

WIGMORE HALL

Tuesday 15 October 2024
7.30pm

Love Letters

Sasha Cooke mezzo-soprano
Malcolm Martineau piano

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Chansons de Bilitis (1897-8)

*La flûte de Pan • La chevelure • Le tombeau des
naïades*

Alma Mahler (1879-1964)

Die stille Stadt (pub. 1910)

Bei dir ist es traut (pub. 1910)

Ich wandle unter Blumen (pub. 1910)

Laue Sommernacht (pub. 1910)

In meines Vaters Garten (pub. 1910)

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

From *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1892-99, rev. 1901)

*Rheinlegendchen • Wo die schönen Trompeten
blasen • Verlorne Müh*

Interval

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

Wesendonck Lieder (1857-8)

*Der Engel • Stehe still! • Im Treibhaus •
Schmerzen • Träume*

Scott Ordway (b.1984)

Expanse of my Soul (2023) *UK première*

Your Voice • Blindfold • Sighs Become Breath

CLASSIC *fm* Wigmore Hall £5 tickets for Under 35s supported by Media Partner Classic FM



SUPPORT OUR AUDIENCE FUND: EVERY NOTE COUNTS

Ensure Wigmore Hall remains a vibrant hub of musical excellence by making a donation today.
wigmore-hall.org.uk/donate | 020 7258 8220



Join & Support
Donations

Wigmore Hall is a no smoking venue. No recording or photographic equipment may be taken into the auditorium nor used in any other part of the Hall without the prior written permission of the management. In accordance with the requirements of City of Westminster persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any other gangways. If standing is permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, it shall be limited to the number indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions. Disabled Access and Facilities - full details from 020 7935 2141. Wigmore Hall is equipped with a loop to help hearing aid users receive clear sound without background noise. Patrons can use this facility by switching hearing aids to 'T'.



Please ensure that watch alarms, mobile phones and any other electrical devices which can become audible are switched off. Phones on a vibrate setting can still be heard, please switch off.

The Wigmore Hall Trust Registered Charity No. 1024838
36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP • Wigmore-hall.org.uk • John Gilhooly Director

Wigmore Hall Royal Patron HRH The Duke of Kent, KG
Honorary Patrons Aubrey Adams OBE; André and Rosalie Hoffmann; Louise Kaye; Kohn
Foundation; Mr and Mrs Paul Morgan

Department
for Culture
Media & Sport



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Eroticism pervades this programme of love, loss, and longing. First, Pierre Louÿs's *Chansons de Bilitis* takes us to an extreme of 19th-century literary fascination with antiquity. Louÿs presented his 1895 volume as the first French translation of little-known poems by Bilitis, a near-contemporary of Sappho from Pamphylia. The poems are divided into three sections, roughly charting the course of Bilitis's life; their powerful imagery and explicit sexual content – including abundant lesbian eroticism – immediately caught the attention of *fin-de-siècle* readers, composers and artists. That Bilitis and her poems were actually an elaborate, meticulous work of fiction by Louÿs only added to their intrigue and ultimate cult status, and as the 20th Century progressed, the fictional Bilitis lent her name to various radical lesbian movements. Louÿs and **Claude Debussy** were both members of Mallarmé's circle, and were deeply attuned to the erotics of symbolism – this suffuses both the poems and music of Debussy's three *Chansons de Bilitis* of 1897. The set was immediately celebrated, and remains among the composer's best-loved music, not least for the songs' intricate text-setting, vibrant conjuring of feeling, time and place, and enchanting evocations of antiquity through the use of modes.

Alma Mahler was an ambitious composer: she studied with Alexander Zemlinsky and thrived within the vibrant musical milieu of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. However, 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 fully reignite her earlier ambition. It did, however, lead to the publication of these five songs, by Universal Edition, in 1910, and Alma went on to publish a further nine songs in 1915 and 1924 – she died in 1964. Until recently, interest in her biography had generally surpassed interest in her music: her romantic liaisons with cultural luminaries, coupled with her notoriously difficult personality, have led to the pervasive – and almost always sexist – characterisation of her as a 'malevolent muse' or 'femme fatale' of 20th-century artistic society. In recent decades, various prominent musicians and scholars have championed her extant early songs, and appreciation is growing of her distinctive compositional voice, which is full of harmonic adventure, carefully crafted dramatic tension, and sensitive settings of texts from diverse poetic sources. Alma Mahler's interests leaned towards the cutting-edge of *fin-de-siècle* poetry, often setting contemporary authors such as Richard Dehmel and Rainer Maria Rilke; her judicious selection of a poem by Heinrich Heine – which we hear tonight alongside settings of Dehmel, Rilke, Gustav Falke and Otto Erich Hartleben – demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of German literary history too.

