

WIGMORE HALL

Sunday 16 April 2023
3.00pm

Michael Arivony baritone
Teodora Oprisor piano

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Adelaide Op. 46 (c.1794-6)

An die ferne Geliebte Op. 98 (1816)

Auf dem Hügel sitz ich, spähend

Wo die Berge so blau

Leichte Segler in den Höhen

Diese Wolken in den Höhen

Es kehret der Maien

Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Hans und Grete (1880)

Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen (1883-5)

Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht

Ging heut' morgen über's Feld

Ich hab' ein glühend Messer

Die zwei blauen Augen



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'Adelaide' dates from around 1796, the same period that saw the composition of the early piano trios and sonatas. It was not until 1800, however, that **Beethoven** sent the song to Friedrich von Matthisson, the author of the poem which had enjoyed enormous popularity as soon as it was published. Beethoven dedicated his 'Adelaide' to the poet, and sent him the song with a letter that speaks volumes about the composer's lack of confidence in his own work. 'Even now', the second paragraph begins, 'I send you my Adelaide with some apprehension. You yourself are aware what difference a few years can make in a composer who continues to develop: the greater the progress one makes in art, the less satisfactory one's early works become. My greatest wish will have been fulfilled if my musical setting of your heavenly Adelaide does not entirely displease you . . .'. When the song was mentioned to Beethoven many years later, he contented himself with the lapidary reply, 'Das Gedicht ist sehr schön' ('The poem is very beautiful').

An die ferne Geliebte is widely considered to be the first ever song cycle – it was certainly the first time that a major composer had organised a group of songs with piano accompaniment into a coherent whole. Beethoven had written his celebrated letter to the 'Immortal Beloved' in July 1812, and although *An die ferne Geliebte* was composed four years after that tortured outpouring, there's enough evidence to suggest that he was still obsessed by the unknown woman, and that the cycle was an attempt to exorcise her. The poet, Alois Jeitteles (or Aloys Jeiteles), was a doctor by profession, and though his verse appeared in several almanacs, the poems were never published in book form, and Beethoven was probably delighted to have found a virtually unknown collaborator who was not only musical and cultured but almost certainly willing to be directed. Each of the six poems is dominated by the image of the distant beloved. 'Auf dem Hügel sitz' ich, spähend' tells of their first meeting ('in the distant meadows') and their subsequent separation which, we are told, is a torment ('Qual') to both of them. 'Wo die Berge so blau' expresses the poet's obsessive wish – the 'wo' is mentioned four times – to be by her side. His reverie is banished in the next song, 'Leichte Segler in den Höhen', in which he begs the scudding clouds, rippling brook and gusting breeze to convey to her his longing. The same idea (and same key) is continued in 'Diese Wolken in den Höhen' which contains the only sensuous phrase in the cycle that describes the breeze frolicking about her cheeks and breast and burrowing in her silken locks. All these fond imaginings, however, vanish in the fifth song, 'Es kehret der Maien', as the poet comes down to earth with a bump, and the joy of all nature (especially the conjugal bliss of the swallow) is contrasted with the

barrenness of his own love, which leads him to conclude in 'Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder' – with a mixture of reverence and stoicism – that only through his poetry will he be at one with the object of his desire.

Mahler's 'Hans und Grete' has an interesting history. Fragments from the song occurred in the third of the Poisl-Lieder that he had composed in 1880 to his own poems, as an expression of his love for Josephine Poisl, daughter of the postman in Jihlava, where he had spent his early childhood. They were performed on Prague radio in 1934, with Alfred Rosé, the composer's nephew, at the piano. The third song was called 'Maitanz im Grünen', themes of which Mahler incorporated into the later 'Hans und Grete' and also into the scherzo second movement of his First Symphony.

