

WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 18 January 2025
7.30pm

Stéphane Degout baritone
Cédric Tiberghien piano
Glen Cunningham tenor
Anna Tilbrook piano

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Liederkreis Op. 24 (1840)

*Morgens steh'ich auf und frage • Es treibt mich
hin • Ich wandelte unter den Bäumen • Lieb'
Liebchen • Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden •
Warte, warte, wilder Schiffmann • Berg' und
Burgen • Anfangs wollt ich fast verzagen •
Mit Myrten und Rosen*

From Myrthen Op. 25 (1840)

*IV - Jemand • X - Die Hochländer-Witwe •
XIII - Hochländers Abschied • XIV - Hochländ-
isches Wiegenlied • XIX - Hauptmanns Weib •
XX - Weit, weit • XXII - Niemand •
XXIII - Im Westen*

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Fêtes galantes Book I (1891)

En sourdine • Fantoques • Clair de lune

Fêtes galantes Book II (1904)

Les ingénus • Le faune • Colloque sentimental

Interval

Claude Debussy

Le promenoir des deux amants (1904-10)

*Auprès de cette grotte sombre • Crois mon
conseil, chère Climène • Je tremble en voyant
ton visage*

Stuart MacRae (b.1976)

From Five Stevenson Songs

*I. ENVOY • II. For age an' youth • III. Bright is the
ring of words • IV. KATHARINE • V. EVENSONG*

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

4 Serious Songs Op. 121 (1896)

*Denn es gehet dem Menschen • Ich wandte
mich • O Tod • Wenn ich mit Menschen*

W

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Robert Schumann was immersed in literature from an early age: his father was a bookseller, publisher, writer, and translator, and the young Schumann – with keen literary and musical aspirations – had his father’s vast collection at his disposal. After composing a series of songs in the late 1820s, he set the genre aside throughout the following decade, while focusing on piano music. 1840 was a pivotal year in many senses. In 1839, Robert and his fiancée Clara Wieck had begun copying poems into a joint book for potential musical use, and by February 1840, Robert found that songs were flowing from his pen. The pair were also in the midst of legal proceedings against Clara’s father, who remained possessive of his prodigious daughter and determined that she would not marry a struggling composer. Aside from the contexts of love and frustration behind Robert’s turn to song, there was a pragmatic incentive: producing publishable and marketable Lieder led quickly to increased financial stability and status. Eventually, the court case was won and the couple married in September 1840.

The Liederkreis, Op. 24, was the first major product of Robert’s *Liederjahr* (‘year of song’). It uses a sequence of nine poems by Heinrich Heine, from the ‘Junge Leiden’ (‘youthful sorrows’) section of his *Buch der Lieder*; Schumann understood the sophistication and modernity of Heine’s poetry and responded in kind. The cycle tracks an emotional trajectory that begins with lovelorn longing. The simple piano figuration of the opening is quasi-folklke, unattached to particular imagery, but is transfigured in the fourth song into something spiky and sinister, its newly off-beat-only rhythm echoing the protagonist’s heartbeat and the coffin-maker’s hammer. By the central song, ‘Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden’, the hope of the first few songs has dissipated, and Schumann transforms Heine’s cradle-grave imagery into an enchanting, thwarted lullaby. There is often a tantalising ambiguity to Schumann’s interpretations of Heine’s poems, and the music of the final song raises the possibility of a less pessimistic conclusion. In that last song, Heine’s opening pairs the flowers of funerals – cypresses – with those of weddings – roses and myrtles (‘Myrthen’).

Myrthen, Op. 25, was Robert’s wedding present for Clara, and his bouquet of 26 songs was beautifully bound for the occasion. Eight poets are used across the collection, which is arranged into four books. Recurring themes of love and separation led musicologist Jon Finson to write that Myrthen had ‘more autobiographical import than any other song cycle from 1840’. Tonight’s selection extracts the eight settings of Robert Burns – which are spread across Myrthen but cluster mostly in the third and fourth books – into a satisfying self-contained group. Schumann had a long-standing interest in British literature, and Wilhelm Gerhard’s German translations

of Robert Burns were hot off the press when they captured the composer’s imagination in 1840.

Claude Debussy was long occupied with the poetry of Paul Verlaine. His *Fêtes galantes* were published in two books in 1904 (FL 86 and FL 114), but the three songs of the first book had a protracted genesis stretching back decades. Versions of ‘En sourdine’, ‘Fantoches’, and ‘Clair de lune’ had been written in 1882 – while Debussy was under the thrall of his first real muse, the (married) amateur soprano Marie Vasnier – and later revised in the 1890s. The vocal lines of many of his early songs suggest Vasnier’s voice was high and agile, while the composer penned suitably virtuosic piano parts to play himself. The second book of three songs was composed in 1904, and has as its dedicatee another singer and subject of Debussy’s romantic interest: Emma Bardac, who would go on to be his second wife. Emma was also the dedicatee of *Le promenoir des deux amants*, L 129, which comprises three settings of the 17th-century poet Tristan L’Hermite. The first, serene song was written in 1904, and Debussy added two radiant love songs to complete the set in 1910.

