

WIGMORE HALL 125

Monday 10 November 2025
1.00pm

The Shipping Forecast

James Newby baritone
Joseph Middleton piano

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
Nicolas Medtner (1880-1951)
Granville Bantock (1868-1946)
Cheryl Frances-Hoad (b.1980)

John Ireland (1879-1962)
Franz Schubert
Charles Ives (1874-1954)
Henri Duparc (1848-1933)

Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894)
Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943)
Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Franz Schubert
Cecil Armstrong Gibbs (1889-1960)
Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

Eric Coates (1886-1957)
Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)
Kurt Weill (1900-1950)
Cole Porter (1891-1964)

Mysteries of the deep

Gruppe aus dem Tartarus D583 (1817)
Meeresstille Op. 15 No. 7 (1905-7)
Song to the Seals (pub. 1930)
Rita the Pirate from *The Thought Machine* (2016)

Invitation to voyage

Sea Fever (1913)
Des Fischers Liebesglück D933 (1827)
From "The Swimmers" (1921)
L'invitation au voyage (1870)

Exotic isles

L'île heureuse (1889)
The Isle Op. 14 No. 2 (1896)
Where corals lie from *Sea Pictures* Op. 37 (1899)

Fearless bark

Der Schiffer D536 (1817)
Sailing Homeward (1934)
Channel Firing from *Before and After Summer* Op. 16
(c.1932-49)

Desert island discs

By the Sleepy Lagoon (1930)
Drake's Drum from *Songs of the Sea* Op. 91 (1904)
My Ship from *Lady in the Dark* (1940)
The Tale of the Oyster from *Fifty Million Frenchmen*
(1929)



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The sea-songs of this recital span almost 200 years. Changing artistic perceptions of the sea across this time inevitably bear traces of the cultural, technological, military and colonial forces of the 19th and 20th centuries – currents which are felt at various points in this recital through nuances of language, metaphor, and musical style.

The only composer featured more than once is **Schubert**, who wrote a considerable body of ‘water music’ but never himself saw the sea. We begin on the river to Hades in *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus*, one of his most striking songs on Classical themes. The music vividly brings to life Schiller’s visceral, horrifying images of the condemned, their groans likened to the ‘angry murmuring’ of the sea. The waters of Goethe’s *Meeresstille* are disquietingly calm, but **Nikolai Medtner**’s setting explores the restless currents that lie beneath the surface. The next two songs tell of folkloric feminine characters holding court at sea. An inscription in the score of **Granville Bantock**’s *Song to the Seals* tells us that ‘the refrain of this song was actually used recently on an Hebredean Island by a singer who thereby attracted a quantity of seals to gather round and listen intently to the singing’. **Cheryl Frances-Hoad**’s ‘Rita the Pirate’ sets Kate Wakeling’s tale of a malevolent mythical boatwoman, in which a sense of the demonic is conjured in a swirling allusion to Paganini’s *Caprice* No. 24.

John Masefield was a sailor and a prolific writer, whose poems have inspired many a British composer. The best-known is probably **John Ireland**’s *Sea Fever* of 1913, a setting of one of Masefield’s *Salt-Water Ballads* in which the music shares the poem’s sense of steely resolution towards the sea’s excitement and promise. The melodic construction is quite simple, with each stanza following similar contours, but the piano’s harmonisation becomes increasingly exploratory and highly-charged. After this, the studied, controlled simplicity of **Schubert**’s late song *Des Fischers Liebesglück* is all the more powerful. As the tale of the fisherman’s love is told, Schubert heightens the poet’s appeals to the senses – light, colour, texture, emotion – through effortless harmonic shapeshifting, and the song’s strophic design means we hear this refined, distilled music four times. Next we return to the early 20th Century, this time to America and the eclectic modernism of **Charles Ives**. The poet Louis Untermeyer praised Ives’s partial setting *From “The Swimmers”*, writing that ‘all that I tried to do in words he was doing in sound’. It’s a short, vigorous song, and in performance we might imagine the singer furiously treading water to overcome the piano’s unrelenting, crashing waves. Baudelaire’s *L’invitation au voyage* has been taken up by dozens of composers enticed by its idealised vision of a land of order and beauty – ‘luxe, calme, et volupté’ – and few are as persuasive as **Henri Duparc**’s 1870 setting that

captures the enigmatic exoticism and eroticism at the heart of the poem.

