

WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 20 January 2024
7.30pm

This concert is supported by the Rick Mather David Scrase Foundation

Christian Gerhaher baritone
Gerold Huber piano

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)
Le papillon et la fleur Op. 1 No. 1 (1861)
A Clymène from *5 mélodies 'de Venise'* Op. 58 (1891)
Les berceaux Op. 23 No. 1 (1879)
Spleen Op. 51 No. 3 (1888)
Danseuse from *Mirages* Op. 113 (1919)
Clair de lune Op. 46 No. 2 (1887)
Notre amour Op. 23 No. 2 (c.1879)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
Again, as before, alone Op. 73 No. 6 (1893)
Take my heart away (1873)

Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849)
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Mazurka in A minor Op. 17 No. 4 (1833)
My genius, my angel, my friend (c.1855-60)
Do not believe, my friend Op. 6 No. 1 (1869)

Fryderyk Chopin
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Mazurka in C sharp minor Op. 30 No. 4 (1837)
Cradle song Op. 16 No. 1 (1872)
The first meeting Op. 63 No. 4 (1887)

Fryderyk Chopin
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Mazurka in E minor Op. 41 No. 2 (1838-9)
As over burning embers Op. 25 No. 2 (1875)
Not a word, O my friend Op. 6 No. 2 (1869)

Interval

Pavel Haas (1899-1944)
4 Songs on Chinese Poetry (1944)
*Zaslech jsem divoké husy • V bambusovém háji •
Daleko měsíc je od domova • Probděná noc*

Fryderyk Chopin
Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)
Ballade No. 4 in F minor Op. 52 (1842)
Les nuits d'été Op. 7 (1840-1)
*Villanelle • Le spectre de la rose • Sur les lagunes •
Absence • Au cimetière • L'île inconnue*

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Fauré spent his earliest childhood in the Occitanie region of south-west France, but by the age of nine he showed such conspicuous musical talent that he was enrolled at Louis Niedermeyer's newly opened music school in Paris, where he boarded for the next 11 years. In 1861, Fauré began lessons with Saint-Saëns, and his first official opus, 'Le papillon et la fleur', dates from the same year. It is an auspicious debut, demonstrating the melodious charm characteristic of Fauré's entire output; Saint-Saëns, who would later ease Fauré's entry into Parisian musical life by introducing him to its key figures, showed his approval by drawing on the manuscript - a flower, and a butterfly sporting a crown. The *mélodie* form remained important to Fauré throughout his long life, and he is often regarded as the finest of all French song composers. He was sometimes criticised for preferring second-rank poetry; certainly he enjoyed the freedom afforded by verse whose metre and form are not particularly distinctive. The momentum of 'Les berceaux', for example, comes less from Prudhomme's verse than from Fauré's flexible vocal line; 'Notre amour' counteracts Silvestre's repetitive structure by moving fluently between keys; 'Danseuse', composed more than quarter of a century later than any other Fauré song in this recital, uses a striking piano ostinato to bring de Brimont's erotic vision to life. But Fauré's numerous settings of Verlaine, the great Symbolist 14 months his senior, are no less accomplished, as the three heard tonight demonstrate. 'A Clymène' was composed during Fauré's 1891 stay at the Venice palazzo of the sewing-machine heiress and patron Winnaretta Singer, who had offered him an opera commission; Fauré approached Verlaine in vain for a libretto, an indication of his regard for the poet.

Fauré's near-contemporary **Tchaikovsky** also composed a hundred or so songs, but although they enjoyed considerable success in his lifetime they have been somewhat eclipsed since his death, at least in the West, by the orchestral and theatrical music for which he is now best known. This relative neglect is unfortunate: Tchaikovsky's song output contains some of his most intimate and heartfelt music and encompasses a wide variety of mood and style, synthesising the lyricism and formal control of Schumann with occasional Glinka-esque nationalistic inflections. Many of his songs were inspired by personal events - for example, the news in 1873 that the wife of his friend Rimsky-Korsakov was expecting the couple's first child drew from him the exquisite 'Cradle Song'. Tchaikovsky's final set of songs, Op. 73, was completed only a few months before his mysterious death: the last of them, 'Again, as before, alone', gives a clear indication of his desperate loneliness and troubled state of mind.

Following his upbringing as a child prodigy in Warsaw, **Chopin** left Poland for Paris at the age of 20, shortly before the November 1830 Uprising. Though he never returned to Poland and took French citizenship in 1835, he always regarded himself as Polish and much

of the music he composed in exile explores this identity, including his 60 or so mazurkas. The mazurka is a traditional Polish dance in triple time, characterised by strong accents on the second or third beats. Though Chopin's mazurkas are not intended for dancing, and are harmonically and texturally much more complex than a typical dance number, he nonetheless keeps the dance's characteristics in mind. Chopin typically published mazurkas in sets of four, with the last of the group generally the longest and most complex. The first two in tonight's recital, composed in 1833 and 1837 respectively, are 'final movements' of this type; Op. 41 No. 2 dates from the winter of 1838-9 which Chopin spent on Mallorca with his lover George Sand and mixes Mallorcan rhythms with those of Poland. The ballade form, meanwhile, was one that Chopin himself invented: the fourth and last, composed in Paris in 1842, is one of the most admired (and most difficult) of all 19th-century piano works.