Stuart MacRae’s Five Stevenson Songs set poems from Robert Louis Stevenson’s collections *Underwoods and Songs of Travel*. These new songs – together with the Burns selection from *Myrthen* – are included on the disc *My Heart’s in the Highlands* by Cunningham and Tilbrook, shortly to be released on Delphian.

In 1896, over half a century after the Schumanns’ joyful wedding year, **Johannes Brahms** composed his *Vier ernste Gesänge* (‘4 Serious Songs’) with mortality on his mind: his close friend and confidant Clara Schumann had suffered a stroke in March, and his songs were completed weeks before her death in May. Brahms was not religious himself, and his selection of texts was careful and precise – the passages are not dogmatic but inclusive in their existential ruminations on humanity, life and death; the composer felt the words to be ‘momentous, heavy with meaning’. The first three are from the Old Testament, and comment on the transience of life, the equality of all beings in death, and suffering on Earth. The first song roots itself firmly in the home minor key, with weighty triads and stepwise scalic motion; a more anguished central section sets off a swift sequence of musical metamorphoses. The second and third songs are a masterclass in motivic development and metrical ingenuity – Schoenberg was so taken with them that they formed the basis of his famous essay ‘Brahms the Progressive’. The final song presents a marked shift towards optimism which has long puzzled scholars: it pairs earnest, heartfelt music with a New Testament passage extolling the virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

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Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Liederkreis Op. 24 (1840)

Heinrich Heine

Morgens steh'ich auf und frage

Morgens steh' ich auf und
frage:

Kommt feins Liebchen
heut?

Abends sink' ich hin und
klage:

Ausblieb sie auch
heut.

In der Nacht mit meinem
Kummer

Lieg' ich schlaflos, lieg' ich
wach;

Träumend, wie im halben
Schlummer,

Wandle ich bei Tag.

Every morning I wake and ask

Every morning I wake and
ask:

will my sweetheart come
today?

Every evening I lie
down,

complaining she stayed
away.

All night long with my
grief

I lie sleepless, lie
awake;

dreaming, as if half
asleep,

I wander through the day.

Es treibt mich hin

I'm driven this way

Es treibt mich hin, es treibt
mich her!

Noch wenige Stunden, dann
soll ich sie schauen,

Sie selber, die schönste der
schönen Jungfrauen; –

Du armes Herz, was pochst
du schwer?

I'm driven this way, driven
that!

A few more hours, and I
shall see her,

she, the fairest
of the fair –

faithful heart, why pound
so hard?

Die Stunden sind aber ein
faules Volk!

Schleppen sich behaglich
träge,

Schleichen gähnend ihre
Wege; –

Tumme dich, du faules
Volk!

But the Hours are a lazy
breed!

They dawdle along and
take their time,

crawl yawningly on their
way –

get a move on, you lazy
breed!

Tobende Eile mich treibend
erfasst!

Aber wohl niemals liebten
die Horen; –

Heimlich im grausamen
Bunde verschworen,

Spotten sie tückisch der
Liebenden Hast.

Raging haste drives me
onward!

But the Horae can never
have loved –

cruelly and secretly in
league,

they spitefully mock a
lover's haste.

Ich wandelte unter den Bäumen

I wandered among the trees

Ich wandelte unter den
Bäumen

Mit meinem Gram allein;

Da kam das alte

Träumen,

Und schlich mir ins

Herz hinein.

I wandered among the
trees,

alone with my own grief,

but then the old dreams

returned

and stole into

my heart.

Wer hat euch dies Wörtlein
gelehret,

Ihr Vöglein in luftiger

Höh'?

Schweigt still! wenn mein

Herz es höret,

Dann tut es noch einmal so

weh.

Who taught you this little
word,

you birds up there in the

breeze?

Be silent! If my heart

hears it,

my pain will return once

more.

„Es kam ein Jungfräulein
gegangen,

Die sang es

immerfort,

Da haben wir Vöglein

gefangen

Das hübsche, goldne Wort.“

'A young woman once
passed by,

she sang it again and

again,

and we birds snatched

it up,

that lovely golden word.'

Das sollt ihr mir nicht
erzählen,

Ihr Vöglein

wunderschlau;

Ihr wollt meinen Kummer

mir stehlen,

Ich aber niemandem trau'.

