the vocal folds for medical treatment.

Pauline studied piano with Franz Liszt during her teens. At age 15, her mother encouraged her to give up piano and become a singer. Pauline’s operatic debut took place in London when she was 18 in the role of Desdemona in Rossini’s *Otello*. Pauline met George Sand around this time, and they became lifelong friends. Sand later went on to write the novel, *Consuelo*, based on Pauline’s career. Through Sand, Pauline met other artists such as Chopin and Delacroix and her husband, Louis Viardot. Louis, 21 years older than Pauline, was the director of the *Théâtre Italien* in Paris at the time they married. As a writer, he founded the socialist-leaning *Revue*

*Indépendante*. Throughout their married lives he was Pauline's manager and supporter. Their three children also became musicians.

During her singing career, Pauline Viardot performed numerous operatic roles and many solo and ensemble concerts in Russia, France, Germany, and Austria. She sang the heroines of Gluck, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Mozart, Meyerbeer, Gounod and Verdi. Her musical friends and acquaintances included Berlioz, Brahms, Gounod, Meyerbeer, Saint-Saëns, Schumann (both Clara and Robert), and Fauré, all of whom composed or dedicated works for her and for whom she served as a "motivator and spiritual catalyst". Alfred de Musset, Flaubert, Dickens, and Henry James were also admirers of hers. Russian playwright and author, Ivan Turgenev became the love of her life, and Viardot collaborated with him on three librettos, which were first performed as amateur theatricals in Viardot's home. Through much of his later life, Turgenev lived with the Viardot family at their Château Courtavenel, and he also lived near or with them when they lived in Paris, London, and Baden Baden.

In the later years of her life, Pauline became a renowned voice teacher and she continued composing. She had, as a young woman, arranged some of Chopin's mazurkas. Pauline composed over 150 songs and a number of piano and violin works. Many of these works were published in Europe and some are available at the University of Michigan, Harvard University and at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* de France.

**Katherine Eberle**, mezzo-soprano, has sung over 125 concerts in the past ten years, including her New York debut at Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall in 1994. She was an Artistic Ambassador for the United States Information Agency doing solo concert tours in South America and Korea in 1995-97. Her recording *From a Woman's Perspective* is on the Vienna Modern Masters label. Eberle earned degrees from Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory (BME), the University of Cincinnati (MM), and the University of Michigan (DMA). She specializes in repertoire of Women Composers, Operatic Monodramas, and Videoconferencing which she uses at Iowa. In demand as an adjudicator, she was State President of the National Association of Teachers of Singing for three years. She taught at Interlochen Summer Music Camp, the Summer Vocology Institute in Denver, CO. Eberle joined the faculty of the University of Iowa in 1990.

**Maggie Conroy**, playwright, has taught playwriting at The University of Iowa where she received her M.F.A., The University of Iowa Playwrights Workshop. She has performed her monologues, *Celestial Messengers*, *The Short History of a Colonial Dame*, and *Sailing into Iowa* at various venues in Iowa and Massachusetts. She wrote the one-man play, *Irving Weber's Iowa City*, which was commissioned by ARTS Iowa City. Her prize-winning monologue, *Foreign Tours*, was performed at the Perishable Theatre in Providence, R.I.