

WIGMORE HALL

Sunday 15 June 2025
7.30pm

David Butt Philip tenor
James Baillieu piano

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) The House of Life (1903)
*Love-sight • Silent Noon • Love's minstrels •
Heart's haven • Death in love • Love's last gift*

Alma Mahler (1879-1964) Hymne (pub. 1924)
Ekstase (pub. 1924)
Der Erkennende (1915)

Interval

Richard Wagner (1813-1883) Wesendonck Lieder (1857-8)
*Der Engel • Stehe still! • Im Treibhaus •
Schmerzen • Träume*

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) The Holy Sonnets of John Donne Op. 35 (1945)
*Oh my black Soule! • Batter my heart •
Oh might those sighes and teares • Oh, to vex me •
What if this present • Since she whom I loved •
At the round earth's imagined corners •
Thou hast made me • Death, be not proud*



UNDER 35S

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In 1903, **Ralph Vaughan Williams** turned twice to Dante Gabriel Rossetti's sequence of sonnets *The House of Life*, first for the cantata *Willow-Wood*, and again for the voice-piano cycle we hear tonight. In a lecture published in 1972, the composer's second wife Ursula Vaughan Williams articulated his wide-reaching musical engagements with British literary history, and noted his enchantment, at the turn of the 20th Century, with the 'scented melancholy' of Rossetti's 'art-nouveau-erotic'. *The House of Life* premiered at Wigmore Hall on 2 December 1904, along with the contrasting *Songs of Travel*, on poems by Robert Louis Stevenson. Vaughan Williams was in his early 30s, and positive reviews spoke encouragingly of his melodic gift and promise as a rising voice of British music.

'Silent Noon' is among the most performed and loved of all his songs, but otherwise the cycle has had a patchy history. The self-deprecating composer lost confidence in the cycle, and even implored the singer George Parker to cut 'Death in Love' from his performance, describing it as a 'thoroughly bad song'. However, he admitted in the same letter that many people disagreed with such judgements! Alongside an overarching sense of lyrical beauty, the cycle contains stark recitative-like passages and moments of striking economy in the piano which – especially when heard with Britten's cycle this evening – point towards the future of British song.

The three songs by **Alma Mahler-Werfel** were all likely composed in the first 15 years of the 20th Century, but weren't published until 1924, in her third and final published set of five songs (her entire extant oeuvre comprises fifteen published and two unpublished songs). Mahler-Werfel was an ambitious composer: she studied with Alexander Zemlinsky and thrived within the vibrant musical milieu of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Her songs display Zemlinsky's influence together with the hallmarks of an individual compositional voice – one which was never able to develop fully. Shortly before her marriage to Gustav Mahler in 1902, she stopped composing at the direct request of her future husband. This blunt suppression of creativity eventually became a source of regret for Gustav, whose belated interest in his wife's music came too late to properly reignite her earlier ambition. Until recently, interest in Mahler-Werfel's biography had generally surpassed interest in her music, but various performers and scholars are now giving her songs the attention they deserve. Appreciation is growing of her characteristic harmonic adventure, carefully crafted dramatic tension, and sensitive settings of texts from diverse poetic sources. These three songs set poems by Friedrich von Hardenberg, Otto Julius Bierbaum, and her future husband Franz Werfel.

Letters sent between Alma and Gustav early in their relationship place the music of **Richard Wagner** close to the centre of their shared universe: Alma was a regular operagoer who read and played through his scores in her spare time, and she felt Wagner's presence keenly as a budding composer. The

Wesendonck-Lieder comprise five songs on poems by Mathilde Wesendock, who became acquainted with Wagner through her husband, a wealthy silk merchant who provided the composer with financial support and a place to stay while he was in exile following the Dresden uprising of May 1849. Over the following years, Wesendonck became the subject of Wagner's infatuation, and their exchange of letters seemingly contributed to the break-up of the composer's marriage in 1858. Wagner's settings of five of Wesendonck's poems were written in 1857-8, alongside the planning of his romantic epic *Tristan und Isolde*. Two of the songs ('Im Treibhaus' and 'Träume') were explicitly written as 'studies' for the opera – aspects of their motivic and harmonic workings are audible in passages including the famous love duet and the prelude to Act III. Wesendonck's poems are replete with vibrant imagery – bleeding heart, weeping sun, lamenting trees – which is treated delicately and passionately in Wagner's music; the songs meditate on themes of love, dreams, and the mysteries of the universe.

