

WIGMORE HALL

Monday 11 December 2023
1.00pm

Love's Philosophy

Roderick Williams baritone
Iain Burnside piano

Roger Quilter (1877-1953)	Love's philosophy Op. 3 No. 1 (1904-5)
Mel Bonis (1858-1937)	Chanson d'amour Op. 94 (?1888)
Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)	From <i>5 mélodies 'de Venise'</i> Op. 58 (1891) Mandoline • En sourdine • Green
Roger Quilter	Now sleeps the crimson petal Op. 3 No. 2 (1904-5)
Mel Bonis	Songe Op. 91 No. 3 (c.1912)
Roger Quilter	Fill a glass with golden wine Op. 3 No. 3 (1904-5)
Alma Mahler (1879-1964)	Die stille Stadt (pub. 1910)
Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)	Stimme im Dunkeln (?1904)
Alma Mahler	Bei dir ist es traut (pub. 1910)
Rebecca Clarke	Aufblick (1904)
Alma Mahler	Laue Sommernacht (pub. 1910)
Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943)	She is as lovely as the noon Op. 14 No. 9 (1896)
Claude Debussy (1862-1918)	Colloque sentimental from <i>Fêtes galantes Book II</i> (1904)
Sergey Rachmaninov	When yesterday we met Op. 26 No. 13 (1906)
	Oh no, I beg you, forsake me not Op. 4 No. 1 (1890-3)
Claude Debussy	Green from <i>Ariettes oubliées</i> (1885-7, rev. 1903)
	Beau soir (c.1887-8)
Sergey Rachmaninov	How fair this spot Op. 21 No. 7 (1902)
	I was with her Op. 14 No. 4 (1896)



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Love's philosophy

Shelley's *Love's philosophy* supplies the theme of tonight's recital. The poem was presented on 29 December 1820 to Sophia Stacey, the ward of one of Shelley's uncles. Shelley spent a great deal of time with her, visiting the Uffizi and other galleries. The attraction was mutual, and it is likely that *Love's philosophy* and *I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden* were written for her.

Quilter's setting builds memorably to a broad climax with a rich harmonic accumulation of appoggiaturas. Tennyson's *Now sleeps the crimson petal* comes from *The Princess*, a work that describes a Victorian country house party at which a succession of stories are told by the aristocratic guests. One story tells of an arranged marriage between a prince and a princess who have never met. They are discovered, and in the ensuing mock-heroic battle the prince is injured. The princess nurses him back to health, falls in love with her victim – and they eventually marry. *Now sleeps the crimson petal* is read by the princess at the bedside of the injured prince while he sleeps. 'Fill a glass with golden wine' sets a poem by William Ernest Henley whose world-weariness appealed to Quilter's own melancholy nature.

Mélanie (Mel) Bonis was a Parisian composer who in 1874 matriculated at the Conservatoire where she received tuition from César Franck. Though as a woman composer she encountered huge prejudice and though her parents withdrew her from the Conservatoire, her work-list numbers some 300 pieces, including works for solo piano, orchestra, chamber music and, of course, *mélodies*. Of her 35 songs, published by Fortin-Armiane, we hear 'Chanson d'amour' and 'Songe', settings of poems by Maurice Bouchor.

The Venetian première of **Fauré's** 'Mandoline' and 'En sourdine' – and likely also 'Green' – is described by the Princesse de Polignac in her *Memoirs*.

Several Parisian friends were staying with me at the same time as Gabriel Fauré; one of them, Madame Ernest Duez, having a lovely voice, we were in the habit of going out on the lagoon after dinner in a *Peata* (large fishing boat) and we had got together a little orchestra of five or six musicians. When Fauré brought back nearly every day one of his lovely songs, Madame Duez and the little orchestra rehearsed them on the lagoon. Fauré played a little portable yacht piano that one of my brothers had given me. And thus I heard for the first time 'Mandoline', 'En sourdine' and the three other songs that he dedicated to me, and they form the five *Mélodies 'de Venise'* that are so beautiful.