The three songs under the heading ‘exotic isles’ were written within a decade of each other, and display some ways in which foreign lands were perceived – and used as metaphor – in the European cultural imagination of the late 19th Century. **Chabrier**’s *L’île heureuse* of 1889 is an exuberant, sensual song full of appetite for discovery and pleasure, driven by ecstatic, searching syncopation in the piano part, while the mysteries of the island of **Rachmaninov**’s 1896 *Ostrovok* (The isle) are those of stillness and quietness. ‘Where corals lie’ has become the best-known individual song of **Elgar**’s 1899 cycle *Sea Pictures*. The protagonist’s yearning is articulated at every level of the music, from the textural shifts at the end of each verse to the astonishing way in which harmonic closure is attained in the final bars. **Schubert**’s *Der Schiffer* plunges us into an awe- (or terror-) inspiring landscape, with a relentless piano part underlying the protagonist’s resolve to submit himself to the elements. The experience of nature as it inspires art animates the long phrases of **Cecil Armstrong Gibbs**’s short song *Sailing Homeward*, after which comes **Gerald Finzi**’s setting of Thomas Hardy’s poem ‘Channel Firing’ – the music carefully tracing the narrative told by voices of the dead, as gunshots from the channel reverberate in West Country graves. The poem was written shortly before war broke out in 1914, and the song was composed in 1940.

The final group thematises the circulation of ships, people, and objects, along with the stories of love and longing attached to them. **Eric Coates**’s *By the Sleepy Lagoon*, written in 1930, is the orchestral piece overlaid with herring gulls as castaways prepare to share their selections of records and luxury items on the BBC’s iconic ‘Desert Island Discs’. In 1940, the American singer Jack Lawrence added words to the easy-going waltz to create a popular song, which was published by Chappell as ‘Sleepy Lagoon’ with an evocative cover illustrating the opening phrase: ‘A sleepy lagoon, a tropical moon, and two on an island’. **Coates**’s own inspiration was apparently a view of Bognor Regis. **Charles Villiers Stanford**’s ‘Drake’s drum’ opens with a similarly distinctive rhythmic profile, this one conjuring an important instrument in English military folklore. The legend goes that, on his deathbed at sea, Francis Drake sent his beloved snare drum back to England, with the proviso that it should be beaten in times of peril to raise his spirit to protect the English seas. The voyage ends with two songs from Broadway musicals: **Kurt Weill**’s ‘My Ship’, from *Lady in the Dark*, and **Cole Porter**’s witty ‘The Tale of the Oyster’, from the *Fifty Million Frenchmen*.

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Mysteries of the Deep

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

**Gruppe aus dem
Tartarus D583** (1817)
Friedrich von Schiller

Scene from Hades

Horch – wie Murmeln des
empörten Meeres,
Wie durch hohler Felsen
Becken weint ein Bach,
Stöhnt dort dumpfigtief ein
schweres, leeres,
Qualerpresstes Ach!

Hark! – like the angered
ocean's murmuring,
like a brook weeping
through rocky hollows
there rises up, dank and
deep, a heavy, empty
tormented cry!

Schmerz verzerret
Ihr Gesicht, Verzweiflung
sperret
Ihren Rachen fluchend
auf.
Hohl sind ihre Augen – ihre
Blicke
Spähen bang nach des
Cocytus Brücke,
Folgen tränend seinem
Trauerlauf.

Pain distorts
their faces, despair
opens
wide their jaws in
imprecation.
Their eyes are hollow –
their gaze
fixes fearfully on Cocytus
Bridge,
weeping they follow the
river's doleful course.

Fragen sich einander
ängstlich leise,
Ob noch nicht Vollendung
sei? –
Ewigkeit schwingt über
ihnen Kreise,
Bricht die Sense des Saturns
entzwei.

Anxiously, softly, they ask
each other
if the end is
nigh? –
Eternity sweeps in circles
above them,
breaks Saturn's scythe
asunder.

Nicolas Medtner (1880-1951)

**Meeresstille Op. 15
No. 7** (1905-7)
*Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe*

Calm sea

Tiefe Stille herrscht im
Wasser,
Ohne Regung ruht das Meer,
Und bekümmert sieht der
Schiffer
Glatte Fläche rings umher.
Keine Luft von keiner Seite!
Todesstille fürchterlich!
In der ungeheuern Weite
Reget keine Welle sich.