The Czech composer **Pavel Haas** studied at the Brno Conservatory under Janáček, who remained the dominant influence on his music throughout his tragically short life. Because of his Jewish origins, Haas was persecuted during the German occupation of the Czech lands, and performances of his music were banned. In 1941 he was imprisoned at the Terezín concentration camp, where he worked on an unfinished symphony as well as the *Study for strings* (1943) and the *4 Songs on Chinese Poetry* (1944). Despite the remote historical and geographical origins of the texts Haas chose, his heartfelt setting draws out their contemporary relevance - there is nothing exoticised about his interpretation. The songs are linked by a recurring musical reference to the Chorale of St Wenceslaus, the patron saint of the Czech lands, which surely represents the composer's longing for freedom and his homeland. During the same year in which he composed these songs, Haas was killed in a gas chamber at Auschwitz.

Berlioz originally conceived *Les nuits d'été* as a song-cycle for mezzo-soprano or tenor with piano accompaniment. He finished the work in 1841, but there is no record of a public performance of the complete piano-vocal version in Berlioz's lifetime, nor indeed of the 1856 orchestration: the only performances Berlioz is known to have heard are those he conducted of the orchestral versions of 'Absence' and 'Le spectre de la rose'. The texts are by the Romantic poet Théophile Gautier: critic, essayist, dramatist and apostle of 'art for art's sake'. Gautier recognised Berlioz as a kindred spirit, whose music possessed 'that indefinable "something" for which language is inadequate but which can be heard in music.' Though there is no continuous narrative or consistent protagonist in *Les nuits d'été*, the songs are united by the theme of the transience of love, and Gautier's words inspired one of Berlioz's most luminous scores.

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Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Le papillon et la fleur Op. 1 No. 1 (1861)

Victor Hugo

La pauvre fleur disait au
papillon céleste:

Ne fuis pas!

Vois comme nos destins
sont différents. Je reste,
Tu t'en vas!

Pourtant nous nous aimons,
nous vivons sans les
hommes

Et loin d'eux,
Et nous nous ressemblons, et
l'on dit que nous sommes
Fleurs tous deux!

Mais, hélas! l'air
t'emporte et la terre
m'enchaîne.

Sort cruel!

Je voudrais embaumer ton
vol de mon haleine
Dans le ciel!

Mais non, tu vas trop loin! –
Parmi des fleurs sans
nombre

Vous fuyez,

Et moi je reste seule à voir
tourner mon ombre
À mes pieds.

Tu fuis, puis tu reviens; puis
tu t'en vas encore

Luire ailleurs.

Aussi me trouves-tu toujours
à chaque aurore
Toute en pleurs!

Oh! pour que notre amour
coule des jours fidèles,

Ô mon roi,

Prends comme moi racine,
ou donne-moi des ailes
Comme à toi!

A Clymène from 5 mélodies 'de Venise'

Op. 58 (1891)

Paul Verlaine

Mystiques barcarolles,
Romances sans paroles,
Chère, puisque tes yeux,
Couleur des cieux,

The butterfly and the flower

The humble flower said to
the heavenly butterfly:

do not flee!

See how our destinies differ.
Fixed to earth am I,
you fly away!

Yet we love each
other, we live without
men

and far from them,
and we are so alike, it is
said that both of us
are flowers!

But alas! The breeze
bears you away, the
earth holds me fast.

Cruel fate!

I would perfume your flight
with my fragrant breath
in the sky!

But no, you flit too far!
Among countless
flowers

you fly away,

while I remain alone, and
watch my shadow circle
round my feet.

You fly away, then return;
then take flight again
to shimmer elsewhere.

And so you always find
me at each dawn
bathed in tears!

Ah, that our love might flow
through faithful days,

O my king,

take root like me, or give
me wings
like yours!

To Clymène

Mystical barcarolles,
songs without words,
sweet, since your eyes,
the colour of skies,

Puisque ta voix, étrange
Vision qui dérange
Et trouble l'horizon
De ma raison,

Puisque l'arome insigne
De ta pâleur de cygne,
Et puisque la candeur
De ton odeur,

Ah! puisque tout ton
être,
Musique qui pénètre,
Nimbés d'anges défunts,
Tons et parfums,

A, sur d'âmes cadences,
En ces correspondances
Induit mon cœur subtil,
Ainsi soit-il!

Les berceaux Op. 23 No. 1 (1879)

Sully Prudhomme

Le long du quai les grands
vaisseaux,
Que la houle incline en
silence,
Ne prennent pas garde aux
berceaux
Que la main des femmes
balance.

