


Roderick Williams

**Milton Court
Artist-in-Residence**

We celebrate one
of our most engaging
musicians as a singer,
composer and dramatic
collaborator.

Tue 19 Feb
An Italian Songbook

Tue 26 Feb
Roderick Williams in recital



barbican

Roderick Williams in recital

Tuesday 26 February 2019 7:30pm,
Milton Court Concert Hall

Brahms An die Nachtigall, Op 46 No 4;
Mädchenlied, Op 107 No 5; Das Mädchen,
Op 95 No 1

Clara Schumann Liebst du um Schönheit, Op 12
No 2

Brahms Das Mädchen spricht, Op 107 No 3;
Salamander, Op 107 No 2; Nachtigall, Op 97
No 1

Howells King David; The Widow Bird, Op 22
No 3; Girl's Song, Op 22 No 4

Sally Beamish Four Songs from Hafez

interval 20 minutes

Rhian Samuel Summer Songs

Robert Schumann Frauenliebe und -leben, Op 42

Roderick Williams baritone

Andrew West piano

Part of Roderick Williams: Milton Court

Artist-in-Residence

Part of Barbican Presents 2018–19

We regret that Ryan Wigglesworth had had to postpone the completion of his new work for Roderick Williams; the premiere of this will take place on another occasion.



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Welcome

A warm welcome to the last concert in Roderick Williams's Milton Court residency. Last November it was as a composer that he was featured, in a concert marking the centenary of Armistice Day. And just last week he led a stunning ensemble cast of singers in a reworking of Wolf's *Italian Songbook*.

Tonight he is joined by pianist Andrew West for an intimate evening of song. Robert Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben* sits

alongside works by his wife Clara and his friend Johannes Brahms. Bringing matters forward in time, we have ravishing settings by Herbert Howells and songs written in this century by Sally Beamish, who finds inspiration in 14th-century Persian poetry, and Rhian Samuel, who sets two very different evocations of summer.

It promises to be a wonderful evening: I hope you enjoy it.

Huw Humphreys, Head of Music, Barbican

Roderick Williams writes:

Years ago, I submitted a programme for a singing competition, only to have a song rejected because, I was told, it was a 'woman's song'. I didn't think to question the decision at the time but it has lingered in my mind ever since; what constitutes a woman's song? Or a man's song? With comparatively few female authors and composers allowed prominence until the last century or so, much poetry and music for women has been written by men. Who can say whether they have been successful in imagining a female perspective? Or is

their goal to present what women ought to be feeling, as men see it?

This programme offers questions rather than answers: what do men imagine women want to sing about? And what if a woman sets love poetry written by a man?

And to distract from all the gender politics, a side-show of birds and beasts seems to have crept into the recital ...

Please turn off watch alarms, phones, pagers etc during the performance. Taking photographs, capturing images or using recording devices during a performance is strictly prohibited.

Please remember that to use our induction loop you should switch your hearing aid to T setting on entering the hall. If your hearing aid is not correctly set to T it may cause high-pitched feedback which can spoil the enjoyment of your fellow audience members.

We appreciate that it's not always possible to prevent coughing during a performance. But, for the sake of other audience members and the artists, if you feel the need to cough or sneeze, please stifle it with a handkerchief.

If anything limits your enjoyment please let us know during your visit. Additional feedback can be given online.

From nightingales to salamanders: love is a many-splendoured thing

For texts, see page 8

Johannes Brahms and Clara Schumann

Bird-song and girls' songs feature frequently in 19th-century lyric poetry. Unprepossessing in appearance but beautiful in song, the nightingale has long attracted poets and, in turn, composers, who hear in its nocturnal warbling remembrances of loves past. Young women can also give voice to romantic frustration – or cause it, as is evident from the selection of songs by Johannes Brahms (1833–97) that starts this programme. *Mädchenlieder* feature often in Brahms's corpus; their folkish poetry evidently captured his musical, and perhaps also his romantic, imagination.

The four songs of Brahms's Op 46 were probably composed in Bonn during the summer of 1868. It was a decade marked for Brahms by a string of romantic entanglements: he almost proposed to Ottilie Hauer, stopped teaching piano to Elisabeth Stockhausen because he found her so attractive (she later married the composer Heinrich von Herzogenberg and the couple were lifelong friends of Brahms), and became infatuated with the Schumanns' daughter Julie. In 'An die Nachtigall', Op 46 No 4, to a poem written by Ludwig Höltz in 1772 (with a second verse rewritten by Höltz's friend and notoriously meddling posthumous editor Johann Heinrich Voss), the bird's song becomes a source of torment because the protagonist does not know similar happiness in love. Brahms uses a modified strophic form, slightly altering the music on each repetition. In all of his songs

featuring nightingales he uses the piano to evoke the bird's song and flight. Here, in response to the command 'Fleuch, Nachtigall', the piano switches from its offbeat rhythms to flighty triplets.