41 years after the première of *The House of Life*, a Wigmore Hall audience witnessed the first performance of a new cycle of sonnets by a composer roughly the same age Vaughan Williams had been in 1904: *The Holy Sonnets of John Donne* by **Benjamin Britten**. Much had changed in those four decades, not least musically, and London was reeling in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. In 1942, Britten's earlier sonnet cycle – the *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo* – had been received as promisingly innovative songs by an up-and-coming young composer; by 1945, Britten's star had been assured by the recent première of the opera *Peter Grimes*, and his reputation was going from strength to strength. The Donne sonnets' première was given on 22 November 1945, in the second of two concerts marking the 250th anniversary of Henry Purcell's death (21 November 1695). Both concerts presented new chamber works by Britten that were, in part, inspired by Purcell's music. On 21st, the Zorian Quartet premiered the Second String Quartet, which ends with a Purcellian passacaglia, and on 22nd – St Cecilia's Day and Britten's birthday – the *Sonnets* were given by Peter Pears and Britten before Purcell's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day*.

Britten's cycle was composed directly after his performance visit to the liberated Bergen-Belsen concentration camp with Yehudi Menuhin, and the darkness of these songs is inescapable, from the stark open octaves that begin the cycle, to several beseeching, despairing vocal lines written to show off the taut beauty of Pears's voice. Invocations of the musical past haunt these meditations on penitential and existential themes: the heartbroken love poem 'Since she whom I loved' has a lyricism of Schubertian richness, while 'Death be not proud' incorporates another passacaglia – fittingly closing a cycle 'written in homage to Henry Purcell'.

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Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

The House of Life (1903)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Love-sight

When do I see thee most, beloved one?
When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that Love through thee made known?

Or when in the dusk hours, (we two alone)
Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?

O love - my love! if I no more should see Thyself,
nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,
How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
The groundwhirl of the perished leaves of Hope
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

Silent Noon

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass, –
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms:
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.

All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
Are golden kingcup fields with silver edge
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn hedge.
'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragonfly
Hangs like a blue thread loosen'd from the sky: –
So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
This close-companion'd inarticulate hour
When twofold silence was the song of love.

Love's minstrels

One flame-winged brought a white-winged harp-player
Even where my lady and I lay all alone;
Saying: 'Behold this minstrel is unknown;
Bid him depart, for I am minstrel here:
Only my songs are to love's dear ones dear.'
Then said I 'Through thine hautboy's rapturous tone
Unto my lady still this harp makes moan,
And still she deems the cadence deep and clear.'
Then said my lady: 'Thou art passion of Love,
And this Love's worship: both he plights to me.
Thy mastering music walks the sunlit sea:
But where wan water trembles in the grove,
And the wan moon is all the light thereof,
This harp still makes my name its voluntary.'

Heart's haven

Sometimes she is a child within mine arms,
Cow'ring beneath dark wings that love must chase,
With still tears show'ring and averted face,
Inexplicably filled with faint alarms:
And oft from mine own spirit's hurtling harms
I crave the refuge of her deep embrace, –
Against all ills the fortified strong place
And sweet reserve of sov'reign counter-charms.

And Love, our light at night and shade at noon,
Lulls us to rest with songs, and turns away
All shafts of shelterless tumultuous day.
Like the moon's growth, his face gleams through his tune;
And as soft waters warble to the moon,
Our ans'ring spirits chime one roundelay.

Death in love

There came an image in Life's retinue
That had Love's wings and bore his gonfalon:
Fair was the web, and nobly wrought thereon,
O soul-sequestered face, thy form and hue!
Bewildering sounds, such as Spring wakens to,
Shook in its folds; and through my heart its power
Sped trackless as the memorable hour
When birth's dark portal groaned and all was new
But a veiled woman followed, and she caught
The banner round its staff, to furl and cling,
Then plucked a feather from the bearer's wing,
And held it to his lips that stirred it not,
And said to me, "Behold, there is no breath:
I and this Love are one, and I am Death."

Love's last gift

Love to his singer held a glistening leaf,
and said: "The rose-tree and the apple-tree
Have fruits to vaunt or flowers to lure the bee;
And golden shafts are in the feathered sheaf
Of the great harvest marshal, the year's chief
Victorious summer; aye, and 'neath warm sea
Strange secret grasses lurk inviolably
Between the filtering channels of sunk reef..."