Mais viendra le jour des
adieux,
Car il faut que les femmes
pleurent,
Et que les hommes
curieux
Tentent les horizons qui
leurrent.

Et ce jour-là les grands
vaisseaux,
Fuyant le port qui
diminue,
Sentent leur masse
retenue
Par l'âme des lointains
berceaux.

Since your voice,
strange vision that unsettles
and troubles the horizon
of my reason,

Since the rare scent
of your swan-like pallor,
and since the candour
of your fragrance,

Ah! since your whole
being –
pervading music,
haloes of departed angels,
sounds and scents –

Has in sweet cadences
and correspondences
led on my receptive heart –
so be it!

The cradles

Along the quay the great
ships,
listing silently with the
surge,
pay no heed to the
cradles
rocked by women's
hands.

But the day of parting will
come,
for it is decreed that
women shall weep,
and that men with
questing spirits
shall seek enticing
horizons.

And on that day the great
ships,
leaving the dwindling
harbour behind,
shall feel their hulls held
back
by the soul of the distant
cradles.

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

Spleen Op. 51 No. 3

(1888)

Paul Verlaine

Il pleure dans mon cœur
Comme il pleut sur la ville;
Quelle est cette langueur
Qui pénètre mon cœur?

O bruit doux de la pluie,
Par terre et sur les toits!
Pour un cœur qui s'ennuie,
O le chant de la pluie!

Il pleure sans raison
Dans mon cœur qui
s'écœure.
Quoi! Nulle
trahison?
Mon deuil est sans raison.

C'est bien le pire peine,
De ne savoir pourquoi,
Sans amour et sans
haine,
Mon cœur a tant de peine.

Spleen

Tears fall in my heart
as rain falls on the town;
what is this torpor
pervading my heart?

Ah, the soft sound of rain
on the ground and roofs!
For a listless heart,
ah, the song of the rain!

Tears fall without reason
in this disheartened
heart.
What! Was there no
treason? ...
This grief is without reason.

And the worst pain of all
must be not to know why
without love and without
hate
my heart feels such pain.

Danseuse from *Mirages* Dancer

Op. 113 (1919)

*Renée Bonnière, Baron
Antoine de Brimont*

Sœur des Sœurs tisseuses
de violettes,
Une ardente veille blémit tes
joues ...
Danse! Et que les rythmes
aigus dénouent
Tes bandelettes.

Vase svelte, fresque
mouvante et souple,
Danse, danse, paumes vers
nous tendues,
Pieds étroits fuyant, tels des
ailes nues
Qu'Eros découple ...

Sois la fleur multiple un peu
balancée,
Sois l'écharpe offerte au
désir qui change,
Sois la lampe chaste, la
flamme étrange,
Sois la pensée!

Sister of violet-weaving
sisters,
a scorching vigil pales
your cheeks ...
Dance! And let the shrill
rhythms unfurl
your sashes.

Svelte vase, supple and
moving fresco,
dance with palms
outstretched before us,
slender feet flying like the
naked wings
which Eros unbinds ...

Be the multiple flower
swaying a little,
be the scarf proffered to
fickle desire,
be the chaste lamp, the
strange flame,
be thought!

Danse, danse au chant de
ma flûte creuse,
Sœur des Sœurs divines. –
La moiteur glisse,
Baiser vain, le long de ta
hanche lisse ...
Vaine danseuse!

Clair de lune Op. 46

No. 2 (1887)

Paul Verlaine

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

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,

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.

Dance, dance to the song
of my hollow flute,
sister of sacred sisters.
Moisture trickles,
a vain kiss, along your
lithe hip ...
Vain dancer!

Moonlight

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

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,

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.

Notre amour Op. 23

No. 2 (c.1879)

Armand Silvestre

Notre amour est chose
légère,
Comme les parfums que le
vent
Prend aux cimes de la fougère
Pour qu'on les respire en
rêvant.
Notre amour est chose
légère.

Notre amour est chose
charmante,
Comme les chansons du
matin
Où nul regret ne se lamente,
Où vibre un espoir
incertain.
– Notre amour est chose
charmante.

Notre amour est chose sacrée,
Comme les mystères des bois
Où tresaille une âme
ignorée,
Où les silences ont des voix.
– Notre amour est chose
sacrée.

Notre amour est chose infinie,
Comme les chemins des
couchants
Où la mer, aux cieux
réunie,
S'endort sous les soleils
penchants.

Notre amour est chose
éternelle,
Comme tout ce qu'un Dieu
vainqueur
A touché du feu de son
aile,
Comme tout ce qui vient du
coeur,
Notre amour est chose
éternelle.

Our love

Our love is light and
gentle,
like fragrance fetched by
the breeze
from the tips of ferns
for us to breathe while
dreaming.
– Our love is light and
gentle.

