WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 15 May 2024 7.30pm

Scattered Rhymes

Nicholas Mulroy director Claire Evans soprano Helena Moore soprano Elspeth Mairwen Piggott soprano Joanna Songi soprano Catherine Backhouse alto

Sarah Anne Champion alto Caitlin Mackenzie alto Rosie Parker alto Malcolm Bennett tenor Tim Burton tenor Euan McDonald tenor

Peter di Toro tenor Robert Davies bass Timothy Dickinson bass Jon Stainsby bass Isaac Tolley bass

James MacMillan (b.1959) Gavin Bryars (b.1943) Biancamaria Furgeri (b.1935) Stephanie Martin (b.1962) Tarik O'Regan (b.1978)

Behold, you are beautiful, my love (2018) A la dolce ombra de le belle frondi (2006) Ego flos campi (2003) Rise up, my Love (2012) Scattered Rhymes (2006) Scattered Rhymes I • Scattered Rhymes II • Scattered Rhymes III

Interval

Raffaella Aleotti (c.1575-1646) Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c.1525-1594) Adrian Willaert (c.1490-1562) Jacobus Clemens non Papa (c.1510-1555) Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina Guillaume Bouzignac (c.1587-1643) Caroline Shaw (b.1982) Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

Surge, propera amica mea (pub. 1593) Duo ubera tua (pub. 1584) Lasso, ch'i ardo (pub. 1559) Ego flos campi a7 (pub. 1555) Surge, amica mea, speciosa mea (pub. 1584) Vulnerasti cor meum Companion Planting (2024) Vadam et circuibo (pub. 1572)

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The Song of Songs plunges us into a lush world of ripe fruits, deep waters, scorching heats and cooling shades. This intense imagery – the Hebrew Bible's richest and most succulent – drives poetry that is both straightforwardly erotic and tantalisingly allegorical in its exploration of love both human and divine. As we will hear this evening, this heady combination invites a huge range of responses.

We begin with something relatively chaste. James MacMillan wrote Behold, you are beautiful, my love for his son's wedding, a repeated tolling note for the soprano soloist conjuring the steadfastness promised by the couple's vows. Next, we move from the cool of the stone church to the sweet shade offered by the first of this evening's settings of Petrach's Rime Sparse or 'Scattered Rhymes' in Gavin Bryars's A la dolce ombra de belle frondi. Popular with 16th Century madrigalists, the text celebrates Petrarch's love for Laura, someone he glimpsed in Avignon in 1327. So captivating a sight, it remains unclear throughout his writings whether she was real or a mirage. As part of Petrach's virtuosic dexterity of rhyme, metre and sound, he takes every opportunity to play on her name - l'aura is breath, l'aurora the dawn and lauro a laurel tree. As we will keep hearing this evening, every limb of a tree could equally be that of a lover and every coo of a dove an intimate murmur.

Biancamaria Furgeri and Stephanie Martin set some of the Song of Songs's most famous passages. **Furgeri** uses just upper voices in her three-part *Ego* flos campi, achieving a remarkable range of textures from this reduced palette. Through careful selections from the text, she focuses particularly on the lily, the beloved coming to rest on a bed of them in the final bars. Martin breaks Rise up, my Love into three contrasting sections. The middle, with its spirited and pouncing foxes, is particularly striking in a programme that invites longer and more languorous lines. The first half closes with Tarik O'Regan's Scattered Rhymes. A substantial work, it gives the text of three poems from across Petrarch's Lauraobsessed life to a solo quartet, while the main body of the choir sings three anonymous stanzas from a 14th Century English collection of love poetry. The piece interlaces these texts and is built on fragmentary, cellular musical ideas, many coming directly from Guillaume de Machaut's Messe de Notre Dame, yet another 14th-century source. Together, the effect is of a dense thicket of textures and rhythms, with the two groups and texts each taking turns to break or provide cover.

The second half begins with **Raffaella Aleotti**'s insistent *Surge, propera amica mea*. An Augustinian

nun in Ferrara, she rose to run the music as Maestra of the convent – one of a seemingly endless supply of such institutions across Italy that fostered remarkable musical opportunities for women in the 17th Century. The poetry set in **Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina**'s *Duo ubera tua* is startingly direct. Written down it is hard to imagine how it could be made sacred rather than profane for a liturgical context. Nonetheless, much as Renaissance sculptors somehow cooled their more heartthrob Biblical subjects with marble, Palestrina's polyphony retains a sensual quality while taking some of the heat out of the text.