It was only after nine years of marriage that Mahler urged his wife **Alma** to have her songs published, and in the summer of 1910 he selected five of her Lieder composed in 1900-1 and had them published by Universal at the same time as his own Eighth

Symphony, which he dedicated to her. We hear three of them this evening. 'Laue Sommernacht', first performed in New York in 1910, when it was encored, much to Mahler's delight; 'Bei dir ist es traut', a setting of a poem by Rilke; and 'Die stille Stadt', to a text by Richard Dehmel that had already been successfully set by Sibelius and was later to attract Pfitzner.

Born in Harrow of American-German parentage, **Rebecca Clarke** claimed that her love for music was first awakened by hearing Brahms's Opus 91 songs with viola accompaniment. She was the first female member of Henry Wood's New Queen's Hall Orchestra, which she joined in 1912. Her output of nearly 100 pieces includes choral and chamber works, as well as music for solo piano and songs. We hear two of her Dehmel settings this evening, 'Stimme im Dunkeln' and 'Aufblick'.

Five of **Rachmaninov's** finest songs punctuate this evening's recital. 'She is as lovely as the noon' sets a poem by Nikolay Minsky whose words contrast the life of a woman who has not suffered (unchanging rhythm in the vocal line) with that of an artist who knows only grief and struggle. 'Oh no, I beg you, forsake me not' is the poet's gentle plea to the beloved not to abandon him – a mood that in the music turns bitter. Rachmaninov transcribed several of his songs for solo piano – a clear indication of the importance he attached to the accompaniment, as we see in 'How fair this spot', where the melody lingers in the postlude as though to prolong the image of his dream. The text of Alexey Koltsov's 'I was with her' is sung by the lover who, when told to keep his beloved's desire for him secret, vows to be faithful, even though she might falter. The man's resolve ('I will never be a traitor') is powerfully depicted in the final four bars by a *fortissimo* dynamic, a plethora of *marcati* in the accompaniment and a wonderfully expressive *tenuto* on a dotted crotchet. 'When yesterday we met' describes how a relationship, which once flamed with passion, has turned cold. The simple, understated accompaniment accords well with the resigned and lifeless expression of the erstwhile lovers.

'Colloque sentimentale' is a dialogue between two ghostly figures who recall their lost love. **Debussy** sets the words of one lover to a rich texture that contrasts vividly with the plain chordal style of the other. Despite the intensity of their emotions, the voices never rise above *piano*. Debussy's reading of Verlaine's 'Green' sees the poem as a passionate and successful declaration of love, and indicates that the song should be performed in a mood that is *joyusement animé*. The *carpe diem* theme of Bourget's *Beau soir* is hardly original, but there's a broad sweep to the verse that clearly attracted Debussy. The melody is appropriately spacious, and there's an expressive marking of *plus lent* at the end of the song to convey the imminence of death – but without sentimentality.

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Roger Quilter (1877-1953)

Love's philosophy Op. 3 No. 1 (1904-5)

Percy Bysshe Shelley

The fountains mingle with the River
And the Rivers with the Ocean,
The winds of Heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle.
Why not I with thine? –

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What are all these kissings worth
If thou kiss not me?

Mel Bonis (1858-1937)

Chanson d'amour

Op. 94 (?1888)

Maurice Bouchor

Détourne de moi ces lèvres
si chères,
Dont le mensonge fut trop
doux,
Ces tendres yeux qui font les
étoiles moins claires
Et rendent le matin
jaloux.

Mais si, malgré tout, ma
douleur te touche,
Ah! ne garde pas mes
baisers
Sur tes yeux vainement
posés,
Sceaux d'amour en vain
scellés sur ta bouche.

Voile tes beaux seins,
neigeuses collines
Où ton cœur glacial est
pris.
Le printemps envierait les
fraîches églantines
Dont je sais bien qu'ils sont
fleuris.

Song of love

Turn from me these lips
so dear,
from which lies fell so
sweetly,
these tender eyes that make
the stars less bright
and render the morning
jealous.