The poems of *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* were written by Mahler in the midst of a traumatic relationship with Johanna Richter, a soprano at the Kassel Opera, where Mahler was Chorus Master. The poems, by Mahler himself, are heavily autobiographical, and the mood and theme of the four songs bear a striking resemblance to Schubert's *Winterreise*. Both protagonists are jilted, both set out on a journey and both lie down to rest beneath a lime tree. Mahler's opening song shares with Schubert's last the same pedal-point and empty fifths, and throughout the two works the wanderer's grief is highlighted by sporadic references to unattainable joy – in Schubert the retrospective bliss of a past relationship, in Mahler the presence of nature's ravishing beauty. The cumulative power of this nature description has its counterpart in the progressive tonality of the cycle, for each song ends in a higher key than the one in which it started – a sort of cranking up of the emotions. The distraught mood of 'Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht' is underlined by the constant shift from *allegro* to *andante*, and from 4/8 to 3/8 time. 'Ging heut' morgen über's Feld' is the only song that starts happily and never modulates to the minor. The opening phrase with its fourths became the main theme of Mahler's First Symphony. 'Ich hab' ein glühend Messer' starts in D minor, and in the middle section, at 'Wenn ich in den Himmel seh', seh' ich zwei blaue Augen stehn', magically enters C major, accompanied continually, though, by sharp dissonances. When the main theme returns it is a semitone higher. 'Die zwei blauen Augen' begins as a funeral march, the first of many that appear in Mahler's works. Unlike the protagonist in Schubert's *Winterreise*, Mahler's wanderer finds lasting peace beneath the linden tree.

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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Adelaide Op. 46

(c.1794-6)

Friedrich von Matthisson

Adelaide

Einsam wandelt dein Freund
im Frühlingsgarten,
Mild vom lieblichen
Zauberlicht umflossen,
Das durch wankende
Blütenzweige
zittert,
Adelaide!

Your friend wanders lonely
in the spring garden,
gently bathed in the
magical sweet light
that shimmers through
swaying boughs in
bloom,
Adelaide!

In der spiegelnden Flut, im
Schnee der Alpen,
In des sinkenden Tages
Goldgewölken,
Im Gefilde der Sterne strahlt
dein Bildnis,
Adelaide!

In the mirroring waves, in
the Alpine snows,
In the golden clouds of
the dying day,
In the fields of stars your
image shines,
Adelaide!

Abendlüftchen im zarten
Laube flüstern,
Silberglöckchen des Mais im
Grase säuseln,
Wellen rauschen und
Nachtigallen flöten:
Adelaide!

Evening breezes whisper
in the tender leaves,
the silvery bells of May
rustle in the grass,
waves murmur and
nightingales sing:
Adelaide!

Einst, o Wunder! entblüht auf
meinem Grabe
Eine Blume der Asche
meines Herzens;
Deutlich schimmert auf
jedem Purpurblättchen:
Adelaide!

One day, O miracle! there
shall bloom on my grave
a flower from the ashes of
my heart;
on every purple leaf shall
clearly shimmer:
Adelaide!

An die ferne Geliebte Op. 98 (1816)

Alois Jeitteles

Auf dem Hügel sitz ich, spähend

I sit on the hill, gazing

Auf dem Hügel sitz ich,
spähend
In das blaue
Nebelland,
Nach den fernen Triften
sehend,
Wo ich dich, Geliebte,
fand.
Weit bin ich von dir
geschieden,
Trennend liegen Berg und
Tal
Zwischen uns und unserm
Frieden,

I sit on the hill,
gazing
into the misty blue
countryside,
towards the distant
meadows
where, my love, I first
found you.
Now I'm far away from
you,
mountain and valley
intervene
between us and our
peace,

Unserm Glück und unsrer
Qual.

our happiness and our
pain.

Ach, den Blick kannst du
nicht sehen,

Ah, you cannot see the
fiery gaze

Der zu dir so glühend
eilt,

that wings its way
towards you,

Und die Seufzer, sie verwehen
In dem Raume, der uns
teilt.

and my sighs are lost
in the space that comes
between us.

Will denn nichts mehr zu dir
dringen,

Will nothing ever reach
you again?

Nichts der Liebe Bote
sein?