From the mid-1880s onwards, **Gustav Mahler** was transfixed by the collection of German folk poetry *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, which was compiled and edited by Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano and published between 1805 and 1808. The source was enormously

generative: *Wunderhorn* settings make up over half Mahler's total song output; they permeate his so-called 'Wunderhorn symphonies'; and, while he moved in different directions from the early 1900s, echoes and ideas from the *Wunderhorn* world continued to ricochet throughout his later music. These three songs were written between 1892 and 1898, before he met Alma and while he was based in Hamburg. All three are known in versions for voice and piano and for voice and orchestra: in these piano versions, where the timbral palettes are restricted and more is left to the imagination, the musical and dramatic effects can be even more vivid. This is equally true for the simple harmonisations and simple storytelling of the *Ländler*-like 'Rheinlegendchen', and the volatile collisions of the military and the pastoral in the mournfully prescient reverie 'Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen'.

Mathilde Wesendonck was a poet 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.

Tonight's final love letters hail from a more immediate source. Set by American composer and mixed-media artist **Scott Ordway**, the texts for *Expanse of my Soul* are drawn from love poems exchanged by Sasha Cooke and her husband Kelly Markgraf during the early stages of their relationship. Reflecting the synthesis of two authors into a work for one singer, Ordway writes, 'I chose to demarcate changes in speaker using shifts in musical texture. Each song's form therefore follows the back-and-forth of the epistolary exchange, but the character of the music itself doesn't pigeonhole either author into a fixed, characteristic mode of vocal expression. Both authors are represented by music that is assertive as well as contemplative, impassioned as well as reflective, and lyrical as well as plainspoken. As in life, each individual speaks in different ways at different times.' 'Working with these texts,' he adds, 'I was continually inspired by the circumstances of their creation: in private, in secret, in earnest, and in love. While I happen to find them very beautiful in their own right, their real meaning comes from the fact that they were written in truth when it mattered most.'

© Frankie Perry 2024

Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Chansons de Bilitis

(1897-8)

Pierre Louÿs

Songs of Bilitis

La flûte de Pan

The flute of Pan

Pour le jour des Hyacinthies,
il m'a donné une syrinx
faite de roseaux bien
taillés, unis avec la blanche
cire qui est douce à mes
lèvres comme le miel.

For Hyacinthus day he
gave me a syrinx made
of carefully cut reeds,
bonded with white wax
which tastes sweet to
my lips like honey.

Il m'apprend à jouer, assise
sur ses genoux; mais je
suis un peu tremblante. Il
en joue après moi, si
doucement que je
l'entends à peine.

He teaches me to play, as
I sit on his lap; but I am
a little fearful. He plays
it after me, so
gently that I scarcely
hear him.

Nous n'avons rien à nous
dire, tant nous sommes
près l'un de l'autre; mais
nos chansons veulent se
répondre, et tour à tour
nos bouches s'unissent sur
la flûte.

We have nothing to say,
so close are we one to
another, but our songs
try to answer each
other, and our mouths
join in turn
on the flute.

Il est tard; voici le chant des
grenouilles vertes qui
commence avec la nuit. Ma
mère ne croira jamais que
je suis restée si longtemps
à chercher ma ceinture
perdue.

It is late; here is the song
of the green frogs that
begins with the night.
My mother will never
believe I stayed out so
long to look for my lost
sash.

La chevelure

The tresses of hair

Il m'a dit: 'Cette nuit, j'ai rêvé.
J'avais ta chevelure autour
de mon cou. J'avais
tes cheveux comme
un collier noir autour
de ma nuque et sur
ma poitrine.

He said to me: 'Last night
I dreamed. I had your
tresses around my
neck. I had your hair
like a black necklace all
round my nape and
over my breast.

'Je les caressais, et c'étaient
les miens; et nous étions
liés pour toujours ainsi,
par la même chevelure
la bouche sur
labouche, ainsi
que
deux
lauriers n'ont souvent
qu'une racine.