But if, in spite of everything,
my pain touches you,
ah! don't hold on to my
kisses
vainly laid upon your
eyes,
tokens of love sealed in
vain upon your mouth.

Veil your beautiful
breasts, snowy hills
where your icy heart is
sealed up.
Spring would envy the
sweet wild roses
I well know cover
them.

Mais puisque mon cher
amour me dédaigne,
Rends-moi mon cœur. Ah! tu
le dois.
Ne serre pas entre tes
doigts
Ce cœur douloureux qui crie
et qui saigne.

But since my beloved
scorns me,
give me back my heart.
Ah, you must!
Don't clutch between your
fingers
this aching heart which
howls and bleeds.

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

From 5 *mélodies* 'de Venise' Op. 58 (1891)

Mandoline

Paul Verlaine

Les donneurs de sérénades
Et les belles écouteuses
Echangent des propos fades
Sous les ramures chanteuses.

C'est Tircis et c'est
Aminte,
Et c'est l'éternel Clitandre,
Et c'est Damis qui pour
mainte
Cruelle fait maint vers
tendre.

Leurs courtes vestes de soie,
Leurs longues robes à queues,
Leur élégance, leur joie
Et leurs molles ombres
bleues

Tourbillonnent dans l'extase
D'une lune rose et grise,
Et la mandoline jase
Parmi les frissons de brise.

Mandolin

The gallant serenaders
and their fair listeners
exchange sweet nothings
beneath singing boughs.

Tircis is there, Aminte is
there,
and tedious Clitandre too,
and Damis, who for many
a cruel maid
writes many a tender
song.

Their short silken doublets,
their long trailing gowns,
their elegance, their joy,
and their soft blue
shadows

Whirl madly in the rapture
of a grey and roseate moon,
and the mandolin jangles on
in the shivering breeze.

En sourdine

Paul Verlaine

Calmes dans le demi-jour
Que les branches hautes font,
Pénétrons bien notre amour
De ce silence profond.

Mêlons nos âmes, nos
cœurs
Et nos sens extasiés,
Parmi les vagues langueurs
Des pins et des arbousiers.

Ferme tes yeux à demi,
Croise tes bras sur ton
sein,
Et de ton cœur
endormi
Chasse à jamais tout dessein.

Laissons-nous persuader
Au soufflé berceur et
doux
Qui vient à tes pieds
rider
Les ondes des gazons roux.

Et quand, solennel, le
soir
Des chênes noirs tombera,
Voix de notre désespoir,
Le rossignol chantera.

Green

Paul Verlaine

Voici des fruits, des fleurs,
des feuilles et des
branches
Et puis voici mon cœur qui
ne bat que pour vous.
Ne le déchirez pas avec vos
deux mains blanches
Et qu'à vos yeux si beaux
l'humble présent soit doux.

J'arrive tout couvert encore
de rosée
Que le vent du matin vient
glacer à mon front.
Souffrez que ma fatigue, à
vos pieds reposée,
Rêve des chers instants qui
la délasseront.

Sur votre jeune sein laissez
rouler ma tête
Toute sonore encore de vos
derniers baisers;

Muted

Calm in the twilight
cast by lofty boughs,
let us steep our love
in this deep quiet.

Let us mingle our souls,
our hearts
and our enraptured senses
with the hazy languor
of arbutus and pine.

Half-close your eyes,
fold your arms across
your breast,
and from your heart now
lulled to rest
banish forever all intent.

Let us both succumb
to the gentle and lulling
breeze
that comes to ruffle at
your feet
the waves of russet grass.

And when, solemnly,
evening
falls from the black oaks,
that voice of our despair,
the nightingale shall sing.

Green

Here are flowers,
branches, fruit and
fronds,
and here too is my heart
that beats just for you.
Do not tear it with your
two white hands
and may the humble gift
please your lovely eyes.

I come all covered still
with the dew
frozen to my brow by the
morning breeze.
Let my fatigue, finding
rest at your feet,
dream of dear moments
that will soothe it.