Will nothing be love's
messenger?

Singen will ich, Lieder singen,
Die dir klagen meine
Pein!

I shall sing, sing songs
that speak to you of my
distress!

Denn vor Liebesklang
entweicht

For sounds of singing put
to flight

Jeder Raum und jede Zeit,
Und ein liebend Herz
erreicht

all space and all time;
and a loving heart is
reached

Was ein liebend Herz
geweiht!

by what a loving heart has
hallowed!

Wo die Berge so blau

Where the blue mountains

Wo die Berge so blau
Aus dem nebligen Grau
Schauen herein,
Wo die Sonne verglüht,
Wo die Wolke umzieht,
Möchte ich sein!
Dort im ruhigen Tal
Schweigen Schmerzen und
Qual.

Where the blue mountains
from the misty grey
look out towards me,
where the sun's glow fades,
where the clouds scud by –
there would I be!
There, in the peaceful valley,
pain and torment
cease.

Wo im Gestein
Still die Primel dort
sinnt,

Where among the rocks
the primrose meditates in
silence,

Weht so leise der
Wind,

and the wind blows so
softly –

Möchte ich sein!

there would I be!

Hin zum sinnigen
Wald

I am driven to the musing
wood

Drängt mich Liebesgewalt,
Innere Pein.

by the power of love,
inner pain.

Ach, mich zög's nicht von
hier,

Ah, nothing could tempt
me from here,

Könnt ich, Traute, bei dir
Ewiglich sein!

if I were able, my love,
to be with you eternally!

Leichte Segler in den Höhen

Leichte Segler in den Höhen
Und du Bächlein, klein und
schmal,
Könnt mein Liebchen ihr
erspähen,
Grüsst sie mir viel
tausendmal.
Seht ihr, Wolken, sie dann
gehen
Sinnend in dem stillen
Tal,
Lasst mein Bild vor ihr
entstehen
In dem luft'gen Himmelssaal.
Wird sie an den Büschen
stehen,
Die nun herbstlich falb und
kahl,
Klagt ihr, wie mir ist geschehen,
Klagt ihr, Vöglein, meine
Qual.
Stille Weste, bringt im
Wehen
Hin zu meiner
Herzenswahl
Meine Seufzer, die vergehen
Wie der Sonne letzter Strahl.
Flüstr' ihr zu mein
Liebesflehen,
Lass sie, Bächlein klein und
schmal,
Treu in deinen Wogen sehen
Meine Tränen ohne Zahl!

Light clouds sailing on high

Light clouds sailing on high,
and you, narrow little
brook,
if you catch sight of my
love,
greet her a thousand
times.
If, clouds, you see her
walking
thoughtful in the silent
valley,
let my image loom before
her
in the airy vaults of heaven.
If she be standing by the
bushes
autumn has turned fallow
and bare,
pour out to her my fate,
pour out, you birds, my
torment.
Soft west winds, waft my
sighs
to her my heart has
chosen –
sighs that fade away
like the sun's last ray.
Whisper to her my
entreaties,
let her, narrow little
brook,
truly see in your ripples
my never-ending tears!

Diese Wolken in den Höhen

Diese Wolken in den Höhen,
Dieser Vöglein muntrer Zug
Werden dich, o Huldin,
sehen.
Nehmt mich mit im leichten
Flug!
Diese Weste warden
spielen
Scherzend dir um Wang' und
Brust,
In den seidnen Locken
wühlen. –
Teilt ich mit euch diese Lust!
Hin zu dir von jenen
Hügeln
Emsig dieses Bächlein eilt.
Wird ihr Bild sich in dir spiegeln,
Fließ zurück dann unverweilt!

These clouds on high

These clouds on high,
this cheerful flight of birds
will see you, O gracious
one.
take me lightly winging
too!
These west winds will
playfully
blow about your cheeks
and breast,
will ruffle your silken
tresses. –
Would I might share that joy!
This brooklet hastens
eagerly
to you from those hills.
If she's reflected in you,
flow directly back to me!