Deep silence weighs on
the water,
motionless the sea rests,
and the fearful boatman
sees
a glassy surface all around.
No breeze from any quarter!
Fearful, deadly silence!
In all that vast expanse
not a single ripple stirs.

Granville Bantock (1868-1946)

Song to the Seals (pub. 1930)
Harold Boulton

A sea maid sings on yonder reef,
The spell-bound seals draw near;
Her lilt that lures beyond belief
Mortals enchanted hear.

*Hoiran, oiran, oiran, oiro,
Hoiran, oiran, oiran, eero,
Hoiran, oiran, oiran, eelaleuran,
Hoiran, oiran, oiran, eero.*

The wond'ring ploughman halts his plough,
The maid her milking stays,
While sheep on hillside, birds on bough,
Pause and listen in amaze.

Hoiran, oiran, oiran, oiro ...

Was it a dream, were all asleep,
Or did she cease her strain?
For the seals with a splash dive into the deep
And the world goes on again,
But lingers the refrain.

Hoiran, oiran, oiran, oiro ...

Cheryl Frances-Hoad (b.1980)

Rita the Pirate from *The Thought Machine* (2016)
Kate Wakeling

Let me warn you of Rita, the pirate supreme:
She'll grab all your gold with an ear-splitting scream.

What she lacks in back teeth she makes up in back bone;
With her horrible stare, she turns grown men to stone.

She steers her great boat with her crooked quick wits
And a cackling crew of rogues, cheats and misfits.

She'll go head-to-head with a hammerhead shark
For it's clear that her bite's just as bad as her bark.

Yes, Rita's old soul is as cold as they come,
There's little feared more than the sound of her drum.

And they say Rita won't touch a toe on dry land
But I'd keep your door locked (and the breadknife to
hand).

*Please do not turn the page until the song and its
accompaniment have ended.*

Invitation to Voyage

John Ireland (1879-1962)

Sea Fever (1913)

John Masefield

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and
the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white
sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn
breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the
running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume and the
seagulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy
life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's
like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's
over.

Franz Schubert

Des Fischers Liebesglück D933

(1827)

Karl Gottfried von Leitner

Dort blinket
Durch Weiden,
Und winket
Ein Schimmer
Blassstrahlig
Vom Zimmer
Der Holden mir zu.

Es gaukelt
Wie Irrlicht,
Und schaukelt
Sich leise
Sein Abglanz
Im Kreise
Des schwankenden Sees.

Ich schaue
Mit Sehnen
In's Blaue
Der Wellen,
Und grüsse
Den hellen,
Gespiegelten Strahl.

The fisherman's luck in love

Yonder light gleams
through the willows,
and a pale
glimmer
beckons to me
from the bedroom
of my sweetheart.

It flickers
like a will-o'-the-wisp,
and its reflection
sways
gently
in the circle
of the undulating lake.

I gaze
longingly
into the blue
of the waves,
and greet
the bright
reflected beam.

Und springe
Zum Ruder,
Und schwinge
Den Nachen
Dahin auf
Den flachen,
Krystallinen Weg.

Fein-Liebchen
Schleicht traulich
Vom Stübchen
Herunter,
Und sputet
Sich munter
Zu mir in das Boot.

Gelinde
Dann treiben
Die Winde
Uns wieder
See-einwärts
Vom Flieder
Des Ufers hindann.

Die blassen
Nachtnebel
Umfassen
Mit Hüllen
Vor Spähern
Den stillen,
Unschuldigen Scherz.

Und tauschen
Wir Küsse,
So rauschen
Die Wellen
Im Sinken
Und Schwellen,
Den Horchern zum Trotz.

Nur Sterne
Belauschen
Uns ferne,
Und baden
Tief unter
Den Pfaden
Des gleitenden Kahns.

So schweben
Wir selig,
Umgeben
Vom Dunkel,
Hoch überm
Gefunkel
Der Sterne einher.

Und weinen
Und lächeln,
Und meinen,
Enthoben

And spring
to the oar,
and swing
the boat
away on
its smooth
crystal course.