You shouldn't tell me
such things,

you wondrously cunning

birds,

you thought to steal my

grief from me,

but I trust no one.

Lieb' Liebchen

Lay your hand on my heart, my love

Lieb Liebchen, leg's
Händchen aufs Herze
mein; –

Ach, hörst du, wie's pochet
im Kämmerlein?

Da hauset ein Zimmermann
schlimm und arg,

Der zimmert mir einen
Totensarg.

Lay your hand
on my heart,
my love; –

ah, can you not hear it
throbbing?

A wicked, evil carpenter's
there,

fashioning me
my coffin.

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

| | |
|---|---|
| Es hämmert und klopft bei Tag und bei Nacht; | He bangs and hammers day and night; |
| Es hat mich schon längst um den Schlaf gebracht. | the noise has long since robbed me of sleep. |
| Ach! sputet Euch, Meister Zimmermann, | Ah! master carpenter, make haste, |
| Damit ich balde schlafen kann. | so that I soon might sleep. |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden | Lovely cradle of my sorrows |
|---------------------------------------|--|

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden, | Lovely cradle of my sorrows, |
| Schönes Grabmal meiner Ruh, | lovely tombstone of my peace, |
| Schöne Stadt, wir müssen scheiden, – | lovely city, we must part – |
| Lebe wohl! ruf' ich dir zu. | farewell! I call to you. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Lebe wohl, du heil'ge Schwelle, | Farewell, O sacred threshold, |
| Wo da wandelt Liebchen traut; | where my dear beloved treads, |
| Lebe wohl! du heil'ge Stelle, Wo ich sie zuerst geschaut. | farewell! O sacred spot, where I first beheld her. |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Hätt' ich dich doch nie gesehn, | Had I never seen you though, |
| Schöne Herzenskönigin! | fair queen of my heart! |
| Nimmer wär es dann geschehen, | It would never then have happened |
| Dass ich jetzt so elend bin. | that I'm now so wretched. |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Nie wollt' ich dein Herze rühren, | I never wished to touch your heart, |
| Liebe hab' ich nie erfleht; | I never begged for love; |
| Nur ein stilles Leben führen | to live in peace was all I wished, |
| Wollt' ich, wo dein Odem weht. | and to breathe the air you breathe. |

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Doch du drängst mich selbst von hinnen, | But you yourself drive me away, |
| Bittere Worte spricht dein Mund; | your lips speak bitter words; |
| Wahnsinn wühlt in meinen Sinnen, | madness rages in my mind, |
| Und mein Herz ist krank und wund. | and my heart is sick and wounded. |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Und die Glieder matt und träge | And my limbs, weary and feeble, |
| Schlepp' ich fort am Wanderstab, | I drag along, staff in hand, |
| Bis mein müdes Haupt ich lege | until I lay my tired head down |
| Ferne in ein kühles Grab. | in a cool and distant grave. |

Warte, warte, wilder Schiffmann

Warte, warte, wilder
Schiffmann,
Gleich folg' ich zum
Hafen dir;
Von zwei Jungfrauen nehm'
ich Abschied,
Von Europa und von Ihr.

Blutquell, rinn' aus meinen
Augen,
Blutquell, brich aus meinem
Leib,
Dass ich mit dem heissen
Blute
Meine Schmerzen
niederschreib'.

Ei, mein Lieb, warum just
heute
Schaudert dich, mein Blut zu
sehn?
Sahst mich bleich und
herzeblutend
Lange Jahre vor dir
stehn!

Kennst du noch das alte
Liedchen
Von der Schlang' im
Paradies,
Die durch schlimme
Apfelgabe
Unsern Ahn ins Elend
stieß?

Alles Unheil brachten
Äpfel!
Eva bracht' damit den Tod,
Eris brachte Trojas
Flammen,
Du bracht'st beides, Flamm'
und Tod.

Berg' und Burgen

Berg' und Burgen schau'n
herunter
In den spiegelhellen
Rhein,
Und mein Schiffchen segelt
munter,
Rings umglänzt von
Sonnenschein.

Ruhig seh' ich zu dem Spiele

Wait, O wait, wild sailor

Wait, O wait, wild
sailor,
soon I'll follow to the
harbour;
I'm taking leave of two
maidens,
of Europe and of her.

Stream from my eyes, O
blood,
gush from my body, O
blood,
that with my hot
blood
I may write down my
agonies.

Why today of all days, my
love,
do you shudder to see my
blood?
You've seen me pale with
bleeding heart
before you for years on
end!

Do you remember the old
story
of the serpent in
Paradise,
who, through the evil gift
of an apple,
plunged our forbears into
woe?