Es kehret der Maien

Es kehret der Maien,
Es blühet die Au,
Die Lüfte, sie wehen
So milde, so lau,
Geschwätzig die Bäche nun
rinnen.
Die Schwalbe, die kehret
Zum wirtlichen Dach,
Sie baut sich so emsig
Ihr bräutlich Gemach,
Die Liebe soll wohnen da
drinnen.
Sie bringt sich geschäftig
Von kreuz und von Quer
Manch weicheres Stück
Zu dem Brautbett hieher,
Manch wärmendes Stück für
die Kleinen.
Nun wohnen die Gatten
Beisammen so treu,
Was Winter geschieden,
Verband nun der Mai,
Was liebet, das weiss er zu
einen.
Es kehret der Maien,
Es blühet die Au.
Die Lüfte, sie wehen
So milde, so lau;
Nur ich kann nicht ziehen
von hinnen.
Wenn alles, was liebet,
Der Frühling vereint,
Nur unserer Liebe
Kein Frühling erscheint,
Und Tränen sind all ihr
Gewinnen.

May returns

May returns,
the meadow blooms.
The breezes blow
so gentle, so mild,
the babbling brooks flow
again.
The swallow returns
to her rooftop home,
and eagerly builds
her bridal chamber,
where love shall
dwell.
She busily brings
from every direction
many soft scraps
for the bridal bed,
many warm scraps for
her young.
Now the pair lives
faithfully together,
what winter parted,
May has joined,
for May can unite all who
love.
May returns,
the meadow blooms.
The breezes blow
so gentle, so mild;
I alone cannot move
on.
When spring unites
all lovers,
our love alone
knows no spring,
and tears are its only
gain.

Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder

Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder, Die ich dir, Geliebte, sang, Singe sie dann abends wieder Zu der Laute süßem Klang! Wenn das Dämmerungsrot dann ziehet Nach dem stillen blauen See, Und sein letzter Strahl verglühet Hinter jener Bergeshöh; Und du singst, was ich gesungen, Was mir aus der vollen Brust Ohne Kunstgepräg erklingen, Nur der Sehnsucht sich bewusst: Dann vor diesen Liedern weicht Was geschieden uns so weit, Und ein liebend Herz erreicht, Was ein liebend Herz geweiht!	Accept, then, these songs Accept, then, these songs I sang for you, beloved; sing them again at evening to the lute's sweet sound! As the red light of evening draws towards the calm blue lake, and its last rays fade behind those mountain heights; and you sing what I sang from a full heart with no display of art, aware only of longing: then, at these songs, the distance that parted us shall recede, and a loving heart be reached by what a loving heart has hallowed!
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Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Hans und Grete (1880)

Gustav Mahler

Ringel, ringel Reih'n! Wer fröhlich ist, der schlinge sich ein! Wer Sorgen hat, der lass' sie daheim! Wer ein liebes Liebchen küsst, Wie glücklich der ist! Ei, Hänsel, du hast ja kein's! So suche dir ein's! Ein liebes Liebchen, das ist was Fein's. Juchhe!	Ring-a-ring, dance in a ring! Whoever's happy, let him join in! Whoever has troubles, let him leave them behind! Whoever kisses a sweetheart, how lucky he is! Why Hans, you haven't got one! So look for one! A loving sweetheart is wonderful. Hurrah!
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Accept, then, these songs

Accept, then, these songs Accept, then, these songs I sang for you, beloved; sing them again at evening to the lute's sweet sound! As the red light of evening draws towards the calm blue lake, and its last rays fade behind those mountain heights; and you sing what I sang from a full heart with no display of art, aware only of longing: then, at these songs, the distance that parted us shall recede, and a loving heart be reached by what a loving heart has hallowed!	Accept, then, these songs Accept, then, these songs I sang for you, beloved; sing them again at evening to the lute's sweet sound! As the red light of evening draws towards the calm blue lake, and its last rays fade behind those mountain heights; and you sing what I sang from a full heart with no display of art, aware only of longing: then, at these songs, the distance that parted us shall recede, and a loving heart be reached by what a loving heart has hallowed!
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Hans and Grete