Our love is
enchanting,
like morning
songs,
where no regret is voiced,
quivering with uncertain
hopes.
– Our love is
enchanting.

Our love is sacred,
like woodland mysteries,
where an unknown soul
throbs
and silences are eloquent.
– Our love is
sacred.

Our love is infinite,
like sunset
paths
where the sea, joined with
the skies,
falls asleep beneath
slanting suns.

Our love is
eternal,
like all that a victorious
God
has brushed with his fiery
wing,
like all that comes from
the heart,
– Our love is
eternal.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Again, as before, alone Op. 73 No. 6 (1893)

Daniil Rathaus

Snova, kak prezhde, odin,
Snova obyat ya toskoi.
Smotritsya topol v
okno,

Again, as before, I'm alone,
again I'm filled with longing.
A poplar stands by the
window,

Ves ozaryonnyi lunoi.

flooded with moonlight.

Smotritsya topol v
okno,
Shepchut o chyom-to
listy.
V zvyozdakh goryat
nebesa ...
Gde teper, milaya,
ty?

A poplar stands by the
window,
the leaves are whispering
about something.
The sky is aflame with
stars ...
Where now, darling, are
you?

Vsyo, chto tvoritsya so mnoi,
Ya peredat ne berus...
Drug! pomolis za menya,
Ya za tebya uzh molyus.

I couldn't begin to tell you
all that's happening to me ...
Friend! Say a prayer for me,
I am praying for you.

Take my heart away (1873)

Afanasy Fet

Unosi moyo serdtse v
zvenyashchuyu dal,
Gde kak mesyats
za roshchei
pechal;
V etikh zvukakh na zharkiy
slyozi tvoi
Krotko svetit ulybka
lyubvi.

Carry my heart away into
the resonant distance,
where sorrow, like the
moon, dwells behind a
grove;
in these sounds, a smile
of love
gently shines on your hot
tears.

O ditya! kak legko sred
nezrimykh zybei
Doveriyatsya mne pesne
tvoyei:
Vyshe, vyshe plyvu
serebristym putyom,
Budto shatkaya ten za
krylom.

Oh child! How easy it is
for me to yield
to your song amidst the
invisible waves:
higher and higher I sail on
a silvery path,
like a quivering shadow
cast by a wing.

Vdaleke zamirayet tvoi
golos, gorya,
Slovno za morem nochyu
zarya, –
I otkuda-to vdrug,
ya ponyat ne
mogu,
Gryanet zvonkii priliv
zhemchugu.

In the distance, your voice
fades away, burning
like the sunset beyond
the sea at night, –
and from somewhere,
suddenly – I know not
where –
bursts forth a sonorous
tide of pearls.

Unosi zh moyo serdtse v
zvenyashchuyu dal,
Gde krotka, kak ulybka,
pechal,
I vsyo vyshe pomchus
serebristym putyom
Ya, kak shatkaya ten za
krylom.

So carry my heart away into
the resonant distance,
where sorrow, as meek as
a smile, resides,
and I'll rise ever higher on
the silvery path,
like a quivering shadow
cast by a wing.

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

Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849)

Mazurka in A minor Op. 17 No. 4 (1833)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

My genius, my angel, my friend (c.1855-60)

Afanasy Fet

Ne zdes li ty lyokh
uyutenyu,
Moi genii, moy angel, moy
drug,
Beseduyesh tikho si
mnoyu
I tikho letayesh
vokrug?

You're here, aren't you,
light spirit,
my genius, my angel, my
friend,
whispering to me in
conversation
as you quietly circle in
flight?

I robkim darish
vdoknovenyem,
I sladkii vrachuyesh
nedug,
I tikhim darish
snovidenyem,
Moi genii, moi angel, moi
drug ...
Moi genii! Moi angel! Moi
drug!

You favor me with shy
inspiration,
your powers heal my
sweet affliction,
you grant a quiet dream
to my imagination,
my genius, my angel, my
friend ...
My genius! My angel! My
friend!

Do not believe, my friend Op. 6 No. 1 (1869)

Aleksey Konstantinovich Tolstoy

Ne ver, moi drug, ne ver
kogda v poryve gorya
Ya govoryu, chto razlyubil
tebya –
V otliva chas ne ver, ne ver
izmene morya,
Ono k zemle vorotitsa
lyubya.

Don't believe me, love,
when in fullness of grief
I say I do not love you any
more, –
don't believe the ebbing
sea's inconstancy:
it will return to land,
loving as before.

Uzh ya toskuyu, prezhnei
strasti polny,
Svoyu svobodu vnov tebe
otdam –
I uzh begut obratna s
shumom volny
Izdaleka k lyubimym
beregam.

Full of passion, I long for
you again,
again I'm ready to
surrender to you –
and rushing back the
loud waves run
from far away to their
beloved shore.

Ne ver, moi drug, ne ver
kogda v poryve gorya
Ya govoryu, chto razlyubil
tebya –
V otliva chas ne ver, ne ver
izmene morya,
Ono k zemle vorotitsa
lyubya.