The apple's the cause of
all our ills!
Eve brought death with it,
Eris brought flames to
Troy,
And you – both flames
and death.

Mountains and castles

Mountains and castles
look down
into the mirror-bright
Rhine,
and my boat sails merrily
on,
with sunshine glistening
all around.

Calmly I watch the play

Goldner Wellen, kraus
bewegt;
Still erwachen die
Gefühle,
Die ich tief im Busen
hegt'.

of golden, ruffled
waves;
quietly the feelings
awaken
I'd nursed deep in my
heart.

Freundlich grüssend und
verheissend
Lockt hinab des Stromes
Pracht;
Doch ich kenn' ihn, oben
gleissend,
Birgt sein Innres Tod und
Nacht.

With friendly greetings
and promises
the river's splendour
beckons me;
but I know how, gleaming
above,
it hides death and night
within.

Oben Lust,
im Busen
Tücken,
Strom, du bist der
Liebsten Bild!
Die kann auch so freundlich
nicken,
Lächelt auch so fromm und
mild.

On the surface –
pleasure, at heart –
malice,
river, how you resemble
my love!
She too can be kind and
friendly,
smiles her gentle,
innocent smile.

Anfangs wollt ich fast verzagen

At first I almost lost heart

Anfangs wollt ich fast
verzagen,
Und ich glaubt', ich trüg'
es nie;
Und ich hab' es doch
getragen –
Aber fragt mich nur nicht,
wie?

At first I almost lost
heart,
and thought I could never
bear it;
and yet I have
borne it –
only do not ask me
how.

Mit Myrten und Rosen

With myrtles and roses

Mit Myrten und Rosen,
lieblich und hold,
Mit duft'gen Zypressen und
Flittergold,
Möcht' ich zieren dies Buch
wie 'nen Totenschrein,
Und sargen meine Lieder
hinein.

With myrtles and roses,
sweet and fair,
with fragrant cypress and
golden tinsel,
I should like to adorn this
book like a coffin
and bury my songs
within.

O könnt' ich die Liebe
sargen hinzu!
Auf dem Grabe der Liebe
wächst Blümlein der Ruh',
Da blüht es hervor, da
pflückt man es ab, –
Doch mir blüht's nur, wenn
ich selber im Grab.

Could I but bury my love
here too!
On Love's grave grows
the flower of peace,
there it blossoms, there is
plucked,
but only when I'm buried
will it bloom for me.

Hier sind nun die Lieder, die
einst so wild,
Wie ein Lavastrom, der dem
Ätna entquillt,
Hervorgestürzt aus dem
tiefsten Gemüt,
Und rings viel blitzende
Funken versprüht!

Here now are the songs,
which once
streamed like lava from
Etna,
wildly from the depths of
my soul,
scattering sparks all
around!

Nun liegen sie stumm und
totengleich,
Nun starren sie kalt und
nebelbleich,
Doch aufs neu' die alte Glut
sie belebt,
Wenn der Liebe Geist einst
über sie schwebt.

Now they lie mute, as
though dead,
now they stare coldly, as
pale as mist,
but the old glow shall
revive them again,
when one day Love's
spirit floats over them.

Und es wird mir im Herzen
viel Ahnung laut:
Der Liebe Geist einst
über sie taut;
Einst kommt dies Buch in
deine Hand,
Du süßes Lieb im
fernen Land.

And a thought speaks
loudly in my heart:
that Love's spirit will one
day thaw them;
one day this book will fall
into your hands,
my sweetest love, in a
distant land.

Dann löst sich des Liedes
Zauberbann,
Die blassen Buchstaben
schaun dich an,
Sie schauen dir flehend ins
schöne Aug',
Und flüstern mit Wehmut
und Liebeshauch.

And on that day the spell
will break,
the pale letters will gaze
at you,
gaze imploringly into
your beautiful eyes,
and whisper with sadness
and the breath of love.

Myrthen Op. 25 (1840)

IV - Jemand (1840)

*Robert Burns, trans.
Wilhelm Gerhard*

Mein Herz ist betrübt – ich
sag' es nicht –
Mein Herz ist betrübt um
Jemand;
Ich könnte wachen die
längste Nacht,
Und immer träumen von
Jemand.
O Wonne! von Jemand;
O Himmel! von Jemand;
Durchstreifen könnt' ich die
ganze Welt,
Aus Liebe zu Jemand.

My heart is sad, I cannot
reveal it,
my heart is sad for
somebody;
I could lie awake during
the longest night
and always dream of
somebody.
O bliss! Of somebody;
O heavens! Of somebody!
I could roam through the
whole world,
for the love of somebody.