Gustav Mahler

Ring-a-ring, dance in a ring! Whoever's happy, let him join in! Whoever has troubles, let him leave them behind! Whoever kisses a sweetheart, how lucky he is! Why Hans, you haven't got one! So look for one! A loving sweetheart is wonderful. Hurrah!	Ring-a-ring, dance in a ring! Whoever's happy, let him join in! Whoever has troubles, let him leave them behind! Whoever kisses a sweetheart, how lucky he is! Why Hans, you haven't got one! So look for one! A loving sweetheart is wonderful. Hurrah!
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Ringel, ringel Reih'n! Ei, Gretchen, was stehst denn so allein? Guckst doch hinüber zum Hänselein!? Und ist doch der Mai so grün? Und die Lüfte, sie zieh'n! Ei, seht doch den dummen Hans! Wie er rennet zum Tanz! Er suchte ein Liebchen, Juchhe! Er fand's! Juchhe! Ringel, ringel Reih'n!	Ring-a-ring, dance in a ring! But Grete, why are you all alone? Yet you're glancing at Hans over there!? And the month of May is so green! And the breezes are blowing! Oh just look at foolish Hans! How he rushes to the dance! He was looking for a sweetheart, sing-ho! He has found one! Sing-hey! Ring-a-ring, dance in a ring!
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Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen (1883-5)

Gustav Mahler

Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht

Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht,
Fröhliche Hochzeit macht,
Hab' ich meinen traurigen Tag!
Geh' ich in mein Kämmerlein,
Dunkles Kämmerlein!
Weine! wein'! Um meinen Schatz,
Um meinen lieben Schatz!

Blümlein blau! Blümlein blau!
Verdorre nicht! Verdorre nicht!
Vöglein süß! Vöglein süß!
Du singst auf grüner Heide!
„Ach, wie ist die Welt so schön!
Ziküth! Ziküth!“

Singet nicht! Blühet nicht!
Lenz ist ja vorbei!
Alles Singen ist nun aus!
Des Abends, wenn ich schlafen geh',
Denk' ich an mein Leid!
An mein Leide!

When my love has her wedding-day

When my love has her wedding-day,
her joyous wedding-day,
I have my day of mourning!
I go into my little room,
My dark little room!
I weep, weep! For my love,
my dearest love!

Blue little flower! Blue little flower!
Do not wither, do not wither!
Sweet little bird! Sweet little bird!
Singing on the green heath!
'Ah, how fair the world is!
Jug-jug! Jug-jug!

Do not sing! Do not bloom!
For spring is over!
All singing now is done!
At night, when I go to rest,
I think of my sorrow!
My sorrow!

Ging heut' morgen über's Feld

Ging heut' morgen über's
Feld,
Tau noch auf den Gräsern
hing;
Sprach zu mir der lust'ge
Fink:
„Ei, du! Gelt?
Guten Morgen! Ei, Gelt?
Du!
Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt?
Zink! Zink! Schön und
flink!
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt!“

Auch die Glockenblum' am
Feld
Hat mir lustig, guter Ding',
Mit den Glöckchen, klinge,
kling,
Ihren Morgengruss
geschellt:
„Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt?
Kling! Kling! Schönes Ding!
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt!“

Und da fing im Sonnenschein
Gleich die Welt zu funkeln
an;
Alles, Alles, Ton und Farbe
gewann!
Im Sonnenschein!
Blum' und Vogel, gross und
klein!
„Guten Tag! Guten Tag!
Ist's nicht eine schöne Welt?
Ei, du! Gelt? Schöne
Welt!“

Nun fängt auch mein Glück
wohl an?
Nein! Nein! Das ich
mein',
Mir nimmer, nimmer blühen
kann!