'Mädchenlied', Op 107 No 5 was composed in the summer of 1886, along with 'Das Mädchen spricht', Op 107 No 3. Brahms was no less prone by this time to being smitten by women than he had been 20 years earlier: in the 1880s they included the contraltos Hermine Spies and Alice Barbi. 'Mädchenlied', like Robert Schumann's setting of the same Paul Heyse poem from 1852, emphasises the girl's forlorn state by using a minor key, the rhythm of her spinning wheel guiding the song to a melancholy close.

Siegfried Kapper's *Die Gesänge der Serben*, translations of Serbian songs, was the source for 'Das Mädchen', Op 95 No 1. The irregular metre of the poem is matched by Brahms in the fluctuations between three- and four-time and major–minor inflections. The song thereby captures the skittish nature of the young woman, who suggests she would try to deter an older suitor by putting wormwood on her face, but if it were a younger lover she would perfume herself with roses to encourage him.

Clara Schumann (1819–96) composed three songs to poems from Friedrich Rückert's *Liebesfrühling* in 1841, while she was pregnant with her first child. Her husband Robert Schumann gathered them together with his songs from the same collection as a present for their first wedding anniversary (they were published as his Op 37 and her Op 12).

‘Liebst du um Schönheit’ uses richly varied musical repetition to convey the cumulative message of the poem: love for beauty, youth or riches is transient, but love for love’s sake will last forever.

Brahms only set one poem from Otto Gruppe’s long sequence of poems *Das Mädchen spricht*, which has been compared to Chamisso’s *Frauenliebe und -leben*, although, as Natasha Loges points out, its female protagonist does not end up married and happy but is deserted by her fiancé. Bird and girl here are in synergy, with the maiden detecting in the swallow’s joyful twittering that it has recently married too. Elisabeth von Herzogenberg apparently did not approve of the cheeky colloquialism of ‘Ist’s dein alter Mann’, which implied that the swallow had multiple partners, but Brahms’s lively musical setting, the last of his *Mädchenlieder*, replete with avian fluttering, suggests that he enjoyed it (along with its unusual poetic metre). Nature and desire collide once more in Brahms’s ‘Salamander’, Op 107 No 2, composed in July 1888. Again, Elisabeth von Herzogenberg did not approve. In this poem by art historian Karl Lemcke, the mythical lizard who, thrown into the fire, flourishes rather than perishes, parallels the fate of the young man, whose spurned ardour burns more brightly – much like Brahms’s incandescent music.

The eponymous nightingale of ‘Nachtigall’, Op 97 No 1 returns to a more elegiac tone, recalling memories of sweet sorrow. Brahms had been introduced to the poet Christian Reinhold – the pseudonym of Reinhold Köstlin – by Reinhold’s daughter, Marie Fellingner (whose mother, incidentally, was the composer Josephine

Lang). Several of Brahms’s most successful songs were composed to Reinhold’s poetry and ‘Nachtigall’, from early 1885, is no exception: the piano prelude seems to give voice to the bird’s song, which is then gently echoed in the singer’s embellishment of his final phrase – the bird’s song reminds him of their lost love.

Herbert Howells

Bird-song also has a significant voice in the next two songs, by English composer Herbert Howells (1892–1983). He produced what he considered to be one of his finest songs, ‘King David’, to a poem by his friend Walter de la Mare on 7 August 1919. Harps cannot console the melancholy regent but the song of the nightingale offers him some relief. Howells tracks King David’s emotional journey harmonically, starting in a minor key, with a lament figure in the opening bars, but opening out into a distantly related major key at the end, as the bird’s song is evoked by the piano.

Howells composed ‘The Widow Bird’ on 4 May 1915, capturing in the piano’s figuration the turning mill wheel that, in Percy Bysshe Shelley’s poem, is the only sound audible in the wintry landscape. Similarly, in ‘Girl’s Song’ (dated 19 May 1916), the piano’s jaunty rhythms mimic the wheels of the clattering cart that takes the young woman’s beloved to market and back. The simplicity and coyness of the poem by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson is typical of the so-called Georgian poets favoured by Howells.

Programme note © Laura Tunbridge

Sally Beamish

Sally Beamish wrote her *Four Songs from Hafez* in 2007, to be performed in October that year by Mark Padmore and Roger Vignoles at the Leeds Lieder+ festival in Yorkshire. The cycle consists, as the composer explains, of 'settings of the 14th-century Persian Sufi poet, each using a bird or animal to describe separation from, and longing for, the Beloved'. The English translations are by the Iranian-born, Glasgow-based artist Jila Peacock, and come from her book *Ten Poems from Hafez*, in which the translations are placed alongside the original poems, each rendered in Persian calligraphy to form the shape of the creature described.

These images are matched by the musical imagery of the settings. The 'Nightingale' sings its passionate song in constantly varied phrases high on the piano, over a recurring ostinato figure. The references to falling in 'Peacock' are matched by the piano's cascading falling figures (in Eastern-sounding modes) at different speeds. The 'Fish' swims in clear water, disturbed only by the swirling eddies created by a traditional Iranian motif. 'Hoopoe' – in Middle Eastern mythology a magical bird, the messenger between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba – is again represented by its call, repeated as a refrain throughout.