Don't believe me, love,
when in fullness of grief
I say I do not love you any
more, –
don't believe the ebbing
sea's inconstancy:
it will return to land,
loving as before.

Fryderyk Chopin

Mazurka in C sharp minor Op. 30 No. 4 (1837)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Cradle song Op. 16 No. 1 (1872)

Apollon Maykov

Spi, ditya moyo,
usni!
Sladkii son k sebe
mani:
V nyanki ya tebe
vzyala
Veter, solntse i
orla.

Sleep, my child, and fall
asleep!
Beckon slumber's
sweetness deep:
I have summoned three
nannies for you -
the wind, the sun and an
eagle.

Uletel oryol domoi;
Solntse skrylos pod
vodoi:
Veter, posle tryokh nochei,
Mchitsya k materi svoyei.

The eagle has flown home,
the sun has hidden above
the water,
the wind, after three nights,
races to its mother.

Vetra sprashivayet
mat:
'Gde izvolil
propadat?
Ali zvyozdy
voyeval?
Ali volny vsyo
gonyal?'

The wind's mother asked
him:
'Where have you been
hiding all this time?
Did you wage war with
the stars?
Did you drive the waves
away?'

'Ne gonyal ya voln
morskikh,
Zvyozd ne trogal zolotykh;
Ya ditya
oberegal,
Kolybelochku kachal!'

'I didn't drive the waves of
the sea away,
I touched no golden stars;
I was keeping a child safe
and sound,
rocking its little cradle!'

Spi, ditya moyo, spi, usni! spi,
usni!
Sladkii son k sebe
mani:
V nyanki ya tebe
vzyala
Veter, solntse i
orla.

Sleep, my child, and fall
asleep!
Beckon slumber's
sweetness deep:
I have summoned three
nannies for you -
the wind, the sun and an
eagle.

The first meeting Op. 63 No. 4 (1887)

Konstantin Konstaninovich Romanov

Vot minovala razluka
unylaya,
Probil svidaniya
chas,
Svetloye, polnoye schastye,
milaya,
Vnov nastupilo dlya nas.

Our joyless separation is
over now,
at last we're together
again, -
happiness, bright and
complete, darling,
has begun for us anew.

Dolgo tomilosya, polna
stradaniya,
Serdtse tvoyo, no pover:
Dni odinochestva, dni
ispytaniya
My naverstayem
teper.

Long did your heart pine,
much did it suffer,
but this you must believe:
days of loneliness, days of
trial -
we're going to make up
for them now.

Neznye rechi, lyubvi
vyrazheniya
Vnov potekut bez kontsa,
I vo yedinoye snova biyeniye
Nashi solyutsya
serdtsa!

Tender speeches,
expressions of our love,
will flow again without end,
and, beating with one beat,
our hearts will be joined
together.

Pust sochetayet sozvuchye
yedinoye
Nashi dve dushi, i vnov,
Slovno vesenyaya pesn
solovinaya,
Nasha vospryanet lyubov!

Let that single harmony
wed
our two souls, and again,
like the spring song of the
nightingale,
let our love take flight!

Fryderyk Chopin

Mazurka in E minor Op. 41 No. 2 (1838-9)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

As over burning embers Op. 25 No. 2 (1875)

Fyodor Tyutchev

Kak nad goryacheyu
zoloi
Dymitsya svitok i
sgorayet,
I ogn' sokrytyi i glukhoy
Slova i stroke
pozhirayet:

As over darkly glowing
embers
a scroll will smoke and be
consumed,
and fire, invisible and mute,
will swallow up the words
and lines:

Tak grustno tlitsya zhizn
moya
I s kazhdym dnyom ukhodit
dymom;
Tak postepenno gasnu
ya
V odnoobrazyi
nesterpimom...

So my life sadly
smoulders too,
and day by day it drifts
away in smoke;
so gradually I'm burning
down
in unendurable
monotony ...

O, nebo, yesli by khot
raz
Sei plamen razvilsya po
vole,
I, ne tomyas, ne muchas
dole,
Ya prosiyal by i
pogas!

O, heaven, if only once
this fire
might burst into an open
flame,
and, without further grief
or torment,
I would flare up brightly
and burn out!

Not a word, O my friend Op. 6 No. 2 (1869)

Aleksey Pleshcheyev, after Moritz Hartmann

Ni slova, o druk moy, ni
vzdokha ...
My budem s toboi
molchalivy...
Ved molcha nad
kamnem
mogilnym
Sklonyayutsa grustnye ivy...

Not a word, my friend, not
a sigh ...
Let us be silent
together ...
As in silence over the
stone, over the stone of
the grave,
the sad willows bend low ...

I tolko, skolonivshis,
chitayut,
Kak ya, v tvoyom serdtse
ustalom,
Shto byli dni yasnovo
schastya,
Shto etovo schastya ne
stalo!
Shto etovo schastya ne
stalo!