My sweetheart
slips lovingly
down
from her little room,
and joyfully
hastens to me
in the boat.

Then the breezes
gently
blow us
again
out into the lake
from the elder tree
on the shore.

The pale
evening mists
envelop
and veil
our silent,
innocent dallying
from prying onlookers.

And as we exchange
kisses,
the waves
lap,
rising
and falling,
to foil eavesdroppers.

Only stars
in the far distance
overhear us,
and bathe
deep down
below the course
of the gliding boat.

So we drift on
blissfully,
in the midst
of darkness,
high above
the twinkling
stars.

Weeping,
smiling,
we think
we have soared free

Der Erde,	of the earth,
Schon oben,	and are already up above,
Schon d'rüben zu sein.	on another shore.

Charles Ives (1874-1954)

From "The Swimmers" (1921)

Louis Untermeyer

Then the swift plunge into the cool green dark,
The windy waters rushing past me, through me;
Filled with the sense of some heroic lark,
Exulting in a vigor clean and roomy.
Swiftly I rose to meet the feline sea...
Pitting against a cold turbulent strife,
The feverish intensity of life...

Out of the foam I lurched and rode the wave
Swimming hand over hand, over hand, against the wind;
I felt the sea's vain pounding, and I grinned
Knowing I was its master, not its slave.

Henri Duparc (1848-1933)

L'invitation au voyage Invitation to journey (1870)

Charles Baudelaire

Mon enfant, ma sœur, Songe à la douceur D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble! Aimer à loisir, Aimer et mourir Au pays qui te ressemble! Les soleils mouillés De ces ciels brouillés Pour mon esprit ont les charmes Si mystérieux De tes traîtres yeux, Brillant à travers leurs larmes.	My child, my sister, think how sweet to journey there and live together! To love as we please, to love and die in the land that is like you! The watery suns of those hazy skies hold for my spirit the same mysterious charms as your treacherous eyes shining through their tears.
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Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté, Luxe, calme et volupté.	There – nothing but order and beauty dwell, abundance, calm and sensuous delight.
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Vois sur ces canaux Dormir ces vaisseaux Dont l'humeur est vagabonde; C'est pour assouvir Ton moindre désir Qu'ils viennent du bout du monde. – Les soleils couchants Revêtent les champs,	See on those canals those vessels sleeping, vessels with a restless soul; to satisfy your slightest desire they come from the ends of the earth. The setting suns clothe the fields,
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Les canaux, la ville entière, D'hyacinthe et d'or; Le monde s'endort Dans une chaude lumière.	canals and all the town with hyacinth and gold; the world falls asleep in a warm light.
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Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté, Luxe, calme et volupté.	There – nothing but order and beauty dwell, abundance, calm and sensuous delight.
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Exotic Isles

Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894)

L'île heureuse (1889) The happy isle *Ephraïm Mikhaël*

Dans le golfe aux jardins ombreux, Des couples blonds d'amants heureux Ont fleuri les mâts langoureux De ta galère, Et, caressé de doux été, Notre beau navire enchanté Vers des pays de volupté Fend l'onde claire!	By the shady gardens of the gulf, blond pairs of happy lovers have garlanded the languorous masts of your galley, and, caressed by gentle summer, our beautiful enchanted ship, bound for the land of delight, cleaves the limpid waves!
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Vois, nous sommes les souverains Des lumineux déserts marins, Sur les flots ravis et sereins Berçons nos rêves! Tes pâles mains ont le pouvoir D'embaumer au loin l'air du soir, Et dans tes yeux je crois revoir Le ciel des grèves!	Behold, we are the sovereigns of the ocean's luminous wastes; on waves, delightful and serene, let us rock our dreams! Your pale hands have the power to scent from afar the evening air, and in your eyes I seem to glimpse again the skyline of the shore!
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Mais là-bas, là-bas, au soleil, Surgit le cher pays vermeil D'où s'élève un chant de réveil Et d'allégresse; C'est l'île heureuse aux cieux légers Où, parmi les lys étrangers, Je dormirai dans les vergers, Sous ta caresse.	But there, over there in the sun, looms the dear vermilion land, where a song of wakening rises and of joy; it is the happy isle of gentle skies, where among exotic lilies I shall sleep in the orchards and your embrace!
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Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

The Isle Op. 14 No. 2

(1896)

Konstantin Balmont, after

Percy Bysshe Shelley

The Isle

Iz morya smotrit
ostrovok,

Evo zelyonye
uklony

Ukrasil trav gustykh
venok,

Fialki, anemony.