On your young breast let
me cradle my head
still ringing with your
recent kisses;

Laissez-la s'apaiser de la
bonne tempête,
Et que je dorme un peu
puisque vous reposez.

after love's sweet tumult
grant it peace,
and let me sleep a while,
since you rest.

Roger Quilter

Now sleeps the crimson petal Op. 3 No. 2 (1904-5)

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.
Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

Mel Bonis

Songe Op. 91 No. 3

(c.1912)

Maurice Bouchor

Guidé par de beaux yeux
candides,
Dans ma barque féerique
aux reflets d'argent fin,
Vers l'amour, je voudrais
faire voile sans fin
Sur des rêves bleus et
splendides,

Vers l'amour dont le souffle
frais
Berce des champs de fleurs
dans une île enchantée
Et qui, pour apaiser mon âme
tourmentée,
M'ouvrira de saintes
forêts.

Et plus tard, quand, loin de la
terre,
O Viola! guérie des brûlantes
langueurs,
Nous irons caresser les
songes de nos cœurs
Dans l'île heureuse du
mystère.

Dans le libre ciel des
esprits,
Quand nous aurons quitté la
nature mortelle,
Ne goûterons-nous pas une
paix éternelle?
Rêveusement, tu me souris.

Dream

Led by beautiful artless
eyes,
in my fairy boat with a fine
silver gleam,
towards love, I would like
to sail without end
on blue and wondrous
dreams,

Towards love whose
sweet breath
sways the fields of flowers
on an enchanted isle
and who, to ease my
tormented soul,
will open sacred forests to
me.

And later, when, far from
land,
O Viola! healed from
burning lassitude,
we will go to nurture the
dreams of our hearts
on the happy island of
mystery.

In the unbound sky of the
spirits,
when we have left our
mortal state,
shall we not taste an
eternal peace?
Dreamily, you smile at me.

Roger Quilter

Fill a glass with golden wine Op. 3 No. 3 (1904-5)

William Ernest Henley

Fill a glass with golden wine,
And the while your lips are wet
Set their perfume unto mine,
And forget
Every kiss we take and give
Leaves us less of life to live.
Yet again! Your whim and mine
In a happy while have met.
All your sweets to me resign,
Nor regret
That we press with every breath,
Sighed or singing, nearer death.
Fill a glass with golden wine,
And the while your lips are wet
Set their perfume unto mine,
And forget
Every kiss we take and give
Leaves us less of life to live.

Alma Mahler (1879-1964)

Die stille Stadt

(pub. 1910)

Richard Dehmel

Liegt eine Stadt im Tale,
Ein blasser Tag vergeht.
Es wird nicht lange dauern
mehr,
Bis weder Mond noch
Sterne
Nur Nacht am Himmel
steht.

Von allen Bergen drücken
Nebel auf die Stadt,
Es dringt kein Dach, nicht
Hof noch Haus,
Kein Laut aus ihrem Rauch
heraus,
Kaum Türme noch und
Brücken.

Doch als dem Wanderer
graute,
Da ging ein Lichtlein auf im
Grund
Und durch den Rauch und
Nebel
Begann ein leiser Lobgesang
Aus Kindermund.

The silent town

A town lies in the valley,
a pale day is fading;
it will not be
long
before neither moon nor
stars
but night alone will deck
the skies.

From every mountain
mists weigh on the town;
no roof, no courtyard, no
house,
no sound can penetrate
the smoke,
scarcely towers and
bridges even.

But as fear seized the
traveller,
a gleam appeared in the
valley;
and through the smoke
and mist
came a faint song of praise
from a child's lips.

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)

Stimme im Dunkeln

(?1904)

Richard Dehmel

Es klagt im Dunkeln
irgendwo.
Ich möchte wissen, was es
ist.
Der Wind klagt wohl die
Nacht an.
Der Wind klagt aber nicht so
nah.
Der Wind klagt immer in der
Nacht.

In meinen Ohren klagt mein
Blut,
Mein Blut wohl.
Mein Blut klagt aber nicht so
fremd.
Mein Blut ist ruhig wie die
Nacht.
Ich glaub, ein Herz klagt
irgendwo.