I caressed it and it was
mine; and we were
united thus forever by
the same tresses,
mouth on mouth, just
as two laurels often
share one root.

'Et peu à peu, il m'a semblé,
tant nos membres étaient
confondus, que je devenais
toi-même ou que tu entrais
en moi comme mon
songe.'

And gradually it seemed
to me, so intertwined
were our limbs, that I
was becoming you, or
you were entering into
me like a dream.'

Quand il eut achevé, il mit
doucement ses mains sur
mes épaules, et il me
regarda d'un regard si
tendre, que je baissai les
yeux avec un frisson.

When he had finished, he
gently set his hands on
my shoulders and
gazed at me so
tenderly that I lowered
my eyes with a shiver.

Le tombeau des naïades

The tomb of the Naiads

Le long du bois couvert de
givre, je marchais; mes
cheveux devant ma
bouche se fleurissaient de
petits glaçons, et mes
sandales étaient lourdes
de neige fangeuse et
tassée.

Along the frost-bound
wood I walked; my hair,
across my mouth,
blossomed with tiny
icicles, and my sandals
were heavy with
muddy, packed
snow.

Il me dit: 'Que cherches-tu?'
– 'Je suis la trace du satyre.
Ses petits pas fourchus
alternent des trous dans
un manteau blanc.' Il me
dit: 'Les satyres sont
morts.'

He said to me: 'What do
you seek?' 'I follow the
satyr's track. His little
cloven hoof marks
alternate like holes in a
white cloak.' He said to
me: 'The satyrs are
dead.'

'Les satyres et les nymphes
aussi. Depuis trente ans
il n'a pas fait un hiver aussi
terrible. La trace que tu
vois est celle d'un bouc.
Mais restons ici,
où est leur
tombeau.'

The satyrs and the
nymphs too. For thirty
years there has not
been so harsh a winter.
The tracks you see are
those of a goat. But let
us stay here, where
their tomb is.'

Et avec le fer de sa houe il
cassa la glace de la
source où jadis riaient
les naïades. Il prenait
de grands morceaux
froids, et les soulevant
vers le ciel pâle, il
regardait au
travers.

And with the iron head of
his hoe he broke the ice
of the spring where the
naiads used to laugh.
He picked up some
huge cold fragments,
and, raising them to the
pale sky, gazed through
them.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

Ich wandle unter

Blumen (pub. 1910)

Heinrich Heine

Ich wandle unter Blumen
Und blühe selber mit.
Ich wandle wie im Traume
Und schwanke bei jedem
Schritt.

Oh halt mich fest, Geliebte!
Vor Liebestrunkenheit
Fall' ich dir sonst zu Füßen,
Und der Garten ist voller
Leut!

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.

In meines Vaters

Garten (pub. 1910)

Otto Erich Hartleben

In meines Vaters Garten -
Blühe, mein Herz,
blüh' auf!
In meines Vaters Garten,
Stand ein schattender
Apfelbaum.
Süsser Traum!
Stand ein schattender
Apfelbaum.

I wander among flowers

I wander among flowers
and blossom with them;
I wander as in a dream
and sway with every
step.

O, hold me fast, beloved!
Or drunk with love
I'll fall at your feet –
and the garden is full of
folk.

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.

In my father's garden

In my father's garden –
blossom, O my heart,
blossom!
In my father's garden
grew a shady
apple tree.
Sweet dream!
Grew a shady
apple tree.