I walked across the fields this morning

I walked across the fields
this morning,
dew still hung on the
grass,
the merry finch said to
me:
'You there, hey –
Good morning! Hey, you
there!
Isn't it a lovely world?
Tweet! Tweet! Bright and
sweet!
O how I love the world!'

And the harebell at the
field's edge,
merrily and in good spirits,
ding-ding with its tiny bell
rang out its morning
greeting:
'Isn't it a lovely world?
Ding-ding! Beautiful thing!
O how I love the world!'

And then in the gleaming
sun
the world at once began
to sparkle;
all things gained in tone
and colour!
In the sunshine!
Flower and bird, great
and small.
'Good day! Good day!
Isn't it a lovely world?
Hey, you there! A lovely
world!'

Will my happiness now
begin?
No! No! The happiness I
mean
can never bloom for
me!

Ich hab' ein glühend Messer

Ich hab' ein glühend Messer,
Ein Messer in meiner Brust,
O weh! O weh!
Das schneid't so tief
In jede Freud' und jede
Lust,
So tief! so tief!
Es schneid't so weh und tief!

Ach, was ist das für ein böser
Gast!
Nimmer hält er Ruh',
Nimmer hält er Rast!
Nicht bei Tag,
Nicht bei Nacht, wenn ich
schliefe!
O weh! O weh! O weh!

Wenn ich in den Himmel seh',
Seh' ich zwei blaue Augen
steh'n!
O weh! O weh!
Wenn ich im gelben Felde
geh',
Seh' ich von fern das blonde
Haar
Im Winde weh'n! O weh! O
weh!
Wenn ich aus dem Traum
auffahr'
Und höre klingen ihr silbern
Lachen,
O weh! O weh!
Ich wollt', ich läg' auf der
schwarzen Bahr',
Könn't nimmer die Augen
aufmachen!

I've a gleaming knife

I've a gleaming knife,
a knife in my breast,
alas! Alas!
It cuts so deep
into every joy and every
bliss,
so deep, so deep!
It cuts so sharp and deep!

Ah, what a cruel guest it
is!
Never at peace,
never at rest!
Neither by day
nor by night, when I'd
sleep!
Alas! Alas! Alas!

When I look into the sky,
I see two blue
eyes!
Alas! Alas!
When I walk in the yellow
field,
I see from afar her golden
hair
blowing in the wind! Alas!
Alas!
When I wake with a jolt
from my dream
and hear her silvery
laugh,
alas! Alas!
I wish I were lying on the
black bier,
and might never open my
eyes again!

Die zwei blauen Augen The two blue eyes

Die zwei blauen Augen von
meinem Schatz,
Die haben mich in die weite
Welt geschickt.
Da musst' ich Abschied
nehmen
Vom allerliebsten Platz!
O Augen blau, warum habt
ihr mich angeblickt?
Nun hab' ich ewig Leid und
Grämen!

The two blue eyes of my
love
have sent me into the
wide world.
I had to bid
farewell
to the place I loved most!
O blue eyes, why did you
look on me?
Grief and sorrow shall
now be mine forever!

Ich bin ausgegangen in stiller
Nacht,
Wohl über die dunkle Heide.
Hat mir niemand Ade gesagt,
Ade!
Mein Gesell' war Lieb' und
Leide!

I set out in the still
night,
across the dark heath.
No one bade me farewell,
farewell!
My companions were
love and sorrow!

Auf der Strasse stand ein
Lindenbaum,
Da hab' ich zum ersten Mal
im Schlaf geruht!
Unter dem Lindenbaum,
Der hat seine Blüten über
mich geschneit,
Da wusst' ich nicht, wie das
Leben tut,
War alles, alles wieder
gut!
Alles! Alles!
Lieb' und Leid, und Welt und
Traum!

A lime tree stood by the
roadside,
where I first found peace
in sleep!
Under the lime tree
which snowed its
blossom on me,
I was not aware of how life
hurts,
and all, all was well once
more!
All! All!
Love and sorrow, and
world and dream!