A voice in the dark

Something, somewhere,
cries in the dark.
I would like to know what
it is.
The wind wails through
the night.
But the wind doesn't
sound so near.
The wind is always
wailing in the night.
In my ears my blood
keens,
my very blood.
But my blood doesn't
sound so strange.
My blood is calm as the
night.
I think somewhere a heart is
making that sound.

Alma Mahler

Bei dir ist es traut

(pub. 1910)

Rainer Maria Rilke

Bei dir ist es traut,
Zage Uhren schlagen
Wie aus weiten Tagen.
Komm mir ein Liebes
sagen –
Aber nur nicht laut!

Ein Tor geht irgendwo
Draussen im Blütentreiben,
Der Abend horcht an den
Scheiben.
Lass uns leise bleiben:
Keiner weiss uns so.

I feel at home with you

I feel at home with you,
faintly the hours strike
like in the old days.
Come say something
loving to me –
but not too loud!

A gate moves somewhere
outside in the sea of flowers,
evening listens at the
window.
Let us stay quiet:
so no-one knows about us.

Rebecca Clarke

Aufblick (1904)

Richard Dehmel

Über unsre Liebe hängt
Eine tiefe Trauerweide.
Nacht und Schatten um uns
beide.
Unsre Stirnen sind gesenkt.

Wortlos sitzen wir im
Dunkeln.
Einstmals rauschte hier ein
Strom,
Einstmals sahn wir Sterne
funkeln.

Ist denn Alles tot und
trübe?
Horch: - ein ferner Mund -
vom Dom:

Glockenchöre... Nacht ... und
Liebe...

Gazing up

Above our love hangs
a deep weeping willow.
Night and shadow
envelop us.
Our brows are lowered.

Wordless we sit in the
dark.
Once a river roared
here,
once we saw stars
sparkle.

Is everything, then, dead
and dismal?
Listen – a distant voice –
from the cathedral –

Choirs of bells... night...
and love.

Alma Mahler

Laue Sommernacht

(pub. 1910)

Otto Julius Bierbaum

Laue Sommernacht: am
Himmel
Steht kein Stern, im weiten
Walde
Suchten wir uns tief im
Dunkel,
Und wir fanden uns.

Fanden uns im weiten
Walde
In der Nacht, der
sternenlosen,
Hielten staunend uns im
Arme
In der dunklen Nacht.

War nicht unser ganzes Leben
Nur ein Tappen, nur ein Suchen
Da: In seine Finsternisse
Liebe, fiel Dein Licht.

Mild summer night

Mild summer night: in the
sky
not a star, in the deep
forest
we sought each other in
the dark
and found one another.

Found one another in the
deep wood
in the night, the starless
night,
and amazed, we
embraced
in the dark night.

Our entire life – was it not
but a tentative quest?
There: into its darkness,
O Love, fell your light.

Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

She is as lovely as the noon Op. 14 No. 9 (1896)

Nikolay Minsky

Ona, kak polden,
khorosha,
Ona zagadochnei
polnochi.
U nei neplakavshiye
ochi
I ne stradavshaya dusha.

A mne, chya zhizn borba i
gore,
Po nei tomitsya suzhdeno.
Tak vechno plachushcheye
more
V bezmolvnyi bereg
vlyubleno.

She is as beautiful as
midday,
more enigmatic than
midnight.
Her eyes have no known
weeping
nor her soul suffering.

And I, who know but strife
and grief,
am destined to long for her.
Thus eternally the
weeping sea
is drawn by love to the
silent shore.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Colloque sentimental from *Fêtes galantes*

Book II (1904)

Paul Verlaine

Lovers' dialogue

Dans le vieux parc solitaire et
glacé,
Deux formes ont tout à
l'heure passé.

Leurs yeux sont morts et
leurs lèvres sont molles,
Et l'on entend à peine leurs
paroles.

Dans le vieux parc solitaire et
glacé
Deux spectres ont évoqué le
passé.