Programme note © Sally Beamish

interval 20 minutes

Rhian Samuel

These two songs were written for James Gilchrist and premiered by him and William Vann at the Forge in London in May 2012. After I included a meteorological poem by Pakistani-born writer Zulfikar Ghose in *Haze and the Absence of Clouds* for voice, string quartet and piano, he sent me a book of his poetry from Texas, and thus I found the text for 'A Dragonfly in the Sun', which seemed to complement Denise Levertov's 'In Summer', something I'd been waiting to set for a long time. The pieces attempt to exploit the colours of the piano as much as those of the voice.

Programme note © Rhian Samuel

Robert Schumann

The first complete performance of Robert Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben*, Op 42 was by soprano Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient at a soirée in October 1848, but its first public performance was given by baritone Julius Stockhausen in 1862. That this song-cycle, to Adelbert von Chamisso's popular poems tracing a woman's courtship, marriage and widowhood, was sung by a man would not have surprised 19th-century audiences, who tended to be fairly flexible when thinking about which gender should sing which song. For example, women sang numbers from Schumann's *Dichterliebe* or Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin*, which we typically think of as having male protagonists. And why not? We do not assume that singers have necessarily experienced the same emotions or experiences as described in a poem, so why could they not imagine themselves into the role of someone of another gender?

In fact, the more unusual aspect of Stockhausen's recital was that he sang the whole of Schumann's cycle rather than individual numbers. Today, we are used to hearing even lengthy cycles such as Schubert's *Winterreise* complete, but in the 19th century Stockhausen's programming of whole works was a novelty – and did not catch on for some time. This is particularly hard to understand in the case of *Frauenliebe und -leben*, which consists of only eight songs and begins and ends with (almost) the same music, emphasising the cyclical nature of the woman's life story.

Schumann composed it in 1840, during his famous *Liederjahr* ('year of song'), which was seemingly prompted by his finally being allowed to marry the pianist Clara Wieck. Chamisso's poems were relatively unusual in that the male author presented, in the first person, a woman's life experiences. In 'Seit ich ihn gesehen' (Since first seeing him), the woman describes her feelings on first encountering her future beloved: it is as if she has been blinded, for he is all she can see. The second poem, 'Er, der Herrlichste von allen' (He, the most wonderful of all), continues the visual theme; she is happy just to gaze at and admire him from afar, for surely she would not deserve his love (she describes him as a 'noble star'). In the third poem, 'Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben' (I cannot grasp it, believe it), she is ecstatic because he has declared that he loves her; in the fourth, 'Du Ring an meinem Finger' (You ring on my finger) she cherishes the ring he has given her; in the fifth, 'Helft mir, ihr Schwestern' (Help me, my sisters), she asks her sisters for help with her bridal attire and bids them farewell. The sixth song, 'Süßer Freund, du blickest' (Sweet friend, you look), is addressed to

her husband; can he not guess why she is crying? They are tears of happiness because, according to what her mother has told her, they must soon get a cradle (Schumann discreetly does not set the verse that explains that she is pregnant, instead leaving that message to be conveyed in music). The penultimate poem, 'An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust' (On my heart, at my breast), expresses her joy at motherhood. Then, in the eighth poem, 'Nun hast du mir der ersten Schmerz getan' (Now you have caused me my first pain), her husband's death inflicts her first pain; she has lost her happiness and her world.

There is a ninth poem to Chamisso's cycle, in which the woman gives advice to her daughter, now herself a bride. Schumann did not set this poem, perhaps because it casts everything in the past tense; he did, though, suggest something of its retrospective aspect by adding a piano postlude that returns to the music of the first song. The appeal of Chamisso's poetry for the newly-wed composer is obvious and it has been argued that *Frauenliebe und -leben* served as a model for the shape a woman's life should take. Recently feminist scholars have resisted that narrative as overly prescriptive of a woman's behaviour but then so, it could be argued, did Schumann's wife Clara, who maintained an active and very successful professional life throughout her youth, marriage and widowhood. The woman's life conceived in *Frauenliebe und -leben* was as much an idealised, unattainable ideal as is represented by the nubile maidens and sympathetic nightingales in the first half of the programme: through Romantic song almost anything and anyone can be imagined.

Programme note © Laura Tunbridge

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)
An die Nachtigall, Op 46 No 4

Geuss nicht so laut der liebentflammten Lieder
Tonreichen Schall
Vom Blütenast des Apfelbaums hernieder,

O Nachtigall!
Du tönest mir mit deiner süßen Kehle
Die Liebe wach;
Denn schon durchbebt die Tiefen meiner Seele
Dein schmelzend Ach.

Dann flieht der Schlaf von neuem dieses Lager,
Ich starre dann
Mit nassem Blick' und totenbleich und hager
Den Himmel an.
Fluch, Nachtigall, in grüne Finsternisse,
Ins Haingesträuch,
Und spend' im Nest der treuen Gattin Küsse;
Entfleuch, entfleuch!