The same cannot be said of **Adrian Willaert**'s *Lasso, ch'i ardo*, which puts the choir's lower voices in the spotlight. Another Petrarch setting, here he laments how obviously he burns with desire and yet remains unacknowledged by the one person whose attention he wants. Still, the poet takes comfort from the idea that his verse will endure and perhaps ignite the hearts of thousands of later readers.

Next comes **Jacobus Clemens non Papa**'s *Ego flos campi*. This elegant setting in seven parts responds to the fountains and streams of the text with flowing, limpid lines. It is now one of his most famous works and has become a stalwart of church, chapel and cathedral music lists around the world.

As with the Aleotti, Palestrina's *Surge, amica mea* sets off at an eager pace. Inspired by the text's command to 'rise up', the phrases race upwards in their enthusiasm. By contrast, *Vulnerasti cor meum,* attributed to **Guillaume Bouzignac**, is a return to longer and more closely entwined lines in which the wounds of love are laid bare by an intense and surprising chromaticism.

Caroline Shaw has written both the text and music for her new commission for Dunedin Consort, *Companion Planting*. Like a nature documentary's time lapse of plants growing towards the light, the piece curls chromatic tendrils across the parts as they grow together and apart.

Our programme concludes with **Tomás Luis de Victoria's** Vadam et circuibo. A master of Iberian polyphony, Victoria seems to take the opening words of the piece to heart in this epic setting. Although full of moments of remarkable millpond stillness, there is still an inexorable and fundamental sense of forward momentum as the speaker seeks their beloved, describing their beauty and enlisting help along the way. Finally, the piece ends with one last image of trees and fruit.

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James MacMillan (b.1959)

Behold, you are beautiful, my love (2018) Liturgical text

Behold, you are beautiful, my love, Behold, you are beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind your veil. Your lips are like a scarlet thread, And your mouth is lovely. Your neck is like the tow'r of David, Until the day breathes, and the shadows flee.

Gavin Bryars (b.1943)

A la dolce ombra de le belle frondi (2006) Petrarch

A la dolce ombra de le belle frondi Corsi fuggendo un dispietato lume Che 'n fin qua giù m'ardea dal terzo cielo; Et disgombrava già di neve i poggi L'aura amorosa che rinova il tempo, Et fiorian per le piagge l'erbe e i rami.

Non vide il mondo sì leggiadri rami Né mosse il vento mai sì verdi frondi Come a me si mostrar quel primo tempo, Tal che temendo de l'ardente lume Non volsi al mio refugio ombra di poggi, Ma de la pianta più gradita in cielo.

Un lauro mi difese allor dal cielo, Onde più volte, vago de' bei rami, Da po' son gito per selve et per poggi;

To the sweet shade of those beautiful leaves

- To the sweet shade of those beautiful leaves I ran, fleeing a pitiless
- light that was burning down upon me from the third heaven;
- and already the snow was disappearing from the hills
- thanks to the loving breeze that renews the season, and through the
- meadows the grass bloomed and the branches.
- The world never saw such graceful branches nor did the wind ever move such green leaves as showed themselves to me in that first season; so that, fearing the burning light, I chose for my refuge no shade of hills
- but that of the tree most favoured in Heaven.
- A laurel defended me then from the heavens; wherefore often, desirous of its lovely branches, since then I have gone through woods and across hills:

Né giamai ritrovai tronco né frondi Tanto onorate dal superno lume Che non mutasser qualitate a tempo.

Però più fermo ogni or di tempo in tempo, Seguendo ove chiamar m'udia dal cielo E scorto d'un soave et chiaro lume, Tornai sempre devoto ai primi rami Et quando a terra son sparte le frondi Et quando il sol fa

verdeggiare i poggi. Selve, sassi, campagne, fiumi, et poggi, Quanto è creato, vince et cangia

il tempo;

Ond' io cheggio perdono a queste frondi Se rivolgendo poi molt'anni

il cielo Fuggir disposi gl'invescati rami Tosto ch' i' ncominciai di veder lume.