– Te souvient-il de notre
extase ancienne?
– Pourquoi voulez-vous donc
qu'il m'en souviennne?

– Ton cœur bat-il toujours à
mon seul nom?
Toujours vois-tu mon âme en
rêve? – Non.

– Ah! Les beaux jours de
bonheur indicible
Où nous joignons nos
bouches! – C'est possible.

In the ancient park,
deserted and frozen,
two shapes have just
passed by.

Their eyes are dead and
their lips are lifeless,
and their words can
hardly be heard.

In the ancient park,
deserted and frozen
two spectres were
recalling the past.

– Do you remember our
past rapture?
– Why would you have
me remember?

– Does your heart still surge
at my very name?
Do you still see my soul
when you dream? – No.

– Ah, the beautiful days of
inexpressible bliss
when our lips met! – It
may have been so.

– Qu'il était bleu, le ciel, et grand, l'espoir!	– How blue the sky, how hopes ran high!
– L'espoir a fui, vaincu, vers le ciel noir.	– Hope has fled, vanquished, to the black sky.

Tels ils marchaient dans les avoines folles	So they walked on through the wild grasses
Et la nuit seule entendit leurs paroles.	and the night alone heard their words.

Sergey Rachmaninov

When yesterday we met Op. 26 No. 13 (1906)

Yakov Polonsky

Vchera my vstretilis: Ona ostanovilas,	Yesterday we chanced to meet: she stopped,
Ya takzhe ... my v glaza drug drugu posmotreli ...	so did I ... we looked into each other's eyes ...
O, Bozhe! kak ona s tekh por pereminilas,	Oh God! How she has changed since our last meeting,
V glazakh potukh ogon, i shch'yoki pobledneli ...	her eyes have lost their light, her cheeks their colour ...
I dolgo na neyo glyadel ya molcha strogo ...	for a long time I gazed at her, in silence, sternly ...
Mne ruku protyanuv, bednyazhka ulybnulas;	the poor thing offered me her hand, and gave me a smile;
Ya govorit khotel; ona zhe radi Boga,	I was about to speak, but she bade me for God's sake
Velega mne molchat, i tut zhe, otvernulas,	to be still, and quickly turned away,
I brovi sdvinula, I vydernula ruku,	and frowned, and withdrew her hand,
I molvila: 'Proshchaite, do svidanya!'	and spoke: 'Farewell ... goodbye ...!'
A ya khotel skazat: 'Na vechnuyu razluku	And I wanted to say: 'We part forever,
Proshchai, pogibshcheye, no miloe sozdanye.'	farewell, thou being, ruined, but still dear.'

Oh no, I beg you, forsake me not Op. 4 No. 1

(1890-3)

Dmitry Merezhkovsky

O, net, molyu, ne ukhodi!	Oh no, I beg you, do not leave!
Vsya bol nichto pered razlukoi,	This pain is slight compared to separation,
Ya slishkom schastliv etoi mukoi,	I'm too happy in this state of torment,
Silne prizhmi menya k grudi,	press me hard against your breast,

Skazhi lyublyu. Prishyol ya vnov,	Say 'I love you'. I've come to you again,
Bolnoi, izmuchennyi i bednyi.	sick, tormented and pale.
Smotri, kakoi ya slabyi, bednyi,	See how weak and pitiful I am,
Kak mne nuzhna tvoya lyubov...	how much I need your love...

Muchenii novykh vpered	New torments lie ahead,
Ya zhdu kak lasku, kak potseluya	I greet them like caresses, like kisses,
I ob odnom molyu, toskuya:	and beg for one thing only in my agony,
O, bud so mnoi, ne ukhodi!	oh, stay with me, do not leave!

Claude Debussy

Green from Ariettes oubliées

(1885-7, rev. 1903)

Paul Verlaine

Voici des fruits, des fleurs, des feuilles et des branches	Here are flowers, branches, fruit, and fronds,
Et puis voici mon cœur qui ne bat que pour vous.	and here too is my heart that beats just for you.
Ne le déchirez pas avec vos deux mains blanches	Do not tear it with your two white hands
Et qu'à vos yeux si beaux l'humble présent soit doux.	and may the humble gift please your lovely eyes.