Drei blonde Königstöchter – Blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf!	Three blond princesses – blossom, O my heart, blossom!
Drei wunderschöne Mädchen	Three wonderfully beautiful girls
Schließen unter dem Apfelbaum.	slept beneath the apple tree.
Süßes Traum!	Sweet dream!
Schließen unter dem Apfelbaum.	Slept beneath the apple tree.
Die allerjüngste Feine –	The youngest of the three beauties –
Blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf!	blossom, O my heart, blossom!
Die allerjüngste Feine	The youngest of the three beauties
Blinzelte und erwachte kaum.	blinked and hardly awoke.
Süßes Traum!	Sweet dream!
Blinzelte und erwachte kaum.	Blinked and hardly awoke.
Die zweite fuhr sich über das Haar –	The second ran her hand through her hair –
Blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf!	blossom, O my heart, blossom!
Sah den roten Morgentraum.	Saw the red morning dream.
Süßes Traum!	Sweet dream!
Sie sprach: „Hört ihr die Trommel nicht?“	She said: 'Don't you hear the drums?'
Blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf!	blossom, O my heart, blossom!
Süßes Traum!	Sweet dream!
Hell durch den dämmernden Traum!	Brightly through the dawn?
„Mein Liebster zieht in den Kampf –“	'My beloved is going to war –'
Blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf!	blossom, O my heart, blossom!
„Mein Liebster zieht in den Kampf hinaus, Küsst mir als Sieger des Kleides Saum.“	'My beloved is going to war, kisses as victor the hem of my dress.'
Süßes Traum!	Sweet dream!
Küsst mir des Kleides Saum!	Kisses the hem of my dress!
Die Dritte sprach und sprach so leis –	The third spoke, and spoke so quietly –
Blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf!	blossom, O my heart, blossom!
Die Dritte sprach und sprach so leis:	The third spoke, and spoke so quietly:
„Ich küsse dem Liebsten Des Kleides Saum.“	'I kiss the hem of my beloved's coat.'
Süßes Traum!	Sweet dream!
Ich küsse dem Liebsten	I kiss the hem

Des Kleides Saum!	of my beloved's coat.
In meines Vaters Garten – Blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf!	In my father's garden – blossom, O my heart, blossom!
In meines Vaters Garten Steht ein sonniger Apfelbaum.	In my father's garden stands a sunny apple tree.
Süßes Traum!	Sweet dream!
Steht ein sonniger Apfelbaum.	Stands a sunny apple tree.

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

From *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

(1892-99, rev. 1901)

Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano

Rheinlegendchen

Little Rhine legend

Bald gras ich am Neckar, Bald gras ich am Rhein, Bald hab ich ein Schätzchen, Bald bin ich allein.	I mow by the Neckar, I mow by the Rhine; at times I've a sweetheart, at times I'm alone.
Was hilft mir das Grasen, Wenn d'Sichel nicht schneidet, Was hilft mir ein Schätzchen, Wenn's bei mir nicht bleibt.	What use is mowing, if the sickle won't cut, what use is a sweetheart, if she'll not stay.
So soll ich denn grasen Am Neckar, am Rhein, So werf ich mein goldenes Ringlein hinein.	So if I'm to mow by the Neckar, and Rhine, I'll throw in their waters my little gold ring.
Es fließet im Neckar Und fließet im Rhein, Soll schwimmen hinunter Ins Meer tief hinein.	It'll flow in the Neckar and flow in the Rhine, and float right away to the depths of the sea.
Und schwimmt es das Ringlein, So frisst es ein Fisch, Das Fischlein soll kommen Aufs Königs sein Tisch.	And floating, the ring will be gulped by a fish, the fish will be served at the King's own table.

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

Der König tät fragen,
Wems Ringlein sollt sein?
Da tät mein Schatz sagen,
Das Ringlein g'hört mein.

The King will enquire
whose ring it might be;
my sweetheart will say
the ring belongs to me.

Mein Schätzlein tät springen,
Berg auf und Berg ein,
Tät mir wiedrum bringen
Das Goldringlein fein.

My sweetheart will bound
over hill, over dale,
and bring back to me
my little gold ring.

Kannst grasen am
Neckar,
Kannst grasen am Rhein,
Wirf du mir nur
immer
Dein Ringlein hinein.

You can mow by the
Neckar,
and mow by the Rhine,
if you'll always keep
throwing
your ring in for me.

Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen

Where the splendid trumpets sound

Wer ist denn draussen und
wer klopfet an,
Der mich so leise wecken
kann?
Das ist der Herzallerliebste
dein,
Steh auf und lass mich zu dir
ein.

Who stands outside and
knocks at my door,
waking me so
gently?
It is your own true dearest
love,
arise, and let me
in.

Was soll ich hier nun länger
stehn?
Ich seh die Morgenröt
aufgehn,
Die Morgenröt, zwei helle
Stern,
Bei meinem Schatz da wär
ich gern,
Bei meinem Herzallerlieble.

Why leave me longer
waiting here?
I see the rosy dawn
appear,
the rosy dawn and two
bright stars.
I long to be beside my
love,
beside my dearest love.

Das Mädchen stand auf, und
liess ihn ein,
Sie heisst ihn auch
willkommen sein.
Willkommen, lieber Knabe
mein,
So lang hast du
gestanden.