All are my blooms; and all sweet blooms of love
To thee I gave while spring and summer sang;
But autumn stops to listen, with some pang
From those worse things the wind is moaning of.
Only this laurel dreads no winter days:
Take my last gift; thy heart hath sung my praise."

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

Alma Mahler (1879-1964)

Hymne (pub. 1924)

Novalis

Hymn

Wenige wissen
Das Geheimnis der Liebe,
Fühlen Unersättlichkeit
Und ewigen Durst.
Des Abendmahls
Göttliche Bedeutung
Ist den irdischen Sinnen
Räthsel;
Aber wer jemals
Von heissen, geliebten Lippen
Athem des Lebens sog,
Wem heilige
Glut
In zitternde Wellen das Herz
schmolz,
Wem das Auge
aufging,
Dass er des
Himmels
Unergründliche Tiefe mass,
Wird essen von seinem Leibe
Und trinken von seinem Blute
Ewiglich.

Wer hat des irdischen
Leibes
Hohen Sinn errathen?
Wer kann sagen,
Dass er das Blut
versteht?
Einst ist alles Leib,
Ein Leib,
In himmlischem Blute
Schwimmt das selige
Paar. –

O! dass das
Weltmeer
Schon erröthete,
Und in duftiges Fleisch
Aufquölle der Fels!
Nie endet das süsse
Mahl,
Nie sättigt die Liebe sich.
Nicht innig, nicht eigen
genug
Kann sie haben den
Geliebten.
Von immer zärteren
Lippen
Verwandelt wird das
Genossene
Inniglicher und
näher.
Heissere Wollust
Durchbebt die Seele,

Few know
the secret of love,
or feel its insatiability
and endless thirst.
The Last Supper's
divine meaning
is a mystery to earthly
minds.
But he who has ever
drawn breath of life
from ardent, beloved lips,
he whose heart has melted
in trembling waves
of sacred
passion,
he whose has opened
wide his eyes
to measure the
fathomless depths
of heaven,
will eat of his body
and drink of his blood
eternally.

Who has fathomed the
lofty meaning
of that earthly body?
Who can say
that he comprehends the
blood?
All shall one day be body,
one single body.
The blessed pair
shall swim in heavenly
blood.

O! that the oceans of the
world
might turn red,
and the rock spring up
as fragrant flesh!
The sweet meal would
never end,
love be never satisfied;
never can it possess the
beloved
profoundly and
exclusively.
With ever more tender
kisses
the beloved is
transformed,
possessed more fervently
and closely.
Hotter lust
quivers through the soul;

Durstiger und hungriger
Wird das Herz:
Und so währet der Liebe
Genuss
Von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit.

the heart grows
thirstier, hungrier:
thus does the pleasure of
love
endure throughout eternity.

Ekstase (pub. 1924)

Otto Julius Bierbaum

Gott, deine Himmel sind mir
aufgetan,
Und deine Wunder liegen
vor mir da
Wie Maienwiesen, drauf die
Sonne scheint.

Du bist die Sonne, Gott, ich
bin bei dir,
Ich seh mich selber in den
Himmel gehn.
Es braust das Licht in mir
wie ein Choral.

Da breit' ich Wanderer meine
Arme aus,
Und in das Licht verweh ich
wie die Nacht,
Die in die Morgenrötenblust
vergeht.

Ecstasy

God, your heavens have
opened up to me,
and your wonders lie
there before me
like May meadows on
which the sun shines.

You are the sun, O God,
and I am with you,
I see myself entering
heaven,
light resounds in me like
a chorale.

Then I, the wanderer,
stretch out my arms,
and in the light I fade like
the night
that vanishes in the
radiant flush of dawn.

Der Erkennende (1915)

Franz Werfel

Menschen lieben uns, und
unbeglückt
Stehn sie auf vom Tisch, um
uns zu weinen.
Doch wir sitzen übers Tuch
gebückt
Und sind kalt und können
sie verneinen.

Was uns liebt, wie stossen
wir es fort
Und uns Kalte kann kein
Gram erweichen.
Was wir lieben, das entrafft
ein Ort [Wort],
Es wird hart und nicht mehr
zu erreichen.

Und das Wort, das waltet,
heisst: Allein,
Wenn wir machtlos zu
einander brennen.
Eines weiss ich: nie und
nichts wird mein.
Mein Besitz allein, das zu
erkennen.