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

| | |
|--|--|
| Ihr Mächte, die ihr der Liebe hold, | Ye powers that smile on love, |
| O lächelt freundlich auf Jemand! | O! smile sweetly on somebody! |
| Beschirmet ihn, wo Gefahren drohn; | Protect him from perils; |
| Gebt sicher Geleite dem Jemand! | and guide my somebody safely! |
| O Wonne! dem Jemand; | O bliss! My somebody; |
| O Himmel! dem Jemand; | O heavens! My somebody; |
| Ich wollt' – ich wollte – was wollt' ich nicht | I'd love, I'd love, what wouldn't I love to do |
| Für meinen Jemand! | for my somebody! |

X - Die Hochländer-Witwe (1840)

XIII - Hochländers Abschied (1840)

XIV - Hochländisches Highland lullaby

Wiegenlied (1840)

*Robert Burns, trans.
Wilhelm Gerhard*

| | |
|--|---|
| Schlafe, süsser, kleiner Donald, | Sleep, sweet little Donald, |
| Ebenbild des grossen Ronald! | the very image of great Ronald! |
| Wer ihm kleinen Dieb gebar, | Our noble clan knows all too well |
| Weiss der edle Clan aufs Haar. | who conceived with him the little thief. |
| Schelm, hast Äuglein schwarz wie Kohlen! | You little rogue, you've coal-black eyes! |
| Wenn du gross bist, stiehl ein Fohlen; | When you grow up, you'll steal a foal; |
| Geh die Ebne ab und zu, | you'll travel the plains up and down, |
| Bringe heim 'ne Carlisle-Kuh! | and bring home a Carlisle cow! |
| Darfst in Niederland nicht fehlen; | Make sure you go to the Lowlands; |
| Dort, mein Bübchen, magst du stehlen; | there, my boy, you may steal; |
| Stiehl dir Geld und stiehl dir Glück, | steal money and steal happiness |
| Und in's Hochland komm zurück! | and come back to the Highlands! |

XIX - Hauptmanns Weib (1840)

XX - Weit, weit (1840)

XXII - Niemand (1840)

XXIII - Im Westen (1840)

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Fêtes galantes Book I (1891)

Paul Verlaine

En sourdine

Muted

| | |
|--|---|
| Calmes dans le demi-jour Que les branches hautes font, Pénétrons bien notre amour De ce silence profond. | Calm in the twilight cast by lofty boughs, let us steep our love in this deep quiet. |
| Fondons nos âmes, nos cœurs Et nos sens extasiés, Parmi les vagues langueurs Des pins et des arbousiers. | Let us blend our souls, our hearts and our enraptured senses with the hazy languor of arbutus and pine. |
| Ferme tes yeux à demi, Croise tes bras sur ton sein, Et de ton cœur endormi Chasse à jamais tout dessein. | Half-close your eyes, fold your arms across your breast, and from your heart now lulled to rest forever banish all desire. |
| Laissons-nous persuader Au souffle berceur et doux Qui vient à tes pieds rider Les ondes de gazon roux. | Let us both succumb to the gentle and lulling breeze that comes to ruffle at your feet the waves of russet grass. |
| Et quand, solennel, le soir Des chênes noirs tombera, Voix de notre désespoir, Le rossignol chantera. | And when, solemnly, evening falls from the black oaks, voice of our despair, the nightingale shall sing. |

Fantoches

Marionettes

| | |
|--|--|
| Scaramouche et Pulcinella Qu'un mauvais dessein rassemble Gesticulent, noirs sous la lune. | Scaramouche and Pulcinella, drawn together by some evil scheme, gesticulate, black beneath the moon. |
|--|--|

Cependant l'excellent
docteur
Bolonais cueille avec
lenteur
Des simples parmi
l'herbe brune.

Meanwhile the excellent
doctor
from Bologna is leisurely
picking
medicinal herbs in the
brown grass.

Lors sa fille, piquant
minois,
Sous la charmillie, en
tapinois,
Se glisse, demi-nue, en
quête

Then his daughter, pertly
pretty,
beneath the arbour,
stealthily,
glides, half-naked in
quest

De son beau
pirate espagnol,
Dont un amoureux
rossignol
Clame la détresse
à tue-tête.

Of her handsome Spanish
pirate,
whose grief a lovelorn
nightingale
proclaims as loudly as he
can.

Clair de lune

Moonlight

Votre âme est un paysage
choisi
Que vont charmant masques
et bergamasques
Jouant du luth et dansant et
quasi
Tristes sous leurs
déguisements fantasques.

Your soul is a chosen
landscape
bewitched by masquers
and bergamaskers,
playing the lute and
dancing and almost
sad beneath their fanciful
disguises.