Ludwig Höltz (1748–76)

Mädchenlied, Op 107 No 5

Auf die Nacht in der Spinnstub'n,
Da singen die Mädchen,
Da lachen die Dorfbub'n,
Wie flink gehn die Rädchen!

Spinnt Jedes am Brautschatz,
Dass der Liebste sich freut.
Nicht lange, so gibt es
Ein Hochzeitgeläut.

Kein Mensch, der mir gut ist,
Will nach mir fragen;
Wie bang mir zumut ist,
Wem soll ich's klagen?

Die Tränen rinnen
Mir übers Gesicht –
Wofür soll ich spinnen?
Ich weiss es nicht!

Paul Heyse (1830–1914)

Das Mädchen, Op 95 No 1

Stand das Mädchen, stand am Bergesabhang,
Widerschien der Berg von ihrem Antlitz,
Und das Mädchen sprach zu ihrem Antlitz:
'Wahrlich, Antlitz, o du meine Sorge,
Wenn ich wüsste, du mein weisses Antlitz,
Dass dereinst ein Alter dich wird küssen,
Ging hinaus ich zu den grünen Bergen,

Do not pour so loudly the full-throated sounds
Of your love-kindled songs
Down from the blossoming boughs of the
apple-tree,
O nightingale!
The tones of your sweet throat
Awaken love in me;
For the depths of my soul already quiver
With your melting lament.

Sleep once more forsakes this couch,
And I stare
Moist-eyed, haggard and deathly pale
At the heavens.
Fly, nightingale, to the green darkness,
To the bushes of the grove,
And there in the nest kiss your faithful mate;
Fly away, fly away!

At night in the spinning-room,
The girls are singing,
The village lads are laughing,
How swiftly the wheels go round!

Each girl spins for her trousseau
To please her lover.
It won't be long
Before wedding-bells sound.

No man who cares for me
Will ask after me;
How anxious I feel,
To whom shall I tell my sorrow?

The tears go coursing
Down my cheeks –
What am I spinning for?
I don't know!

The girl stood, stood by the mountain slope,
The mountains reflected her face,
And the girl spoke to her face:
'Truly, my face, O you my sorrow,
If I knew, white face of mine,
That an old man would one day kiss you,
I'd go out to the green mountain,

Pflückte allen Wermut in den Bergen,
 Presste bittr' res Wasser aus dem Wermut,
 Wüsche dich, o Antlitz, mit dem Wasser,
 Dass du bitter, wenn dich küsst der Alte!

Wüss' ich aber, du mein weisses Antlitz,
 Dass dereinst ein Junge dich wird küssen,
 Ging hinaus ich in den grünen Garten,
 Pflückte alle Rosen in dem Garten,
 Presste duftend Wasser aus den Rosen,
 Wüsche dich, o Antlitz, mit dem Wasser,
 Dass du duftest, wenn dich küsst der Junge!

Siegfried Kapper (1821–79)

Clara Schumann (1819–96)
Liebst du um Schönheit, Op 12 No 2

Liebst du um Schönheit,
 O nicht mich liebe!
 Liebe die Sonne,
 Sie trägt ein goldnes Haar.
 Liebst du um Jugend,
 O nicht mich liebe!
 Liebe den Frühling,
 Der jung ist jedes Jahr.
 Liebst du um Schätze,
 O nicht mich liebe!
 Liebe die Meerfrau,
 Sie hat viel Perlen klar.
 Liebst du um Liebe,
 O ja, mich liebe!
 Liebe mich immer,
 Dich lieb' ich immerdar.

Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866)

Johannes Brahms
Das Mädchenspricht, Op 107 No 3

Schwalbe, sag mir an,
 Ist's dein alter Mann,
 Mit dem du's Nest gebaut,
 Oder hast du jüngst erst
 Dich ihm vertraut?

Sag, was zwitschert ihr,
 Sag, was flüstert ihr
 Des Morgens so vertraut?
 Gelt, du bist wohl auch noch
 Nicht lange Braut?

Otto Friedrich Gruppe (1804–76)

Gather all the wormwood in the mountain,
 Press the bitter juice from the wormwood,
 And wash you, O my face, in that juice,
 That you'd taste bitter when the old man kisses
 you!

But were I to know, white face of mine,
 That a young man would one day kiss you,
 I'd go out into the green garden,
 Pick all the roses in the garden,
 Press scented water from the roses,
 Wash you, O face, in the water,
 That you'd taste sweet when the young man kisses
 you!

If you love for beauty,
 O love not me!
 Love the sun,
 She has golden hair.
 If you love for youth,
 O love not me!
 Love the spring
 Which is young each year.
 If you love for riches,
 O love not me!
 Love the mermaid
 Who has many shining pearls.
 If you love for love,
 Ah yes, love me!
 Love me always,
 I shall love you ever more.

Tell me, swallow,
 Is it last year's mate
 You've built your nest with,
 Or are you
 But recently betrothed?