The recognizer

People love us, and
rise
Discontent from the table
to weep for us.
But we sit bent over the
cloth
And are cold and can
deny them.

What we love, we
reject,
And no sorrow can
temper our coldness.
What we love is snatched
away –
It becomes hard and can
no longer be reached.

And the word that rules
all is: Alone,
When we, powerless, burn
ourselves to ashes.
One thing I know: never
shall anything be mine.
My only possession is to
recognize that fact.

Interval

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

Wesendonck Lieder (1857-8)

Mathilde Wesendonck

Der Engel

In der Kindheit frühen
Tagen
Hört' ich oft von Engeln sagen,
Die des Himmels hehre
Wonne
Tauschen mit der Erdensonne,

Dass, wo bang ein Herz in
Sorgen
Schmachtet vor der Welt
verborgen,
Dass, wo still es will
verbluten,
Und vergehn in
Tränenfluten,

Dass, wo brünstig sein
Gebet
Einzig um Erlösung fleht,
Da der Engel niederschwebt,
Und es sanft gen Himmel
hebt.

Ja, es stieg auch mir ein
Engel nieder,
Und auf leuchtendem Gefieder
Führt er, ferne jedem
Schmerz,
Meinen Geist nun himmelwärts!

The angel

In the early days of
childhood
I often heard tell of angels
who exchange heaven's
pure bliss
for the sun of earth,

So that, when a sorrowful
heart
hides its yearning from
the world,
and would silently bleed
away
and dissolve in streams of
tears,

And when its fervent
prayer
begs only for deliverance,
that angel will fly down
and gently raise the heart
to heaven.

And to me too an angel
descended,
and now on shining wings
bears my spirit, free from
all pain,
towards heaven!

Stehe still!

Sausendes, brausendes Rad
der Zeit,
Messer du der Ewigkeit;
Leuchtende Sphären im
weiten All,
Die ihr umringt den
Weltenball;
Urewige Schöpfung, halte
doch ein,
Genug des Werdens, lass
mich sein!

Stand still!

Rushing, roaring wheel of
time,
you that measure eternity;
gleaming spheres in the
vast universe,
you that surround our
earthly sphere;
eternal creation –
cease:
enough of becoming, let
me be!

Halte an dich, zeugende
Kraft,

Urgedanke, der ewig
schafft!

Hemmet den Atem, stillet
den Drang,

Schweigend nur eine
Sekunde lang!

Schwellende Pulse, fesselt
den Schlag;

Ende, des Wollens ew'ger
Tag!

Hold yourselves back,
generative powers,
Primal Thought, that
always creates!

Stop your breath, still
your urge,
be silent for a single
moment!

Swelling pulses, restrain
your beating;
eternal day of the Will –
end!

Dass in selig süßem
Vergessen

Ich mög alle Wonne
ermessen!

Wenn Auge in Auge wonnig
trinken,

Seele ganz in Seele
versinken;

Wesen in Wesen sich
wiederfindet,

Und alles Hoffens Ende sich
kündet,

Die Lippe verstummt in
staunendem Schweigen,

Keinen Wunsch mehr will
das Innre zeugen:

Erkennt der Mensch des
Ew'gen Spur,

Und löst dein Rätsel, heil'ge
Natur!

That in blessed, sweet
oblivion

I might measure all my
bliss!

When eye gazes blissfully
into eye,

when soul drowns utterly
in soul;

when being finds itself in
being,

and the goal of every
hope is near,

when lips are mute in
silent wonder,

when the soul wishes for
nothing more:

then man perceives
Eternity's footprint,

and solves your riddle,
holy Nature!

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

Im Treibhaus

Hochgewölbte
Blätterkronen,
Baldachine von Smaragd,
Kinder ihr aus fernen
Zonen,
Saget mir, warum ihr klagt?

Schweigend neiget ihr die
Zweige,
Malet Zeichen in die
Luft,
Und der Leiden stummer
Zeuge
Steiget aufwärts, süsser
Duft.

Weit in sehndem Verlangen
Breitet ihr die Arme aus,
Und umschlinget
wahnbefangen
Öder Leere nicht'gen Graus.

Wohl, ich weiss es, arme
Pflanze;
Ein Geschicke teilen wir,
Ob umstrahlt von Licht und
Glanze,
Unsre Heimat ist nicht hier!