The girl arose and let him
in,
she bids him welcome
too.
O welcome, dearest love
of mine,
too long have you been
waiting.

Sie reicht ihm auch die
schneeweisse Hand.
Von Ferne sang die
Nachtigall,
Das Mädchen fing zu weinen
an.

She gives to him her
snow-white hand,
from far off sang the
nightingale,
the girl began to
weep.

Ach weine nicht, du Liebste
mein,

Ah, do not weep, my
dearest love,

Aufs Jahr sollst du mein
eigen sein;
Mein eigen sollst du werden
gewiss,
Wies keine sonst auf Erden
ist.

within a year you shall be
mine,
you shall be mine most
certainly,
as no one else on earth.

O Lieb auf grüner
Erden.

O love upon the green
earth.

Ich zieh' in Krieg auf grüne
Haid',
Die grüne Haide, die ist so
weit.

I'm going to war, to the
green heath,
the green heath so far
away.

Allwo dort die schönen
Trompeten blasen,
Da ist mein Haus von
grünem Rasen.

There where the splendid
trumpets sound,
there is my home of
green turf.

Verlorne Müh

Wasted effort

Sie
Büble, wir wollen ausse gehe,
Wollen wir? Unsere Lämmer
besehe,
Komm, liebs Büberle,
Komm, ich bitt.

She
Hey, laddie, shall we go
walking,
shall we see to our
lambs?
Come, dear laddie,
come, I beg you.

Er
Närrisches Dinterle,
Ich geh dir halt nit.

He
Foolish girl,
I'll not go with you.

Sie
Willst vielleicht ä Bissel
nasche,
Hol dir was aus meiner
Tasch;
Hol, liebs Büberle,
Hol, ich
bitt.

She
Perhaps you'd like a little
nibble,
take a morsel from my
pack;
take it, dear lad,
take something, I beg
you.

Er
Närrisches Dinterle,
Ich nasch dir halt
nit.

He
Foolish girl,
I'll take no nibbles from
you.

Sie
Gelt, ich soll mein Herz dir
schenke,
Immer willst an mich
gedenke;
Nimms, liebs Büberle!
Nimms, ich bitt.

She
I'll offer you my heart,
then,
so you'll always think of
me;
take it, dear laddie!
Take it, I beg you.

Er
Närrisches Dinterle,
Ich mag es halt nit!

He
Foolish girl,
I'll have none of it!

Interval

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

Wesendonck Lieder (1857-8)

Mathilde Wesendonck

Der Engel

The angel

In der Kindheit frühen
Tagen

In the early days of
childhood

Hört' ich oft von Engeln
sagen,

I often heard tell of angels

Die des Himmels hehre
Wonne

who exchange heaven's
pure bliss

Tauschen mit der
Erdensonne,

for the sun of
earth,

Dass, wo bang ein Herz in
Sorgen

So that, when a sorrowful
heart

Schmachtet vor der Welt
verborgen,

hides its yearning from
the world,

Dass, wo still es will
verbluten,

and would silently bleed
away

Und vergehn in Tränenfluten,

and dissolve in streams of
tears,

Dass, wo brünstig sein Gebet

And when its fervent
prayer

Einzig um Erlösung fleht,

begs only for deliverance,

Da der Engel niederschwebt,

that angel will fly down

Und es sanft gen Himmel
hebt.

and gently raise the heart
to heaven.

Ja, es stieg auch mir ein
Engel nieder,

And to me too an angel
descended,

Und auf leuchtendem
Gefieder

and now on shining
wings

Führt er, ferne jedem
Schmerz,

bears my spirit, free from
all pain,

Meinen Geist nun
himmelwärts!

towards
heaven!

Stehe still!

Stand still!

Sausendes, brausendes Rad
der Zeit,

Rushing, roaring wheel of
time,

Messer du der
Ewigkeit;

you that measure
eternity;

Leuchtende Sphären im
weiten All,

gleaming spheres in the
vast universe,

Die ihr umringt den
Weltenball;

you that surround our
earthly sphere;

Urewige Schöpfung, halte
doch ein,

eternal creation –
cease:

Genug des Werdens, lass
mich sein!

enough of becoming, let
me be!

Halte an dich,
zeugende Kraft,
Urgedanke, der ewig
schafft!