Tout en chantant sur le
mode mineur
L'amour vainqueur et la vie
opportune,
Ils n'ont pas l'air de croire à
leur bonheur
Et leur chanson se
mêle au clair de
lune,

Singing as they go in a
minor key
of conquering love and
life's favours,
they do not seem to
believe in their fortune
and their song mingles
with the light of the
moon,

Au calme clair de lune triste
et beau,
Qui fait rêver les oiseaux
dans les arbres
Et sangloter d'extase
les jets
d'eau,
Les grands jets d'eau sveltes
parmi les marbres.

The calm light of the
moon, sad and fair,
that sets the birds
dreaming in the trees
and the fountains
sobbing in their
rapture,
tall and svelte amid
marble statues.

Fêtes galantes Book II (1904)

Paul Verlaine

Les ingénus

Ingénues

Les hauts talons luttaiient
avec les longues jupes,
En sorte que, selon le terrain
et le vent,
Parfois luisaient des
bas de jambes, trop
souvent
Interceptés! – et nous
aimions ce jeu
de dupes.

High heels struggled with
long skirts,
so that, depending on
contour and wind,
glimpses of leg would
sometimes gleam, too
often
snatched from view! –
and we loved this
foolish play.

Parfois aussi le dard d'un
insecte jaloux
Inquiétait le col des belles
sous les branches,
Et c'étaient des éclairs
soudains de nuques
blanches,
Et ce régal comblait
nos jeunes yeux de
fous.

Sometimes too a jealous
insect's sting
bothered pretty necks
beneath the branches,
and there were
sudden flashes of white
napes –
and this feast
overwhelmed our
crazed young eyes.

Le soir tombait, un soir
équivoque d'automne:
Les belles, se pendant
rêveuses à nos bras,
Dirent alors des mots si
spécieux, tout bas,
Que notre âme, depuis ce
temps, tremble et
s'étonne.

Evening fell, an equivocal
autumn evening:
the pretty girls, leaning
dreamily on our arms,
then murmured such fair-
seeming words,
that, ever since, our
startled souls have
trembled.

Le faune

The faun

Paul Verlaine

Un vieux faune de terre
cuite
Rit au centre des boulingrins,
Présageant sans doute une
suite
Mauvaise à ces instants
sereins

An ancient terracotta
faun
laughs in the middle of
the lawns,
predicting no doubt an
unhappy
sequel to these moments
of calm

Qui m'ont conduit et t'ont
conduite,
– Mélancoliques pèlerins, –
Jusqu'à cette heure dont la
fuite
Tournoie au son des
tambourins.

that have led both you
and me,
– melancholy pilgrims –
to this hour that flits
away,
twirling to the
tambourines

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

Colloque sentimental

Lovers' dialogue

| | |
|---|---|
| Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé, Deux formes ont tout à l'heure passé. | In the ancient park, deserted and frozen, two shapes have just passed by. |
| Leurs yeux sont morts et leurs lèvres sont molles, Et l'on entend à peine leurs paroles. | Their eyes are dead and their lips are lifeless, and their words can hardly be heard. |
| Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé Deux spectres ont évoqué le passé. | In the ancient park, deserted and frozen two spectres were recalling the past. |
| – Te souvient-il de notre extase ancienne? – Pourquoi voulez-vous donc qu'il m'en souvienne? | – Do you remember our past rapture? – Why would you have me remember? |
| – Ton cœur bat-il toujours à mon seul nom? Toujours vois-tu mon âme en rêve? – Non. | – Does your heart still surge at my very name? Do you still see my soul when you dream? – No. |
| – Ah! Les beaux jours de bonheur indicible Où nous joignons nos bouches! – C'est possible. | – Ah, the beautiful days of inexpressible bliss when our lips met! – It may have been so. |
| – Qu'il était bleu, le ciel, et grand, l'espoir! – L'espoir a fui, vaincu, vers le ciel noir. | – How blue the sky, how hopes ran high! – Hope has fled, vanquished, to the black sky. |
| Tels ils marchaient dans les avoines folles Et la nuit seule entendit leurs paroles. | So they walked on through the wild grasses and the night alone heard their words. |

Interval

Claude Debussy

**Le promenoir des deux
amants (1904-10)** **The two lovers'
promenade**
Tristan l'Hermitte

**Auprès de cette grotte
sombre** **Close to this dark
grotto**

Auprès de cette grotte
sombre
Où l'on respire un air si doux,
L'onde lutte avec les cailloux,

Close to this dark
grotto,
where the air is so soft,
the water contends with
pebbles,

Et la lumière avecque
l'ombre.

and light contends with
shade.