Und wie froh die Sonne
scheidet
Von des Tages leerem Schein,
Hüllet der, der wahrhaft
leidet,
Sich in Schweigens Dunkel
ein.

Stille wird's, ein säuselnd
Weben
Füllet bang den dunklen
Raum:
Schwere Tropfen seh ich
schweben
An der Blätter grünem
Saum.

Schmerzen

Sonne, weinst jeden
Abend
Dir die schönen Augen
rot,
Wenn im Meeresspiegel
badend
Dich erreicht der frühe Tod;

In the greenhouse

High-arching leafy
crowns,
canopies of emerald,
you children who dwell in
distant climes,
tell me, why do you lament?

Silently you bend your
branches,
inscribe your symbols on
the air,
and a sweet fragrance
rises,
as silent witness to your
sorrows.

With longing and desire,
you open wide your arms,
and embrace in your
delusion
desolation's awful void.

I am well aware, poor
plant;
we both share a single fate,
though bathed in
gleaming light,
our homeland is not here!

And just as the sun is
glad to leave
the empty gleam of day,
the true sufferer veils
himself
in the darkness of
silence.

It grows quiet, a whirring
whisper
fills the dark room
uneasily:
I see heavy droplets
hanging from
the green edge of the
leaves.

Agonies

Every evening, sun, you
redden
your lovely eyes with
weeping,
when, bathing in the
sea,
you die an early death;

Doch erstehst in alter
Pracht,
Glorie der düstren Welt,
Du am Morgen neu
erwacht,
Wie ein Stolzher
Siegesheld!

Ach, wie sollte ich da klagen,
Wie, mein Herz, so schwer
dich sehn,
Muss die Sonne selbst
verzagen,
Muss die Sonne untergehn?

Und gebietet Tod nur
Leben,
Geben Schmerzen Wonne nur:
O wie dank ich, dass
gegeben
Solche Schmerzen mir Natur!

Träume

Sag, welch wunderbare
Träume
Halten meinen Sinn umfassen,
Dass sie nicht wie leere
Schäume
Sind in ödes Nichts
vergangen?

Träume, die in jeder
Stunde,
Jedem Tage schooner
blühen,
Und mit ihrer
Himmelskunde
Selig durchs Gemüte
ziehn!

Träume, die wie hehre
Strahlen
In die Seele sich versenken,
Dort ein ewig Bild zu
malen:
Allvergessen,
Eingedenken!

Träume, wie wenn
Frühlingssonne
Aus dem Schnee die Blüten
küsset,
Dass zu nie geahnter
Wonne
Sie der neue Tag begrüsst,

Yet you rise in your old
splendour,
the glory of the dark world,
when you wake in the
morning
as a proud and
conquering hero!

Ah, why should I complain,
why should I see you, my
heart, so depressed,
if the sun itself must
despair,
if the sun itself must set?

If only death gives birth to
life,
if only agony brings bliss:
oh how I give thanks to
Nature
for giving me such agony!

Dreams

Say, what wondrous
dreams are these
embracing all my senses,
that they have not, like
bubbles,
vanished to a barren
void?

Dreams, that with every
hour
bloom more lovely every
day,
and with their heavenly
tidings
float blissfully through
the mind!

Dreams, that with
glorious rays
penetrate the soul,
there to paint an eternal
picture:
forgetting all,
remembering one!

Dreams, as when the
Spring sun
kisses blossoms from the
snow,
so the new day might
welcome them
in unimagined bliss,

Dass sie wachsen, dass sie blühen,	So that they grow and flower,
Träumend spenden ihren Duft,	bestow their scent as in a dream,
Sanft an deiner Brust verglühen,	fade softly away on your breast
Und dann sinken in die Gruft.	and sink into their grave.

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

The Holy Sonnets of John Donne Op. 35 (1945)

John Donne

Oh my black Soule!

Oh my blacke Soule! now thou art summoned
By sicknesse, death's herald, and champion;
Thou art like a pilgrim, which abroad hath done
Treason, and durst not turne to whence hee is fled,
Or like a thiefe, which till death's doome be read,
Wisheth himselfe deliver'd from prison;
But dam'd and hal'd to execution,
Wisheth that still he might be imprisoned.
Yet grace, if thou repent, thou canst not lacke;
But who shall give thee that grace to beginne?
Oh make thyselfe with holy mourning blacke,
And red with blushing, as thou are with sinne;
Or wash thee in Christ's blood, which hath this might
That being red, it dyes red soules to white.

