

WIGMORE HALL

Thursday 21 September 2023
7.30pm

Wigmore Soloists

Michael Collins clarinet
Michael McHale piano
Isabelle van Keulen violin
Rachel Roberts viola
Steffan Morris cello
Tim Gibbs double bass

Carolyn Sampson soprano

Louis Spohr (1784-1859)

6 deutsche Lieder Op. 103 (1837)

*Sei still mein Herz • Zwiegesang • Sehnsucht •
Wiegenlied in drei Tönen • Das heimliche Leid •
Wach auf!*

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Trio in B flat Op. 97 'Archduke' (1810-1)

*I. Allegro moderato • II. Scherzo. Allegro •
III. Andante cantabile ma però con moto - •
IV. Allegro moderato*

Interval

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen D965 (1828)

Piano Quintet in A D667 'Trout' (1819)

*I. Allegro vivace • II. Andante • III. Scherzo. Presto •
IV. Thema. Andantino - Allegretto •
V. Finale. Allegro giusto*

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Virtuoso violinist and composer **Louis Spohr** (1784–1859) was hugely famous in his lifetime. A friend of Beethoven, an early champion of Wagner, and a touring musician with an international profile, he held a number of prominent posts, including as the chief conductor of opera at Frankfurt am Main and as director of music at William II's court in Kassel. Although less performed today, the scale of his musical oeuvre remains an impressive testament to his success: in addition to 15 violin concerti, his compositions also include 11 operas, nine symphonies and an extensive array of smaller-scale music, including some 90 songs. This collection of *6 deutsche Lieder* dates from 1837, and is generally regarded as his greatest achievement in vocal chamber music. It was commissioned by the Princess von Sondershausen (from whom he received a reward in the form of 'a very costly ring'), and features a prominent and dramatic clarinet part - inspired by the artistry of his friend, the renowned clarinettist Johann Simon Hermstedt. The piano takes an accompanying role, while the clarinet provides an elegant counterpart to the voice, though never overpowering it.

The texts - drawn from a collection of different writers - are steeped in the imagery and sentiment of the Romantic era. In the first song alone, we encounter a roaring storm, a vanished dream of Spring and dashed hopes of love, as the poet tries in vain to soothe their tormented soul. The second song, 'Zwiegesang', paints a portrait of a girl and bird in dialogue, with the clarinet mimicking the trilling of birdsong. A poignant yearning for youth in 'Sehnsucht' gives way to a tender lullaby in the deceptively simple 'Wiegenlied on three notes', and the bittersweet introspection of 'Das heimliche Leid' resolves into the uplifting 'Wach auf!', in which the singer urges us to relish the fleeting joys of life and love.

Beethoven composed his final piano trio at around the same time that his deafness was beginning to affect his ability to perform in public. Hearing an early rehearsal, Spohr lamented: 'Little is left of his once celebrated virtuosity. In forte passages he hit the keys so hard that the strings rattled...' Yet the composer's ambitions seem if anything to have been galvanised by the gradual loss of his hearing. After jotting down some initial sketches for the work in 1810, he composed the Trio in a flurry of inspiration between 3 and 26 March the following year. It was dedicated to the Archduke Rudolf of Austria - grandson of the Empress Maria Theresa, and one of Beethoven's longstanding patrons and students - and is unusually expansive.

The opening movement is broad in scope, and both sublime and playful in character. The piano introduces a serene melody, followed, in true sonata form, by a contrasting staccato second subject. The

development of these two elements flows easily, with luxuriant piano writing and warmly expressive dialogue between all three instruments. The cello launches the upbeat *Scherzo* with a bouncy melody, although the upbeat tone alternates with darker, more chromatic elements. Frequently described as 'hymn-like' in character, the third movement unfolds through a series of elegant variations, with a memorably beautiful *coda*, or final section. The glittering finale, with its jaunty rondo (returning theme), jolts us out of our reverie, concluding with a dazzling presto *coda*. And what better way to end our first half than with the piece Beethoven chose to give his farewell to the stage? Thanks to a temporary improvement in his symptoms, he was able to flourish and thrive at the keyboard one last time, performing with friends at a charity concert in 1814 at the Hotel Römischer Kaiser in Vienna.