Ces flots, lassés de
l'exercice
Qu'ils ont fait dessus ce
gravier,
Se reposent dans ce vivier
Où mourut autrefois
Narcisse...

These waves, tired of
moving
across the
gravel,
are reposing in this pond
where long ago Narcissus
died...

L'ombre de cette fleur
vermeille
Et celle de ces joncs
pendants
Paraissent estre là-dedans
Les songes de l'eau qui
sommeille.

The shadow of this
crimson flower
and of those bending
reeds
seem in the depths to be
the dreams of the
sleeping water.

**Crois mon conseil,
chère Climène** **Trust my counsel,
dear Climène**

Crois mon conseil, chère
Climène;
Pour laisser arriver
le soir,
Je te prie, allons nous asseoir
Sur le bord de cette fontaine.

Trust my counsel, dear
Climène;
while waiting for evening
to fall,
I beg you, let us sit
at this fountain's edge.

N'ouïs-tu pas soupirer
Zéphire,
De merveille et d'amour
atteint,
Voyant des roses sur
ton teint,
Qui ne sont pas de son
empire?

Can you not hear
Zephyrus sigh,
stricken with wonder and
love
at the sight of roses on
your cheeks,
over which he has no
power?

Sa bouche d'odeur toute
pleine,
A soufflé sur notre
chemin,
Mêlant un esprit de
jasmin

His mouth, so full of
fragrance,
has breathed across our
path,
mingling jasmine essence

A l'ambre de ta douce
haleine.

with the amber of your
sweet breath.

Je tremble en voyant ton visage

I tremble when I see your face

Je tremble en voyant ton
visage
Flotter avecque mes désirs,
Tant j'ai de peur que mes
soupirs
Ne lui fassent faire
naufrage.

I tremble when I see your
face
floating with my desires,
so frightened am I that
my sighs
might cause your face to
drown.

De crainte de cette
aventure
Ne commets pas si librement
A cet infidèle
élément
Tous les trésors de la Nature.

For fear of this
misfortune,
do not endow too freely
that untrustworthy
element
with all of Nature's
treasures.

Veux-tu, par un doux
privilege,
Me mettre au-dessus des
humains?
Fais-moi boire aux creux de
tes mains,
Si l'eau n'en dissout point la
neige.

Will you, as a sweet
privilege,
raise me above human
kind?
Let me drink from your
cupped hands,
if the water melt not their
snow.

Stuart MacRae (b.1976)

I. ENVOY

Robert Louis Stevenson

Go, little book, and wish to all
Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,
A bin of wine, a spice of wit,
A house with lawns enclosing it,
A living river by the door,
A nightingale in the sycamore!

Go, little book, and wish to all
Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,
A bin of wine, a spice of wit,
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A nightingale in the sycamore!

II. For age an' youth

Robert Louis Stevenson

It's an owercome sooth for age an' youth
And it brooks wi' nae denial,
That the dearest friends are the auldest friends
And the young are just on trial.

There's a rival bauld wi' young an' auld
And it's him that has bereft me;
For the sürest friends are the auldest friends
And the maist o' mines hae left me.

There are kind hearts still, for friends to fill
And fools to take and break them;
But the nearest friends are the auldest friends
And the grave's the place to seek them.

It's an owercome sooth for age an' youth
And it brooks wi' nae denial,
That the dearest friends are the auldest friends
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And the grave's the place to seek them.

III. Bright is the ring of words

Robert Louis Stevenson

Bright is the ring of words
When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs
When the singer sings them.
Still they are carolled and said –
On wings they are carried –
After the singer is dead
And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies
In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
The swains together.
And when the west is red
With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings
And the maid remembers.

Bright is the ring of words
When the right man rings them,

Fair the fall of songs
When the singer sings them.
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The swains together.
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IV. KATHARINE

Robert Louis Stevenson

We see you as we see a face
That trembles in a forest place
Upon the mirror of a pool
Forever quiet, clear and cool;
And in the wayward glass, appears
To hover between smiles and tears,
Elfin and human, airy and true,
And backed by the reflected blue.

We see you as we see a face
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To hover between smiles and tears,
Elfin and human, airy and true,
And backed by the reflected blue.

V. EVENSONG

Robert Louis Stevenson

The embers of the day are red
Beyond the murky hill.
The kitchen smokes: the bed
In the darkling house is spread:
The great sky darkens overhead,
And the great woods are shrill.
So far have I been led,
Lord, by Thy will:
So far I have followed, Lord, and wondered still.

The breeze from the enbalmèd land
Blows sudden toward the shore,
And claps my cottage door.
I hear the signal, Lord – I understand.
The night at Thy command
Comes. I will eat and sleep and will not question
more.