Tanto mi piacque prima il dolce lume Ch' i' passai con diletto assai gran poggi Per poter appressar gli amati rami; Ora la vita breve e 'I loco e 'I tempo Mostranmi altro sentier di gire al cielo Et di far frutto, non pur fior et frondi. nor have I ever again found trunk or leaves so honoured by the supernal light that they did not change their quality according

to the season.

Therefore, more and more firm from season to season. following where I heard myself called from Heaven and guided by a mild and clear light, I have come back always devoted to the first branches. both when on earth are scattered their leaves and when the sun turns green the hills. Woods, rocks, fields, rivers, and hills all that is made - are vanguished and changed by time; wherefore I ask pardon of these leaves if, the heavens turning many years, I have made ready to flee the enlimed branches as soon as I began to see the light. So pleasing to me at first was that sweet light that joyfully I traversed great hills in order to approach the beloved branches. Now the shortness of life and the place and the season show me another pathway to go to

et and bear fruit, not merely flowers and leaves.

Heaven

Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.

- Altr'amor, altre frondi, et altro lume, Altro salir al ciel per altri poggi Cerco (che n'è ben tempo), et altri rami.
- Another love, other leaves, and another light, another climbing to Heaven by other hills I seek (for it is indeed time), and other branches.

Biancamaria Furgeri (b.1935)

Ego flos campi (2003) Liturgical text

I am the rose of Sharon

Ego flos campi, et lilium convalium.

Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias. Sicut malus inter ligna silvarum, sic

dilectus meus inter filios. Sub umbra illius, quem desideraveram, sedi,

Et fructus eius dulcis gutturi meo. Introduxit me Rex in cellam vinariam ordinavit in me charitatem. Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis quia amore langueo. Laeva eius sub capite meo, et dextera illius amplexabitur me.

Vox dilecti mei, ecce iste venit,saliens in montibus, transiliens colles.

En dilectus meus loquitur mihi. Surge, propera, amica mea, Columba mea, formosa mea, et veni:

Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi, Qui pascitur inter lilia. I am the rose of Sharon. and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one. and come

away. My beloved is mine, and I

am his: he feedeth among the lilies.

Stephanie Martin (b.1962)

Rise up, my Love (2012) Liturgical text

My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;

- The flow'rs appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
- Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.
- My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.
- Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a deer upon the mountains.

Tarik O'Regan (b.1978)

Scattered Rhymes (2006) Petrarch Anonymous

Scattered Rhymes I

QUARTET:

Que' ch' infinita providentia et arte Mostrò nel suo mirabil magistero, Che criò questo et quell'altro hemispero, Et mansueto piú Giove che Marte,

Vegnendo in terra a 'Iluminar le carte Ch' avean molt'anni già celato il vero, Tolse Giovanni da la rete et Piero, Et nel regno del ciel fece lor parte; Di sé nascendo a Roma non fe' grazia,

A Giudea sí, tanto sovr' ogni stato

Umiltate esaltar sempre gli piacque.

QUARTET:

He who showed endless providence and art, the master craftsman of this shining world, who made the hemispheres, this one and that, and proved a Jove, more mild than Mars,

Who came here to illuminate the leaves that had concealed the truth for many years, took John and Peter from their fishing nets and gave them portions of his Paradise;

He, for his birth, did not bestow himself on Rome, but chose Judea, since he cared among all states to elevate the humblest. Ed or di picciol borgo un sol n'à dato, Tal che natura o 'l luogo si ringrazia Onde sì bella donna al mondo nacque.

CHORUS: Ipsa vivere mihi reddidit! Cessit prospere, spe plus accidit Menti misere: Que dum temere totam tradidit Se sub Venere, Venus ethere risus edidit Leto sidere.

Scattered Rhymes II

QUARTET: Se mai foco per foco non si spense Né fiume fu giamai secco per pioggia, Ma sempre l'un per l'altro simil poggia Et spesso l'un contrario l'altro accense,

Amor, tu che' pensier nostri dispense, Al qual un'alma in duo corpi s'appoggia, Perché fai in lei con disusata foggia Men per molto voler le voglie intense?

Forse sì come 'l Nil d'alto caggendo Col gran suono i vicin d'intorno assorda, E'l sole abbaglia chi ben fiso 'l guarda,

Cosí 'l desio che seco non s'accorda, Ne lo sfrenato obiecto vien perdendo, Et por troppo spropar la fu

Et per troppo spronar la fuga è tarda.