Say, what are you twittering,
 Say, what are you whispering
 So intimately in the morning?
 Am I right, you haven't long
 Been married either?

Salamander, Op 107 No 2

Es sass ein Salamander
Auf einem kühlen Stein,
Da warf ein böses Mädchen
In's Feuer ihn hinein.

Sie meinf', er soll verbrennen,
Ihm war erst wohl zu Mut,
Wohl wie mir kühlem Teufel
Die heisse Liebe tut.

Karl Lemcke (1831–1913)

A salamander was sitting
On a cool stone,
When suddenly a bad girl
Threw it into the fire.

She thought it would burn up,
But it felt even more at ease,
Just as hot love
Suits a cool devil like me.

Nachtigall, Op 97 No 1

O Nachtigall,
Dein süsser Schall,
Er dringet mir durch Mark und Bein.
Nein, trauter Vogel, nein!
Was in mir schafft so süsse Pein,
Das ist nicht dein –
Das ist von andern, himmelschönen,
Nun längst für mich verklungenen Tönen,
In deinem Lied ein leiser Widerhall.

Reinhold Köstlin (1813–56)

O nightingale,
Your sweet voice
Pierces me to the marrow.
No, dear bird, no!
What causes me such sweet pain
Is not your notes,
But others, of heavenly beauty,
Long since vanished for me,
A gentle echo in your song.

Translations © Richard Stokes

Herbert Howells (1892–1983)**King David**

King David was a sorrowful man:
No cause for his sorrow had he;
And he called for the music of a hundred harps,
To ease his melancholy.

They played till they all fell silent:
Played and play sweet did they;
But the sorrow that haunted the heart of
King David
They could not charm away.

He rose; and in his garden
Walked by the moon alone,
A nightingale hidden in a cypress tree,
Jargoned on and on.

King David lifted his sad eyes
Into the dark-boughed tree –
'Tell me, thou little bird that singest,
Who taught my grief to thee?'

But the bird in no-wise heeded;
And the king in the cool of the moon
Hearkened to the nightingale's sorrowfulness,
Till all his own was gone.

Walter de la Mare (1873–1956)

The Widow Bird, Op 22 No 3

A widow bird sate mourning for her love
 Upon a wintry bough,
 The frozen wind crept on above;
 The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
 No flower upon the ground
 And little motion in the air,
 Except the mill-wheel's sound.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822)

**Sally Beamish (born 1956)
Four Songs from Hafez****1 Nightingale**

Roaming the dawn garden
 I heard the call of a nightingale.

Forlorn like me, he loved the rose
 And in that cry surged all his warbling grief.

I drifted in that garden's timeless moment
 Balancing the plight of rose and bird.

For endless roses flower each day
 Yet no man plucks a single bloom
 Without the risk of thorn.

O Hafez, seek no gain from the orbit of this wheel:
 It has a thousand failings and no concern for you.

Girl's Song, Op 22 No 4

I saw three black pigs riding
 In a blue and yellow cart;
 Three black pigs riding to the fair
 Behind the old grey dappled mare,
 But it wasn't black pigs riding
 In a gay and gaudy cart
 That sent me into hiding
 With a flutter in my heart.

I heard the cart returning,
 The jolting jingling cart;
 Returning empty from the fair
 Behind the old jogtrotting mare
 But it wasn't the returning
 Of a clatt'ring empty cart
 That sent the hot blood burning
 And throbbing thro' my heart.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson (1878–1962)

2 Peacock

Until your hair falls through the fingers of the
 breeze,
 My yearning heart lies torn apart with grief.

The dusty mole encircled by your curls,
 Is like the ink-drop falling in the curve of J.

And wafting tresses in the perfect garden of your
 face,
 Drop like a peacock falling into paradise.

My soul searches for the comfort of a glance,
 Light as the dust arising from your path,

Your shadow falls across my frame,
 Like the breath of Jesus over melting bones.

And those who turned to Mecca as their only
 haven,
 Now at the knowledge of your lips tumble at the
 tavern door.

O precious love, the suffering of your absence
 and lost Hafez
 Fell and fused together with the ancient pact.

3 Fish

When my beloved offers the cup
Graven idols are crushed,

And those who gaze into that intoxicating eye
Call ecstatically for rescue.

I plunge into the ocean like a fish
Craving the beloved's hook,

I fall pleading at those feet
In hope of a helping hand.

O happy the heart who like Hafez
Has tasted the wine of creation.

4 Hoopoe

O Hoopoe of the east wind,
To Sheba I shall send you.
Take heed from where to where
I shall send you.

Pity a bird like you
Lodged in a well of sorrow.
From here, to the nest of devotion
I shall send you
In quest of love.
There is no near or far but only now.
I see you whole, and my fealty
I shall send you.

Whispering in the winds
Each dawn and dusk,
Convoys of sweet invocations
I shall send you.

Love's face
Reveals the joy of all Creation
In the God-reflecting mirror
I shall send you.