From the sea, a small
island gazes out.

Its green slopes are
crowned

with a thick wreath of
grasses -

violets and anemones.

Nad nim spletayutsya listy,
Vokrug nevo chut pleshchut
volny.

Derevya grustny, kak
mechty,

Kak statui, bezmolvny.

Above, the leaves intertwine,
around it, the waves
gently lap.

The trees are sorrowful,
like dreams,

silent, like statues.

Zdes yele dyshit
veterok,

Syuda groza ne doletayet,

I bezmyatezhnyi ostrovok

Vsyo dremlet, zasypayet.

Here, the breeze barely
breathes.

No storm reaches this place.

The tranquil little island

sleeps, and dreams.

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Where corals lie from Sea Pictures Op. 37 (1899)

Richard Garnett

The deeps have music soft and low
When winds awake the airy spry,
It lures me, lures me on to go
And see the land where corals lie.

By mount and mead, by lawn and rill,
When night is deep and moon is high,
That music seeks and finds me still,
And tells me where the corals lie.

Yes, press my eyelids close, 'tis well;
But far the rapid fancies fly
The rolling worlds of wave and shell,
And all the lands where corals lie.

Thy lips are like a sunset glow,
Thy smile is like a morning sky,
Yet leave me, leave me, let me go
And see the land where corals lie.

Fearless Bark

Franz Schubert

Der Schiffer D536 (1817)

Johann Mayrhofer

The boatman

Im Winde, im Sturme befahr'
ich den Fluss,

Die Kleider durchweicht
der Regen im Guss;

Ich peitsche die Wellen mit
mächtigem Schlag,

Erhoffend, erhoffend mir
heiteren Tag.

I ply the river in wind and
storm,

my garments soaked by
teeming rain,

I lash the waves with
powerful strokes,

filled with hopes for a
bright day.

Die Wellen, sie jagen das
ächzende Schiff,

Es drohet der Strudel, es
drohet das Riff,

Gesteine entkollern den
felsigen Höh'n,

Und Tannen erseufzen wie
Geistergestöh'n.

The waves drive on the
creaking boat,

whirlpool and reef loom
threateningly,

rocks roll down the
towering cliffs,

and fir-trees sigh like
groaning ghosts.

So musste es kommen – ich
hab es gewollt,

Ich hasse ein Leben
behaglich entrollt;

Und schlängen die Wellen
den ächzenden Kahn,

Ich priese doch immer die
eigene Bahn.

It had to come – I willed it
so,

I hate a snugly unfolding
life,

and were waves to engulf
the creaking boat,

I should still extol my
chosen course.

Drum tose des Wassers
ohnmächtiger Zorn,

Dem Herzen entquillet ein
seliger Born,

Die Nerven erfrischend – o
himmlische Lust!

Dem Sturme zu trotzen mit
männlicher Brust.

So – let waters roar in
impotent rage,

a fountain of bliss spurts
from my breast,

renewing my courage, O
heavenly joy!

To brave the storm with a
manly heart.

Cecil Armstrong Gibbs (1889-1960)

Sailing Homeward (1934)

Arthur Waley, after Chan Fang-Sheng

Cliffs that rise a thousand feet
Without a break,

Lake that stretches a hundred miles
Without a wave,

Pine-tree woods, winter and summer
Ever-green,

Streams that for ever flow and flow
Without a pause,

Trees that for twenty thousand years
Your vows have kept,

You have suddenly healed the pain of a traveller's heart,
And moved his brush to write a new song.

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

Channel Firing from *Before and After Summer Op. 16* (c.1932-49)

Thomas Hardy

That night your great guns, unawares,
Shook all our coffins as we lay,
And broke the chancel window-squares,
We thought it was the Judgment-day

And sat upright. While drearisome
Arose the howl of wakened hounds:
The mouse let fall the altar-crumbs,
The worms drew back into the mounds,

The glebe cow drooled. Till God called, 'No;
It's gunnery practice out at sea
Just as before you went below;
The world is as it used to be:

'All nations striving strong to make
Red war yet redder. Mad as hatters
They do no more for Christ's sake
Than you who are helpless in such matters.