And now he's given us a sun from one small village, so that we thank Nature and the place that gave the world this fairest lady.

CHORUS: She herself has restored life to me! It has turned out well, more than I hoped for has fallen to my poor understanding: and when heedlessly she surrendered herself wholly under Venus, in the upper air Venus smiled from her joyful star.

QUARTET: If fire never puts a fire out,

nor river can grow dry receiving rain, but things increase by contact with their ilk, and even oppositions spur each other;

Then you who rule our thinking, oh, great Love, you who have made me one soul in two bodies, why do you come in an outmoded shape and make desire shrink by its own surplus?

Perhaps the way the Nile, thundering down, makes deaf all those who live too near its noise, the way the sun blinds those who stare into it,

The way desire, with no sense of limits, is lost when its objective's too immense.

flies fast, flies hard, and is by that made slow.

CHORUS: Desiderio nimis officit, Dum vix gaudio pectus sufficit, Quod concipio Dum Venerio Flora reficit Me colloquio, Dum, quem haurio, favus allicit Dato basio.

Scattered Rhymes III

QUARTET: Se lamentar augelli, o verdi fronde Mover soavemente a l'aura estiva, O roco mormorar di lucide onde S'ode d'una fiorita et fresca

S'ode d'una fiorita et fresca riva.

Là 'v io seggia d'amor pensoso et scriva, Lei che 'l Ciel ne mostrò, terra n'asconde Veggio et odo et intendo, ch' ancor viva Di sí lontano a' sospir miei risponde.

'Deh, perché inanzi 'I tempo ti consume?' Mi dice con pietate. 'A che pur versi Degli occhi tristi un doloroso fiume?

'Di me non pianger tu, ch' é' miei dì fersi,
Morendo eterni; et ne l'interno lume,
Quando mostrai de chiuder, gli occhi apersi.' CHORUS:

By desire much is hindered while force suffuses my breast with joy, which I take in completely

while Flora restores me to converse with Venus, while I drain what the honeycomb has nourished in the kiss she gave.

QUARTET:

If I hear birds lamenting, or green leaves that summer breeze is

stirring very softly, or the faint murmur of the lucid waters

that run along beside a flowery bank

Where I am sitting, lost in thought and writing,

I see her, then, whom Heaven reveals, earth hides,

I see her and I hear and understand her, as from afar she answers to my sighing:

'Why do you waste yourself before your time?'

she asks me, full of pity. 'Why pour out this river of affliction from your eyes?

'Don't weep for me, for dying made my day an endless one, and when I closed my eyes I opened them to one great inner light.'

Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.

CHORUS: Sepe refero cursum liberum Sinu tenero: sic me superum Addens numero. Cunctis impero, felix iterum Si tetigero quem desidero, sinum tenerum Tactu libero.

CHORUS: Often I turn back my wandering thoughts to her tender bosom: thus adding myself to the number of the gods above. I command all things if I touched what I desire. her tender bosom, with a free touch.

Interval

Raffaella Aleotti (c.1575-1646)

Surge, propera amica mea (pub. 1593) Liturgical text	Arise, my love
Surge, propera amica mea,	Arise, my love, my fair
speciosa mea, et veni.	one, and come away.
Columba mea, in foraminibus	O my dove, that art in the
petrae,	clefts of the rock, in the
caverna	secret places of the
maceriæ,	stairs,
Ostende mihi faciem tuam,	let me see thy countenance,
Sonet vox tua in auribus meis:	let me hear thy voice;
Vox enim tua dulcis, et	for sweet is thy voice, and
facies tua	thy countenance is
decora.	comely.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

(c.1525-1594) Duo ubera tua (pub. 1584) Liturgical text

Duo ubera tua sicut duo hinnuli, gemelli capreae.

Collum tuum sicut turris eburnea: Oculi tui sicut piscinæ in Hesebon Quæ sunt in porta filiae multitudinis. Nasus tuus sicut turris Libani. Quæ respicit contra Damascum.

Thy two breasts

- Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.
- Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose is as the tower of l ebanon which looketh toward Damascus.

Caput tuum ut Carmelus;

Et comae capitis tui sicut purpura regis Vincta canalibus.