The embers of the day are red
Beyond the murky hill.
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Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.

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 The night at Thy command
 Comes. I will eat and sleep and will not question
 more.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

4 Serious Songs Op. 121 (1896)

Liturgical text

| | |
|--|---|
| Denn es geheth dem Menschen | For that which befalleth the sons of men |
|--|---|

| | |
|--|--|
| Denn es geheth dem Menschen wie dem Vieh, wie dies stirbt, so stirbt er auch, und haben alle einerlei Odem; und der Mensch hat nichts mehr denn das Vieh; denn es ist alles eitel. | For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity. |
|--|--|

| | |
|---|--|
| Es fährt alles an einen Ort; es ist alles von Staub gemacht, | All go unto one place; all are of dust, and all turn to |
|---|--|

und wird wieder zu Staub. dust again.

| | |
|---|--|
| Wer weiss, ob der Geist des Menschen aufwärts fahre, und der Odem des Viehes unterwärts unter die Erde fahre? | Who knoweth the spirit of man goeth upward and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|--|
| Darum sahe ich, dass nichts bessers ist, denn dass der Mensch fröhlich sei in seiner Arbeit; denn das ist sein Teil. Denn wer will ihn dahin bringen, dass er sehe, was nach ihm geschehen wird? | Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that is his portion. For who shall bring him to see what shall happen after him? |
|---|--|

Ich wandte mich

So I returned

| | |
|--|---|
| Ich wandte mich, und sahe an alle, die Unrecht leiden unter der Sonne; und siehe, da waren Tränen derer, die Unrecht litten und hatten keinen Tröster, und die ihnen Unrecht täten, waren zu mächtig, dass sie keinen Tröster haben konnten. | So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter. |
|--|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Da lobte ich die Toten, die schon gestorben waren, mehr als die Lebendigen, die noch das Leben hatten. Und der noch nicht ist, ist besser als alle beide, und des Bösen nicht inne wird, das unter der Sonne geschieht. | Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive. Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun. |
|---|---|

O Tod

O Tod, wie bitter
bist du,
wenn an dich gedenket ein
Mensch, der gute
Tage und
genug hat und ohne
Sorge
lebet; und dem es
wohl geht
in allen Dingen
und noch
wohl essen
mag!
O Tod, wie wohl tust
du dem
Dürftigen, der da
schwach
und alt ist, der in
allen
Sorgen steckt,
und nichts
Bessers zu hoffen,
noch zu
erwarten
hat!

Wenn ich mit Menschen

Wenn ich mit Menschen-
und
mit Engelzungen
redete, und
hätte der Liebe nicht, so wär
ich ein tönend Erz,
oder eine
klingende Schelle.

Und wenn ich weissagen
könnte
und wüsste alle Geheimnisse
und
alle Erkenntnis, und hätte
allen
Glauben, also, dass ich Berge
versetzte, und hätte
der Liebe
nicht, so wäre ich
nichts.

Und wenn ich alle meine
Habe
den Armen gäbe, und
liesse
meinen Leib brennen,
und

O death

O death, how bitter is the
remembrance
of thee to a man that
liveth at rest in his
possessions,
unto the man that hath
nothing to
vex him, and that hath
prosperity
in all things; yea, unto him
that
is yet able to receive
meat!
O death, acceptable is thy
sentence
unto the needy and unto
him
whose strength faileth,
that is
now in the last age, and is
vexed
with all things, and to him
that
despaireth, and hath lost
patience!

Though I speak with the tongues of men

Though I speak with
the
tongues of men and of
angels,
and have not charity, I am
become as sounding
brass
or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift
of
prophecy, and
understand all
mysteries, and all
knowledge;
and though I have all
faith, so that
I could remove
mountains, and
have not charity, I am
nothing.

And though I
bestow all
my goods to feed the
poor,
and though I give my
body

hätte der Liebe nicht, so
wäre
mirs nichts nütze.

Wir sehen jetzt durch einen
Spiegel in einem dunkeln
Worte, dann aber von
Angesicht
zu Angesichte. Jetzt erkenne
ichs stückweise, dann aber
werd ichs erkennen,
gleichwie
ich erkennet bin.

Nun aber bleibet Glaube,
Hoffnung, Liebe, diese
drei;
aber die Liebe ist die
grösste
unter ihnen.

to be burned, it
profiteth
me nothing ...

For now we see through
a glass, darkly; but
then face to
face:
now I know in part,
but then shall I know
even as also
I am
known.

And now abideth faith,
hope, charity, these three;

but the greatest
of these
is charity.

Translations of 'Liederkreis', 'Myrthen' and '4 Serious Songs' 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.

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