Divan-e-Hafez (1315–90), translated by Jila Peacock

interval 20 minutes

Rhian Samuel (born 1944)

Summer Songs

1 In Summer

Night lies down
in the field when the moon
leaves. Head in clover,
held still.

It is brief,
this time of darkness,
hands of night
loosefisted, long hair
outspread.

Sooner than one would dream,
the first bird
wakes with a sobbing cry.
Whitely

dew begins to drift
cloudily.
Leafily naked, forms of the world
are revealed,
all asleep. Colors

come slowly
up from behind the hilltop,
looking for forms to fill for the day,
dwellings.

Night
must rise and
move on, stiff and
not yet awake.

*Denise Levertov (1923–97), from 'Selected Poems',
publ Bloodaxe Books, 1986*

2 A Dragonfly in the Sun

The afternoon's light is caught
 in the dragonfly's wings where
 transparency permits no reflections
 and yet will not give free passage
 to the sun, preserving the surface
 brightness of delicate webbing
 as a fragile brilliance of gleaming
 points which make the wings nearly
 invisible and the diagonal markings appear
 as tiny irradiations of very faint
 pink and blue when the dragonfly
 darts up against the sun as if it
 plucked colours from the air
 and immediately discarded them:
 this is the moment of intensity,
 of the afternoon's light gathering
 in the garden in a brief flickering
 of a dragonfly's wings just above
 the red blossoms of the pomegranate.

*Zulfikar Ghose (born 1935), from '50 Poems', publ
 OUP, 2010)*

Robert Schumann (1810–56) Frauenliebe und -leben, Op 42

1 Seit ich ihn gesehen

Seit ich ihn gesehen,
 Glaub ich blind zu sein;
 Wo ich hin nur blicke,
 Seh ich ihn allein;
 Wie im wachen Traume
 Schwebt sein Bild mir vor,
 Taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel,
 Heller nur empor.

Sonst ist licht- und farblos
 Alles um mich her,
 Nach der Schwestern Spiele
 Nicht begehrt ich mehr,
 Möchte lieber weinen,
 Still im Kämmerlein;
 Seit ich ihn gesehen,
 Glaub ich blind zu sein.

2 Er, der Herrlichste von allen

Er, der Herrlichste von allen,
 Wie so milde, wie so gut!
 Holde Lippen, klares Auge,
 Heller Sinn und fester Mut.

Since first seeing him,
 I think I am blind,
 Wherever I look,
 Him only I see;
 As in a waking dream
 His image hovers before me,
 Rising out of deepest darkness
 Ever more brightly.

All else is dark and colourless
 Around me,
 My sisters' games
 I no more long to share,
 I would rather weep
 Quietly in my room;
 Since first seeing him,
 I think I am blind.

He, the most wonderful of all,
 How gentle and loving he is!
 Sweet lips, bright eyes,
 A clear mind and firm resolve.

So wie dort in blauer Tiefe,
Hell und herrlich, jener Stern,
Also er an meinem Himmel,
Hell und herrlich, hehr und fern.

Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen;
Nur betrachten deinen Schein,
Nur in Demut ihn betrachten,
Selig nur und traurig sein!

Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,
Deinem Glücke nur geweiht;
Darfst mich niedre Magd nicht kennen,
Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!

Nur die Würdigste von allen
Darf beglücken deine Wahl,
Und ich will die Hohe segnen,
Viele tausendmal.

Will mich freuen dann und weinen,
Selig, selig bin ich dann;
Sollte mir das Herz auch brechen,
Brich, o Herz, was liegt daran?

3 Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben,
Es hat ein Traum mich berückt;
Wie hätt er doch unter allen
Mich Arme erhöht und beglückt?

Mir war's, er habe gesprochen:
'Ich bin auf ewig dein' –
Mir war's – ich träume noch immer,
Es kann ja nimmer so sein.

O lass im Traume mich sterben,
Gewieget an seiner Brust,
Den seligen Tod mich schlürfen
In Tränen unendlicher Lust.

4 Du Ring an meinem Finger

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringelein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

Ich hatt ihn ausgeträumet,
Der Kindheit friedlich schönen Traum,
Ich fand allein mich, verloren
Im öden, unendlichen Raum.

Just as there in the deep-blue distance
That star gleams bright and brilliant,
So does he shine in my sky,
Bright and brilliant, distant and sublime.

Wander, wander on your way,
Just to gaze on your radiance,
Just to gaze on in humility,
To be but blissful and sad!

Do not heed my silent prayer,
Uttered for your happiness alone,
You shall never know me, lowly as I am,
You noble star of splendour!

Only the worthiest woman of all
May your choice elate,
And I shall bless that exalted one
Many thousands of times.

Then shall I rejoice and weep,
Blissful, blissful shall I be,
Even if my heart should break,
Break, O heart, what does it matter?

I cannot grasp it, believe it,
A dream has beguiled me;
How, from all women, could he
Have exalted and favoured poor me?

He said, I thought,
'I am yours for ever',
I was, I thought, still dreaming,
After all, it can never be.