And thus bent low, they
read,
as I read in your tired
heart,
that once there were days of
bright happiness,
and that happiness has
gone forever!
And that happiness has
gone forever!

Ni slova, o drug moi, ni
vzdokha...
My budem s toboi
molchalivy...
Ved molcha
nad kamnem
mogilnym
Sklonyayutsa grustnye ivy...

Not a word, my friend, not
a sigh ...
Let us be silent
together ...
As in silence over the
stone, over the stone of
the grave,
the sad willows bend low ...

Interval

Pavel Haas (1899-1944)

4 Songs on Chinese Poetry (1944)

Zaslech jsem divoké husy

Bohumil Mathesius, after Wei Yingwu

Domov je tam,
Daleko tam,
Mělo bys domů,
Zbloudilé srdce!

Za cizí noci,
V podzimním dešti,
Když nejvíc studil
Smutku chladný van;
Ve vysokém domě svém
zaslech jsem
Křik divokých husí.

Právě přilétly.

I heard the wild geese

Your homeland is there,
far away in the distance,
you should go home,
my errant heart.

In the strange night-time,
in the autumn rain,
when one feels most
the chill wind of sorrow;
in my highland home I
heard
the whooping of wild geese.

They have just returned.

V bambusovém háji

Bohumil Mathesius, after Wang Wei

V bambusech nejsou
lidé,
V bambusech sedím sám,
Tu na loutnu zahraju
tiše,
Tu sobě zahvívám.

Kdo, řekněte lidé, kdo
ví,
Kde v bambusech sedím
sám
A na východ srpečku luny
Bambusem
pozírám?

In the bamboo grove

In the bamboo no human
soul,
in the bamboo I sit alone,
here I play quietly on my
lute,
here I whistle to myself.

Who then, dear people,
who knows,
where I sit alone in the
bamboo
and through the stems
gaze on the rising
crescent moon?

Daleko měsíc je od domova

Bohumil Mathesius, after Zhang Jiuling

Z temného moře vyrůstá
měsíc,
V daleké zemi teď rozkvétá
též.
Láska svůj truchlí daremný
sen,
Čeká na vzdálený
večer.

Jasněji měsíc svítí v hoře
mé.
Oblékám noční šat, chladné
je jíní.
Ruce mé, ruce, kterak jste
prázdné,
Říci to všechno!

Spánku, sen dej mi,
O návratu domů,
Spánku, sen nemůžeš
dát:
Mě toužení stále mne
budí.

The moon is far from home

Out of the dark sea the
moon rises,
in a distant land it now
also waxes.
Love laments its vain
dream,
it waits for the distant
evening.

The moon shines more
brightly upon my grief.
I put on night clothes; the
hoarfrost is cold.
My arms, my hands, you
are too weak
to write all that down?

O sleep, bring me a dream
about going back home!
O sleep, you cannot give
me that dream:
my longing keeps waking
me up.

Probděná noc

Bohumil Mathesius, after Chan I

Větrem se bambus
houpá,
Na kámen měsíce
sed.
Do chvění Mléčné dráhy
Stín divoké kachny
vzlét.

Na naše shledání myslím,
Víčka mívá sen.
Zatím co radosti zpívám,
Strak repot vzbouzí už
den.

A sleepless night

The bamboo sways in the
wind,
the moon sits above a
stone.
Into the flickering Milky Way
soars the shadow of a
wild duck.

I think of our reunion,
dreaming shuns my eyelids.
While I sing for pleasure,
the chattering of magpies
already rouses the day.

Fryderyk Chopin

Ballade No. 4 in F minor Op. 52 (1842)

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

Les nuits d'été Op. 7 (1840-1)

Théophile Gautier

Villanelle

Quand viendra la saison
nouvelle,
Quand auront disparu les froids,
Tous les deux nous irons, ma
belle,
Pour cueillir le muguet au
bois;
Sous nos pieds égrenant les
perles
Que l'on voit au matin
trembler,
Nous irons écouter les
merles
Siffler!

Le printemps est venu, ma
belle;
C'est le mois des amants
béné,
Et l'oiseau, satinant son
aile,
Dit ses vers au rebord du
nid.
Oh! viens donc sur ce banc
de mousse,
Pour parler de nos beaux
amours,
Et dis-moi de ta voix si
douce:
Toujours!

Loin, bien loin, égarant nos
courses,
Faisons fuir le lapin
caché,
Et le daim au miroir des
sources
Admirant son grand bois
penché;
Puis, chez nous, tout
heureux, tout aises,
En panier enlaçant nos
doigts,
Revenons rapportant des
fraises
Des bois!

Villanelle

When the new season
comes,
when the cold has gone,
we two will go, my
sweet,
to gather lilies-of-the-
valley in the woods;
scattering as we tread the
pearls of dew
we see quivering each
morn,
we'll go and hear the
blackbirds
sing!