Adrian Willaert (c.1490-1562)

Lasso, ch'i ardo (pub. 1559) Petrarch

Lasso, ch'i' ardo, et altri non me'l crede; Sì crede ogni uom, se non sola colei Chè sovr'ogni altra, et ch'i' sola, vorrei: Ella non par che 'l creda. et sì sel vede. Infinita bellezza et poca fede. Non vedete voi 'l cor ne gli occhi mei? Se non fusse mia stella, i' pur devrei Al fonte di pietà trovar mercede. Quest'arder mio, di che vi cal sì poco, E i vostri honori, in mie rime diffusi. Ne porian infiammar fors'anchor mille: Ch'i' veggio nel penser, dolce mio foco, Fredda una lingua et duo belli occhi chiusi Rimaner, dopo noi, pien' di faville.

Alas, I burn, and others will not believe me: if all believed she who's above all others still does not. she who alone I wish to do so:

she does not seem to believe, and yet she sees.

Infinite beauty, yet of such little faith, do you not see my heart in my eyes?

If my fate were not otherwise, I surely must find mercy at the fountain of pity.

My passion, for which you care so little, and your praises that pervade my verses, may yet perhaps set thousands on fire: since, my sweet flame, in my thoughts, I see, long after us, this tongue, grown cold, yet your two lovely closed eyes, there, glowing still.

Jacobus Clemens non Papa (c.1510-

1555) Ego flos campi a7 (pub. 1555) Liturgical text

I am the rose of Sharon

Ego flos campi, et lilium convalium. Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias.

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries.

Fons hortorum, puteus aquarum viventium, Quae fluunt impetu de Libano. A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

Arise, my love, my

fair one

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Surge, amica mea, speciosa mea (pub. 1584) Liturgical text

Surge, amica mea, speciosa mea, et veni.

Columba mea, in foraminibus petrae, in caverna

Ostende mihi faciem tuam, Sonet vox tua in auribus meis: Vox enim tua dulcis,

maceriae.

et facies

tua decora.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the

secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

Guillaume Bouzignac (c.1587-1643)

Vulnerasti cor meum Liturgical text

Thou hast ravished my heart

Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea, sponsa; Vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum, et in uno crine colli tui. Quam pulchrae sunt

mammae tuae, soror mea sponsa. Pulchriora sunt ubera tua

vino, Et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata.

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! How much better is thy love than wine! And the smell of thine

ointments than all spices!

Caroline Shaw (b.1982)

Companion Planting (2024) Caroline Shaw

The first spring, not yet knowing the path of the summer sun and how bare limbs would roar to life and mediate the sky through leaves unfurling, born to amplify each shade and shadow's incantation.

I heard about companion planting – brassica with allium, limonene and solanum, microplitus mediation – patient reconciliation.

Next year we'll plant another garden. Then I'll know the arc of your summer sun, the shades and shadows of the sweetgum, the patterns of the bees and solanum lycopersicum, with lavender by each one. And the shape of things to come.

And when we deeply know and love the ground beneath and light above, we will have only just begun the ancient recollection.

Every spring reminds me to look up and through the slivered shadows of the tree – its semi-quavering entropy – hearing every shade of you.

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

Vadam et circuibo (pub. I will arise and go 1572)

Liturgical text

Vadam et circuibo civitatem, Per vicos et plateas, Quaeram quem diligit anima mea: Quaesivi illum, et non inveni.

Adiuro vos, filiae lerusalem,

Si inveneritis dilectum meum,

Ut annuntietis ei quia amore langueo.

I will arise and go about the city, through the streets and the squares;

I will seek him whom my soul loves.

I sought him but I did not find him.

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my

beloved,

that you tell him I am sick with love.

Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.

Qualis est dilectus	What is your beloved
tuus, quia	more than another
sic adiurasti	beloved, that you
nos?	adjure us so?
Dilectus meus candidus et	My beloved is radiant and
rubicundus; electus ex	ruddy, distinguished
milibus.	amongst ten thousand:
Talis est dilectus meus et	this is my beloved and
amicus meus, filiae	friend, daughters of
lerusalem.	Jerusalem.
Quo abiit dilectus tuus, o pulcherrima mulierum? Quo declinavit, et quaeremus eum tecum?	Where has your beloved gone, O fairest amongst women? Where has your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you?
Ascendit in	He has gone up to the
palmam,	palm tree,
Et apprehendit fructus eius.	and has taken of its fruit.

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