J'arrive tout couvert encore de rosée	I come all covered still with the dew
Que le vent du matin vient glacer à mon front.	frozen to my brow by the morning breeze.
Souffrez que ma fatigue à vos pieds reposée	Let my fatigue, finding rest at your feet,
Rêve des chers instants qui la délasseront.	dream of dear moments that will soothe it.

Sur votre jeune sein laissez rouler ma tête	On your young breast let me cradle my head
Toute sonore encore de vos derniers baisers;	still ringing with your recent kisses;
Laissez-la s'apaiser de la bonne tempête,	after love's sweet tumult grant it peace,
Et que je dorme un peu puisque vous reposez.	and let me sleep a while, since you rest.

Beau soir (c.1887-8)

Paul Bourget

Lorsque au soleil couchant
les rivières sont roses,
Et qu'un tiède frisson court
sur les champs de blé,
Un conseil d'être heureux
semble sortir des choses
Et monter vers le cœur
troublé;

Un conseil de goûter le
charme d'être au monde
Cependant qu'on est jeune
et que le soir est beau,
Car nous nous en allons,
comme s'en va cette onde:
Elle à la mer – nous au
tombeau!

Beautiful evening

When at sunset the rivers
are pink
and a warm breeze ripples
the fields of wheat,
all things seem to advise
content –
and rise toward the
troubled heart;

Advise us to savour the
gift of life,
while we are young and
the evening fair,
for our life slips by, as that
river does:
it to the sea – we to the
tomb.

Sergey Rachmaninov

How fair this spot Op. 21 No. 7 (1902)

Galina

Zdes khorosho...Vzglyani:
vdali
Ognyom gorit reka,
Tsvetnym kovrom luga
legli,
Beleyut oblaka.

Here it's so fine...Look: in
the distance
the river glitters like fire,
the meadows are a carpet
of colour,
there are white clouds
overhead.

Zdes net lyudei...Zdes
tishina...
Zdes tolko Bog da ya.
Tsvety, da staraya
sosna,
Da ty, mechta moya...

Here there are no people
...it's so quiet...
here are only God and I.
And the flowers, and the
old pine tree,
and you, my dream...

I was with her Op. 14 No. 4 (1896)

Aleksey Vasil'yevich Koltsov

Ya byl u nej; ona
skazala:
„Lyublyu tebya, moi milyi
drug!“
No etu tainu ot
podrug
Khranit mne strogo
zaveshchala.

I came to her, and she
told me:
'I love you, my dear
friend!'
But made me take a
solemn vow
to keep this secret from
her girlfriends.

Ya byl u nej, na prelest zlata
Klyalas menya ne
promenyat;
Ko mne lish strastiyu
pylat,
Menya lyubit, lyubit, kak
brata.

I came to her, and she swore
not to forsake me for the
lure of gold;
to burn with passion for
me alone,
to love me, to love me,
like a brother.

Ya byl u nej; ya vechno
budu
S yeyo dushoi dushoyu zhit.
Puskai ona mne izmenit,
No ya izmennikom ne budu.

I came to her, and will
forever
live with her in my heart.
Let her betray me if she will,
I will never be a traitor.

Translations of Bonis, 'Stimme im Dunkeln' and 'Bei dir ist es traut' by Jean du Monde. Fauré and Debussy by Richard Stokes from A French Song Companion (Johnson/Stokes) published by OUP. 'Die stille Stadt' by Richard Stokes from The Book of Lieder published by Faber & Faber, with thanks to George Bird, co-author of The Fischer-Dieskau Book of Lieder, published by Victor Gollancz Ltd. 'Aufblick' and 'Laue Sommernacht' by Richard Stokes. Rachmaninov by Richard D Sylvester from Rachmaninoff's Complete Songs: A Companion with Texts and Translations published by Indiana University Press.