Spring has come, my
sweet;
it is the season lovers
bless,
and the birds, preening
their wings,
sing songs from the edge
of their nests.
Ah! Come, then, to this
mossy bank
to talk of our beautiful
love,
and tell me in your gentle
voice:
forever!

Far, far away we'll stray
from our path,
startling the rabbit from
his hiding-place
and the deer reflected in
the spring,
admiring his great
lowered antlers;
then home we'll go,
serene and at ease,
and entwining our fingers
basket-like,
we'll bring back home
wild
strawberries!

Le spectre de la rose

Soulève ta paupière close
Qu'effleure un songe virginal;
Je suis le spectre d'une rose
Que tu portais hier au
bal.
Tu me pris encore
emperlée
Des pleurs d'argent de
l'arrosoir,
Et parmi la fête étoilée
Tu me promenas tout le
soir.

O toi qui de ma mort fus
cause,
Sans que tu puisses le
chasser,
Toutes les nuits mon spectre
rose
A ton chevet viendra
danser.
Mais ne crains rien, je ne
réclame
Ni messe ni
De profundis;
Ce léger parfum est mon
âme,
Et j'arrive du paradis.

Mon destin fut digne
d'envie:
Et pour avoir un sort si beau,
Plus d'un aurait donné sa
vie,
Car sur ton sein j'ai mon
tombeau,
Et sur l'albâtre où je
repose
Un poète avec un baiser
Ecrivit: Ci-gît une rose
Que tous les rois vont
jalouser.

The spectre of the rose

Open your eyelids,
brushed by a virginal
dream;
I am the spectre of a rose
that yesterday you wore
at the dance.
You plucked me still
sprinkled
with silver tears of
dew,
and amid the glittering feast
you wore me all evening
long.

O you who brought about
my death,
you shall be powerless to
banish me:
the rosy spectre which
every night
will come to dance at
your bedside.
But be not afraid – I
demand
neither Mass nor De
Profundis;
this faint perfume is my
soul,
and I come from Paradise.

My destiny was worthy of
envy;
and for such a beautiful fate,
many would have given
their lives –
for my tomb is on your
breast,
and on the alabaster
where I lie,
a poet with a kiss
has written: Here lies a rose
which every king will
envy.

Sur les lagunes

Ma belle amie est morte:
Je pleurerai toujours;
Sous la tombe elle
emporte
Mon âme et mes amours.
Dans le ciel, sans m'attendre,
Elle s'en retourna;
L'ange qui
l'emmena
Ne voulut pas me prendre.
Que mon sort est amer!
Ah! sans amour, s'en aller sur
la mer!

La blanche créature
Est couchée au cercueil.
Comme dans la nature
Tout me paraît en deuil!
La colombe oubliée
Pleure et songe à
l'absent;
Mon âme pleure et sent
Qu'elle est dépareillée.
Que mon sort est amer!
Ah! sans amour, s'en aller sur
la mer!

Sur moi la nuit
immense
S'étend comme un linceul;
Je chante ma romance
Que le ciel entend
seul.
Ah! Comme elle était belle,
Et comme je l'aimais!
Je n'aimerai jamais
Une femme autant qu'elle.
Que mon sort est amer!
Ah! sans amour, s'en aller sur
la mer!

On the lagoons

My dearest love is dead:
I shall weep for evermore;
to the tomb she takes
with her
my soul and all my love.
Without waiting for me
she has returned to Heaven;
the angel who took her
away
did not wish to take me.
How bitter is my fate!
Alas! to set sail loveless
across the sea!

The pure white being
lies in her coffin.
How everything in nature
seems to mourn!
The forsaken dove
weeps, dreaming of its
absent mate;
my soul weeps and feels
itself adrift.
How bitter is my fate!
Alas! to set sail loveless
across the sea!

The immense night
above me
is spread like a shroud;
I sing my song
which heaven alone can
hear.
Ah! how beautiful she was,
and how I loved her!
I shall never love a woman
as I loved her.
How bitter is my fate!
Alas! to set sail loveless
across the sea!

Absence

Reviens, reviens, ma bien-
aimée;
Comme une fleur loin du
soleil,
La fleur de ma vie est
fermée
Loin de ton sourire vermeil!

Entre nos coeurs quelle
distance!
Tant d'espace entre nos
baisers!
O sort amer! O dure
absence!
O grands désirs
inapaisés!

Reviens, reviens, ma bien-
aimée!
Comme une fleur loin du
soleil,
La fleur de ma vie est
fermée
Loin de ton sourire vermeil!

D'ici là-bas, que de
campagnes,
Que de villes et de
hameaux,
Que de vallons et de
montagnes,
A lasser le pied des chevaux!

Reviens, reviens, ma bien-
aimée!
Comme une fleur loin du
soleil,
La fleur de ma vie est
fermée
Loin de ton sourire vermeil!