'That this is not the judgment-hour
For some of them's a blessed thing,
For if it were they'd have to scour
Hell's floor for so much threatening ...

'Ha, ha. It will be warmer when
I blow the trumpet (if indeed
I ever do; for you are men,
And rest eternal sorely need).'

So down we lay again. 'I wonder,
Will the world ever saner be',
Said one, 'than when He sent us under
In our indifferent century!'

And many a skeleton shook his head.
'Instead of preaching forty year,'
My neighbour Parson Thirdly said,
'I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer.'

Again the guns disturbed the hour,
Roaring their readiness to avenge,
As far inland as Stourton Tower,
And Camelot, and starlit Stonehenge.

Desert Island Discs

Eric Coates (1886-1957)

By the Sleepy Lagoon (1930)

Jack Lawrence

A sleepy lagoon, a tropical moon
And two on an island,
A sleepy lagoon and two hearts in tune in some
lullabyland.
The fireflies gleam, reflects in the stream,
They sparkle and shimmer,
A star from a high, falls out of the sky,
And slowly grows dimmer.
The leaves from the trees, all dance in the breeze,
And float on the ripples;
We're deep in a spell,
As nightingales tell of roses and dew;
The memory of this moment of love,
Will haunt me forever.
A tropical moon, a sleepy lagoon and you!

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

Drake's Drum from *Songs of the Sea Op. 91*
(1904)

Henry Newbolt

Drake he's in his hammock and a thousand miles away,
(Captain, art thou sleeping there below?)
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
And dreaming all the time of Plymouth Hoe.
Yonder looms the Island, yonder lie the ships,
With sailor-lads a-dancing heel-an'-toe,
And the shore-lights flashing, and the night-tide dashing,
He sees it all so plainly as he saw it long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas,
(Captain, art thou sleeping there below?)
Roving tho' his death fell, he went with heart at ease,
And dreaming all the time of Plymouth Hoe.
'Take my drum to England, hang it by the shore,
Strike it when your powder's running low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
And drum them up the Channel as we drummed them
long ago.'

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Captain, art thou sleeping there below?)
Slung atween the round shot, listening for the drum,
And dreaming all the time of Plymouth Hoe.
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade's plying and the old flag flying
They shall find him ware and waking, as they found him
long ago!

*Please do not turn the page until the song and its
accompaniment have ended.*

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

My Ship from *Lady in the Dark* (1940)

Ira Gershwin

My ship has sails that are made of silk,
The decks are trimmed with gold,
And of jam and spice there's a paradise in the hold.

My ship's aglow with a million pearls
And rubies fill each bin,
The sun sits high in a sapphire sky when my ship comes
in.

I can wait the years
Till it appears
One fine day one spring,
But the pearls and such
They won't mean much
If there's missing just one thing.

I do not care if that day arrives
That dream need never be,
If the ship I sing doesn't also bring
My own true love to me.

Cole Porter (1891-1964)

The Tale of the Oyster from *Fifty Million*

Frenchmen (1929)

Cole Porter

Down by the sea lived a lonesome oyster
Every day getting sadder and moister
He found his home life awfully wet
And longed to travel with the upper set
Poor little oyster

Fate was kind to that oyster we know
When one day the chef from the Park Casino
Saw that oyster lying there
And said "I'll put you on my bill of fare."
Lucky little oyster

See him on his silver platter
Watching the queens of fashion chatter
Hearing the wives of millionaires
Discuss their marriages and their love affairs
Thrilled little oyster

See that bivalve social climber
Feeding the rich Mrs. Hoggenheimer
Think of his joy as he gaily glides
Down to the middle of her gilded insides
Proud little oyster

After lunch Mrs. H. complains
And says to her hostess, "I've got such pains
I came to town on my yacht today
But I think I'd better hurry back to Oyster Bay."
Scared little oyster

Off they go through the troubled tide
The yacht rolling madly from side to side
They're tossed about till that fine young oyster
Finds that it's time he should quit his cloister
Up comes the oyster

Back once more where he started from
He murmured, "I haven't a single qualm
For I've had a taste of society
And society has had a taste of me."
Wise little oyster

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