Batter my heart

Batter my heart, three person'd God; for you
As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend;
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new.

I, like an usurpt towne, to another due,
Labour to admit you, but Oh, to no end,
Reason your viceroy in mee, mee should defend
But is captiv'd, and proves weake or untrue.

Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved faine,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy:
Divorce mee, untie, or breake that knot againe,

Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I
Except you enthrall mee, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee.

Oh might those sighes and teares

Oh might those sighes and teares return againe
Into my breast and eyes, which I have spent,
That I might in this holy discontent
Mourne with some fruit, as I have mourn'd in vaine;
In mine Idolatry what show'rs of rain
Mine eyes did waste? What griefs my heart did rent?
That sufferance was my sinne; now I repent
'Cause I did suffer, I must suffer paine.
Th'hydroptique drunkard, and night scouting thief,
The itchy lecher and self-tickling proud
Have the remembrance of past joyes, for relief
Of coming ills. To poore me is allow'd
No ease; for long, yet vehement grieffe hath been
Th'effect and cause, the punishment and sinne.

Oh, to vex me

Oh, to vex me, contraries meet in one:
In constancy unnaturally hath begott
A constant habit; that when I would not
I change in vowes, and in devotione.
As humorous is my contritione
As my profane Love and as soone forgott:
As ridlingly distemper'd, cold and hott,
As praying, as mute; as infinite, as none.
I durst not view Heav'n yesterday; and today
In prayers, and flatt'ring speeches I court God:
Tomorrow I quake with true feare of his rod.
So my devout fitts come and go away,
Like a fantastique Ague: save that here
Those are my best dayes, when I shake with feare.

What if this present

What if this present were the world's last night?
Marke in my heart, O Soule, where thou dost dwell,
The picture of Christ crucified, and tell
Whether that countenance can thee affright,
Teares in his eyes quench the amazing light,
Blood fills his frownes, which from his pierc'd head fell.
And can that tongue adjudge thee into hell,
Which pray'd forgiveness for his foes fierce spight?
No, no; but as in my Idolatrie
I said to all my profane mistresses,
Beauty, of pity, foulness onely is
A sign of rigour: so I say to thee,
To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assign'd,
This beauteous forme assures a piteous minde.

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

Since she whom I loved

Since she whom I loved hath payd her last debt
To Nature, and to hers, and my good is dead,
And her Soule early into heaven ravished,
Wholly on heavenly things my mind is sett.
Here the admyring her my mind did whett
To seeke thee God; so streames do shew their head;
But although I have found thee, and thou my thirst hast
fed,
A holy thirsty dropsy melts mee yett.
But why should I begg more Love, when as thou
Dost wooe my soule for hers; offering all thine:
And dost not only feare least I allow
My Love to Saints and Angels things divine,
But in thy tender jealousy dost doubt
Least the World, Fleshe, yea Devill putt thee out.

At the round earth's imagined corners

At the round earth's imagined corners, blew
Your trumpets, angels, and arise
From death, you numberless infinities
Of souls, and to your scattered bodies go,
All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow
All whom war, death, age, agues, tyrannies,
Despair, law, chance hath slain; and you whose eyes
Shall behold God and never taste death's woe,
But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space,
For, if above all these my sins abound,
'Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace,
When we are there. Here on this lowly ground,
Teach me how to repent, for that's as good
As if Thou hadst seal'd my pardon with Thy blood.

Thou hast made me

Thou hast made me, and shall thy work decay?
Repaire me now, for now mine end doth haste,
I runne to death, and death meets me as fast,
And all my pleasures are like yesterday;
I dare not move my dim eyes anyway,
Despaire behind, and death before doth cast
Such terror, and my feeble flesh doth waste
By sinne in it, which it t'wards Hell doth weigh;
Onely thou art above, and when t'wards thee
By thy leave I can looke, I rise againe;
But our old subtle foe so tempteth me,
That not one houre myselfe can I sustaine;
Thy Grace may wing me to prevent his art,
And thou like Adamant draw mine iron heart.

Death, be not proud

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadfull, for thou art not soe,
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill mee.
From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do goe,
Rest of their bones, and souls deliverie.
Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings and desperate men,
And dost with poyson, warre, and sickness dwell,
And poppie, or charmes can make us sleepe as well
And better than thy stroake; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

*Translation of Mahler 'Hymne' and 'Ekstase' by © Richard Stokes.
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