Absence

Return, return, my
sweetest love!
Like a flower far from the
sun,
the flower of my life is
closed
far from your crimson smile!

Such a distance between
our hearts!
So great a gulf between
our kisses!
O bitter fate! O harsh
absence!
O great unassuaged
desires!

Return, return, my
sweetest love!
Like a flower far from the
sun,
the flower of my life is
closed
far from your crimson smile!

So many intervening
plains,
so many towns and
hamlets,
so many valleys and
mountains
to weary the horses' hooves!

Return, return, my
sweetest love!
Like a flower far from the
sun,
the flower of my life is
closed
far from your crimson smile!

Au cimetière

Connaissez-vous la blanche
tombe
Où flotte avec un son plaintif
L'ombre d'un if?
Sur l'if, une pâle colombe,
Triste et seule, au soleil
couchant,
Chante son chant;

Un air maladivement
tendre,
A la fois charmant et
fatal,
Qui vous fait mal
Et qu'on voudrait toujours
entendre,
Un air, comme en soupire
aux cieux
L'ange amoureux.

On dirait que l'âme éveillée
Pleure sous terre à
l'unisson
De la chanson,
Et du malheur d'être
oubliée
Se plaint dans un roucoulement
Bien doucement.

Sur les ailes de la musique
On sent lentement revenir
Un souvenir;
Une ombre, une forme
angélique
Passe dans un rayon
tremblant,
En voile blanc.

Les belles-de-nuit, demi-
closes,
Jettent leur parfum faible et
doux
Autour de vous,
Et le fantôme aux molles
poses
Murmure, en vous tendant
les bras:
Tu reviendras?

Oh! jamais plus, près de la
tombe
Je n'irai, quand descend le soir
Au manteau noir,
Ecouter la pâle colombe
Chanter sur la pointe de l'if
Son chant plaintif!

At the cemetery

Do you know the white
tomb,
where the shadow of a yew
waves plaintively?
On that yew a pale dove,
sad and solitary at
sundown
sings its song;

A melody of morbid
sweetness,
delightful and deathly at
once,
which wounds you
and which you'd like to
hear forever,
a melody, such as in the
heavens,
a lovesick angel sighs.

As if the awakened soul
weeps beneath the earth
together
with the song,
and at the sorrow of
being forgotten
murmurs its complaint
most meltingly.

On the wings of music
you sense the slow return
of a memory;
a shadow, an angelic form
passes in a shimmering
beam,
veiled in white.

The Marvels of Peru, half-
closed,
shed their fragrance
sweet and faint
about you,
and the phantom with its
languid gestures
murmurs, reaching out to
you:
will you return?

Ah! nevermore shall I
approach that tomb,
when evening descends
in its black cloak,
to listen to the pale dove
from the top of a yew
sing its plaintive song!

L'île inconnue

Dites, la jeune belle,
Où voulez-vous aller?
La voile ouvre son aile,
La brise va souffler!

L'aviron est d'ivoire,
Le pavillon de moire,
Le gouvernail d'or fin;
J'ai pour lest une orange,
Pour voile une aile d'ange,
Pour mousse un séraphin.

Dites, la jeune belle,
Où voulez-vous aller?
La voile ouvre son aile,
La brise va souffler!

Est-ce dans la Baltique,
Dans la mer Pacifique,
Dans l'île de Java?
Ou bien est-ce en Norvège,
Cueillir la fleur de neige
Ou la fleur d'Angsoka?

Dites, la jeune belle,
Où voulez-vous aller?

Menez-moi, dit la
belle,
A la rive fidèle
Où l'on aime toujours.
– Cette rive, ma chère,
On ne la connaît guère
Au pays des amours.

Où voulez-vous aller?
La brise va souffler.

The unknown isle

Tell me, pretty young maid,
where is it you would go?
The sail is billowing,
the breeze about to blow!

The oar is of ivory,
the pennant of watered silk,
the rudder of finest gold;
for ballast I've an orange,
for sail an angel's wing,
for cabin boy a seraph.

Tell me, pretty young maid,
where is it you would go?
The sail is billowing,
the breeze about to blow!

Perhaps the Baltic,
or the Pacific
or the Isle of Java?
Or else to Norway,
to pluck the snow flower
or the flower of Angsoka?

Tell me, pretty young maid,
where is it you would go?

Take me, said the pretty
maid,
to the shore of faithfulness
where love endures forever.
– That shore, my sweet,
is scarce known,
in the realm of love.

Where do you wish to go?
The breeze is about to blow!

Translations of Fauré and Berlioz by Richard Stokes from A French Song Companion (Johnson/Stokes) published by OUP. All Tchaikovsky except 'Take my heart away' and 'Cradle song' by Richard D Sylvester from Tchaikovsky's Complete Songs: A Companion with Texts and Translations published by Indiana University Press. 'Take my heart away' and 'Cradle song' by Philip Ross Bullock.