O let me, dreaming, die,
Cradled on his breast;
Let me savour blissful death
In tears of endless joy.

You ring on my finger,
My golden little ring,
I press you devoutly to my lips,
To my heart.

I had finished dreaming
Childhood's peaceful dream,
I found myself alone, forlorn
In boundless desolation.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Da hast du mich erst belehrt,
Hast meinem Blick erschlossen
Des Lebens unendlichen, tiefen Wert.

You ring on my finger,
You first taught me,
Opened my eyes
To life's deep eternal worth.

Ich will ihm dienen, ihm leben,
Ihm angehören ganz,
Hin selber mich geben und finden
Verklärt mich in seinem Glanz.

I shall serve him, live for him,
Belong to him wholly,
Yield to him and find
Myself transfigured in his light.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringlein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

You ring on my finger,
My golden little ring,
I press you devoutly to my lips,
To my heart.

5 Helft mir, ihr Schwestern

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
Freundlich mich schmücken,
Dient der Glücklichen heute mir,
Windet geschäftig
Mir um die Stirne
Noch der blühenden Myrte Zier.

Help me, my sisters,
With my bridal attire,
Serve me today in my joy,
Busily braid
About my brow
The wreath of blossoming myrtle.

Als ich befriedigt,
Freudigen Herzens,
Sonst dem Geliebten im Arme lag,
Immer noch rief er,
Sehnsucht im Herzen,
Ungeduldig den heutigen Tag.

When with contentment
And joy in my heart
I lay in my beloved's arms,
He still called,
With longing heart,
Impatiently for this day.

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
Helft mir verscheuchen
Eine törichte Bangigkeit,
Dass ich mit klarem
Aug ihn empfangen,
Ihn, die Quelle der Freudigkeit.

Help me, my sisters,
Help me banish
A foolish fearfulness;
So that I with bright eyes
May receive him,
The source of all my joy.

Bist, mein Geliebter,
Du mir erschienen,
Giebst du mir, Sonne, deinen Schein?
Lass mich in Andacht,
Lass mich in Demut,
Lass mich verneigen dem Herren mein.

Have you, my love,
Really entered my life,
Do you, O sun, give me your glow?
Let me in reverence,
Let me in humility
Bow before my lord.

Streuet ihm, Schwestern,
Streuet ihm Blumen,
Bringet ihm knospende Rosen dar,
Aber euch, Schwestern,
Grüss ich mit Wehmut,
Freudig scheidend aus eurer Schar.

Scatter flowers, O sisters,
Scatter flowers before him,
Bring him budding roses.
But you, sisters,
I greet with sadness,
As I joyfully take leave of you.

6 Süßer Freund, du blickest

Süßer Freund, du blickest
Mich verwundert an,
Kannst es nicht begreifen,
Wie ich weinen kann;
Lass der feuchten Perlen
Ungewohnte Zier
Freudig hell erzittern
In dem Auge mir!

Wie so bang mein Busen,
Wie so wonnevoll!
Wüsst ich nur mit Worten,
Wie ich's sagen soll;
Komm und birg dein Antlitz
Hier an meiner Brust,
Will in's Ohr dir flüstern
Alle meine Lust.

Weisst du nun die Tränen,
Die ich weinen kann,
Sollst du nicht sie sehen,
Du geliebter Mann?
Bleib an meinem Herzen,
Fühle dessen Schlag,
Dass ich fest und fester
Nur dich drücken mag.

Hier an meinem Bette
Hat die Wiege Raum,
Wo sie still verberge
Meinen holden Traum;
Kommen wird der Morgen,
Wo der Traum erwacht,
Und daraus dein Bildnis
Mir entgegen lacht.

7 An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!

Das Glück ist die Liebe, die Lieb ist das Glück,
Ich hab's gesagt und nehm's nicht zurück.

Hab überschwenglich mich geschätzt,
Bin übergücklich aber jetzt.

Nur die da säugt, nur die da liebt
Das Kind, dem sie die Nahrung giebt;

Nur eine Mutter weiss allein,
Was lieben heisst und glücklich sein.

O, wie bedaur' ich doch den Mann,
Der Mutterglück nicht fühlen kann!

Sweet friend, you look
At me in wonder,
You cannot understand
How I can weep;
Let the unfamiliar beauty
Of these moist pearls
Tremble joyfully bright
In my eyes!

How anxious my heart is,
How full of bliss!
If only I knew
How to say it in words;
Come and hide your face
Here against my breast,
For me to whisper you
All my joy.

Do you now understand the tears
That I can weep,
Should you not see them,
Beloved husband?
Stay by my heart,
Feel how it beats,
That I may press you
Closer and closer.

Here by my bed
There is room for the cradle,
Silently hiding
My blissful dream;
The morning shall come
When the dream awakens,
And your likeness
Laughs up at me.

On my heart, at my breast,
You my delight, my joy!

Happiness is love, love is happiness,
I've always said and say so still.

I thought myself rapturous,
But now am delirious with joy.