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

Hemmet den Atem, stillt
den Drang,

Stop your breath, still
your urge,

Schweigend nur eine
Sekunde lang!

be silent for a single
moment!

Schwellende Pulse, fesselt
den Schlag;

Swelling pulses, restrain
your beating;

Ende, des Wollens ew'ger
Tag!

eternal day of the Will –
end!

Dass in selig süßem
Vergessen

That in blessed, sweet
oblivion

Ich mög alle Wonne
ermessen!

I might measure all my
bliss!

Wenn Auge in Auge wonnig
trinken,

When eye gazes blissfully
into eye,

Seele ganz in Seele
versinken;

when soul drowns utterly
in soul;

Wesen in Wesen sich
wiederfindet,

when being finds itself in
being,

Und alles Hoffens Ende sich
kündet,

and the goal of every
hope is near,

Die Lippe verstummt in
stauendem Schweigen,

when lips are mute in
silent wonder,

Keinen Wunsch mehr will das
Innre zeugen:

when the soul wishes for
nothing more:

Erkennt der Mensch des
Ew'gen Spur,

then man perceives
Eternity's footprint,

Und löst dein Rätsel, heil'ge
Natur!

and solves your riddle,
holy Nature!

Im Treibhaus

In the greenhouse

Hochgewölbte

High-arching leafy

Blätterkronen,

crowns,

Baldachine von Smaragd,

canopies of emerald,

Kinder ihr aus fernen

you children who dwell in

Zonen,

distant climes,

Saget mir, warum ihr

tell me, why do you

klagt?

lament?

Schweigend neiget ihr die
Zweige,

Silently you bend your
branches,

Malet Zeichen in

inscribe your symbols on

die Luft,

the air,

Und der Leiden stummer

and a sweet fragrance

Zeuge

rises,

Steiget aufwärts, süßes Duft.

as silent witness to your

sorrows.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Schmerzen

Agonies

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

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 stolzer
Siegesheld!

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!

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

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?

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

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

Träume

Dreams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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,
Träumend spenden ihren
Duft,
Sanft an deiner Brust
verglühen,
Und dann sinken in die Gruft.

So that they grow and
flower,
bestow their scent as in a
dream,
fade softly away on your
breast
and sink into their grave.

Scott Ordway (b.1984)

Expanse of my Soul (2023)

Texts by Sasha Cooke

Texts by Kelly Markgraf

Your Voice

Expanse of my soul:

Your voice like a heavy blanket
Easing me into the earth, and
I imagine your broad view and the
Simple room with the lone
Hook on the wall, and
You sit on the bed and
Weep and breathe and
Look out for hours.

*Now coursing through me,
Waking from children
Laughing in the trees,
Silhouettes beckoning the
Ocean. Beams of light:
I know not where from,
I just feel and feel and feel.*

It's a pilgrimage, isn't it?
I hesitate to say it, but God knows
It's holy. It belongs. Is.
I have become yours.
At your side the fickle earth is velvet
That beckons each - next - step.

Blindfold

*Blindfolded entering the room
I know where to find you:
Here on an island of life.
I put the blindfold on again
And know once more
That you are there.
Your eyes gaze back at me:
A world of truth and clear.
They smile into my heart.*

Now is our time and our place,
Our own sense of space
To decide by day and
By night what we are.
Tethered together,
Floating deep and afar,
Awareness our beacon
In waters spread wide.
May we be still and listen,
Ever-knowing the tide
That brings and takes and
Brings again.

*Soft hands that cling to ours,
Still singing songs.
They smile and we know all is well.
Tis their love that blends this magic spell.*

Sighs Become Breath

*Pockets of sand on my eyes,
Trickling down to kiss my soul
And twist up toward the sun.*

*No one hears the peace
Easing forth from those eyes
Which breathe calm and
Home and warm.*

*Waves cleanse
And nourish this youth,
Bringing that light,
Carrying that warmth
Home to where it began
When ears became mouths and
Sighs became breath.*

*You are me. I am yours
In our lair, in our home.*

*Translations of Debussy by Richard Stokes from A French Song
Companion (Johnson/Stokes) published by OUP. 'Die stille Stadt',
Gustav Mahler and Wagner 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.
'Bei dir ist es traut' by Jean du Monde. All other Alma Mahler by Richard
Stokes.*

*Texts of Expanse of my Soul © by Sasha Cooke and Kelly Markgraf,
printed by kind permission.*