Only she who suckles, only she who loves
The child that she nourishes;

Only a mother knows
What it means to love and be happy.

Ah, how I pity the man
Who cannot feel a mother's bliss!

Du lieber, lieber Engel, Du,
Du schauest mich an und lächelst dazu!

You dear, dear angel, you,
You look at me and you smile!

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!

On my heart, at my breast,
You my delight, my joy!

8 Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan

Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan,
Der aber traf.
Du schläfst, du harter, unbarmherziger Mann,
Den Todesschlaf.

Now you have caused me my first pain,
But it struck hard.
You sleep, you harsh and pitiless man,
The sleep of death.

Es blicket die Verlassne vor sich hin,
Die Welt ist leer.
Geliebet hab ich und gelebt, ich bin
Nicht lebend mehr.

The deserted one stares ahead,
The world is void.
I have loved and I have lived,
And now my life is done.

Ich zieh mich in mein Innres still zurück,
Der Schleier fällt,
Da hab ich dich und mein verlornes Glück,
Du meine Welt!

Silently I withdraw into myself,
The veil falls,
There I have you and my lost happiness,
You, my world!

Adelbert von Chamisso (1781–1838)

Translations © Richard Stokes

About the performers



Benjamin Edlowega

Roderick Williams

Roderick Williams baritone

Roderick Williams is one of the most sought-after baritones of his generation and is this season's Artist-in-Residence at Milton Court Concert Hall. He performs a wide repertoire from Baroque to contemporary music in opera houses and concert halls over the world.

He enjoys relationships with all the major UK opera houses and has sung in world premieres of operas by David Sawer, Sally Beamish, Michael van der Aa, Robert Saxton and Alexander Knaifel. Recent and future engagements include the title-role in *Eugene Onegin* for Garsington, the title-role in *Billy Budd* with Opera North, Papageno for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and productions with Dallas Opera, English National Opera and Netherlands Opera.

He sings regularly with all the BBC orchestras and other major UK orchestras, as well as the Berlin and New York Philharmonic orchestras, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Russian National Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Chicago's Music of the Baroque and Bach Collegium Japan, among others. His many festival appearances include the BBC Proms (where he sang at the Last Night in 2014) and the Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Bath, Aldeburgh and Melbourne festivals.

Roderick Williams has an extensive discography. He is also a composer and has had works premiered at the Wigmore and Barbican Halls, the Purcell Room and live on national radio. In December 2016 he won the prize for best choral composition at the British Composer Awards.

In 2015 he started a three-year odyssey of the Schubert song-cycles, culminating in performances at the Wigmore Hall in the 2017–18 season; he is now in the process of recording them for Chandos.

Roderick Williams was Artistic Director of Leeds Lieder in April 2016 and won the RPS Singer of the Year award in May the same year. He was awarded an OBE in 2017.



Andrew West

Andrew West piano

Andrew West and Roderick Williams have a longstanding partnership which has covered a wide range of repertoire, from Schumann song-cycles to world premieres of works by Alexander Goehr and Dominic Muldowney. They have given recitals at many of the leading British music festivals, as well as at the Nuremberg Chamber Music Festival, of which Andrew West has been an Artistic Director since 2005. They have performed Britten's *Songs and Proverbs of William Blake* at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, and will present this work again as part of a four-concert 'Poetry and Music' series at the Aldeburgh Festival in June. Together they have recorded Parry's *English Lyrics*, and later this year will record songs by Stanford, all for Somm Records.

Andrew West also plays for many of today's other leading singers, including Benjamin Appl, James Gilchrist, Susan Grifton, Robert Murray and Hilary Summers.

He appears regularly with the tenor Mark Padmore. Their concerts have included staged performances of Schubert's *Winterreise* at the

Queen Elizabeth Hall and Lincoln Center, New York; and the 2013 world premiere of Sir Harrison Birtwistle's song-cycle *Songs from the Same Earth*, which they subsequently performed in Amsterdam, Cologne and at the Wigmore Hall. They opened the 2016–17 recital series at the Library of Congress in Washington DC.

Andrew West has appeared with flautist Emily Beynon at the BBC Chamber Music Proms, Edinburgh Festival and at festivals throughout Europe; next year they perform together at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Wigmore Hall. Other chamber music partners have included violinist Sarah Chang and cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras.

He won second prize at the Geneva International Piano Competition and has since made solo tours of South Africa, South America and the USA.

Recordings include Strauss Lieder with Emma Bell; music by Les Six with Emily Beynon for Hyperion; and Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* with Robert Murray for Stone Records.

Andrew West is Chairman and Artistic Director of the Kirckman Concert Society, which for over 50 years has auditioned exceptional young musicians and offered them debut recitals at major London venues. He served on the jury of the 2014 Kathleen Ferrier Competition.

He has an MA from Clare College, Cambridge, where he read English before studying under Christopher Elton and John Streets at the Royal Academy of Music. He was Pianist-in-Residence at Lancaster University from 1993 to 1999. He is currently professor of chamber music and accompaniment at both the RAM and Guildhall School of Music & Drama.



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