With **Schubert's** 'Der Hirt auf dem Felsen', we return to firmly Romantic territory. Over a sombre piano accompaniment of triplets, a sonorous, wide-ranging clarinet melody unfurls which is then answered by the voice, painting a scene worthy of a Caspar David Friedrich landscape. Alone, a shepherd sings of their absent beloved, their voice echoing through a remote valley. The vertiginous leaps of the vocal line reflect the dizzying heights and depths - both emotional and geographical - traversed by their longing, finally drawing our thoughts upwards to heaven, and onwards to the coming of spring, in a breathless, exuberant conclusion. Written in 1828 for Schubert's friend, the operatic soprano Anna Milder-Hauptmann, the work is a masterclass in concision, showing a composer at the height of his expressive powers, even in the last few months of his life.

Schubert's song, 'The Trout' - one of over 600 he composed during his lifetime - tells a simple tale. The poet, standing by a brook, looks on as a trout swims in the clear waters, only for a cunning angler to catch the wriggling creature, much to the observer's dismay. Written when Schubert was only 20, its lively, catchy tune soon became a favourite in the salons of Vienna, and two years later, it inspired the amateur cellist Sylvester Paumgartner to commission this much-loved quintet, based on the popular song and with the unusual inclusion of a double bass. It seems Schubert was only too happy to oblige: written in 1819, the Quintet sparkles with infectious high spirits, effortlessly developing the song into a wide-ranging, five-movement masterwork. The opening movement recalls elements of the song, with its bubbling piano arpeggios and chromatic flourishes, although it isn't until the fourth movement that we hear the song melody in full, in a series of exquisite variations, before the toe-tapping *Allegro giusto* movement brings us to an irresistible finale.

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Louis Spohr (1784-1859)

6 deutsche Lieder Op. 103 (1837)

Sei still mein Herz

Karl Friedrich, Freiherr von Schweitzer

Ich wahrte die Hoffnung tief
in der Brust,
Die sich ihr vertrauend
erschlossen,
Mir strahlten die Augen voll
Lebenslust,
Wenn mich ihre Zauber
umflossen,
Wenn ich ihrer schmeichelnden
Stimme gelauscht,
Im Wettersturm ist ihr Echo
verrauscht,
Sei still, mein Herz, und
denke nicht dran,
Das ist nun die Wahrheit, das
Andre war Wahn.

Die Erde lag vor mir im
Frühlingstraum,
Den Licht und Wärme
durchglühte,
Und wonnetrunken
durchwallt' ich den Raum,
Der Brust entspross die
Blüte,
Der Liebe Lenz war in mir
erwacht,
Mich durchrieselt Frost, in
der Seele ist Nacht.
Sei still, mein Herz, und
denke nicht dran,
Das ist nun die Wahrheit, das
Andre war Wahn.

Ich baute von Blumen und
Sonnenglanz
Eine Brücke mir durch das
Leben,
Auf der ich wandelnd im
Lorbeerkranz
Mich geweiht dem
hochedelsten Streben,
Der Menschen Dank war
mein schönster Lohn,
Laut auflacht' die Menge mit
frechem Hohn,
Sei still, mein Herz, und
denke nicht dran,
Das ist nun die Wahrheit, das
Andre war Wahn.

Be still, my heart

Deep in my heart I
harboured a hope
I had trustingly
surrendered to,
my eyes sparkled with
zest for life,
when her charms
surrounded me,
when I heard her cajoling
voice –
Now its echo is lost in the
storm,
be still, my heart, think no
more of it,
this is the truth, the rest
was delusion.

The earth lay before me
in a Spring dream
that glowed with light and
warmth,
drunk with joy I wandered
up and down,
blossoms burgeoned in
my heart,
Love's Spring had woken
in me –
Frost now chills me, my
soul is benighted,
be still, my heart, think no
more of it,
this is the truth, the rest
was delusion.

Throughout my life I built
a bridge
of flowers and sunny
radiance,
on which, wreathed in
laurel, I devoted myself
to the noblest of
aspirations,
human gratitude was my
richest reward –
The mob laughed in
derisive scorn
be still, my heart, think no
more of it,
this is the truth, the rest
was delusion.

Zwiegesang

Robert Reinick

Im Fliederbusch ein Vöglein
sass
In der stillen, schönen
Maiennacht,
Darunter ein Mägdlein im
hohen Gras
In der stillen, schönen
Maiennacht.
Sang Mägdlein, hielt das
Vöglein Ruh',
Sang Vöglein, hört' das
Mägdlein zu,
Und weithin klang
Der Zwiegesang
Das mondbeglänzte Thal
entlang.

Was sang das Vöglein im
Gezweig
Durch die stille, schöne
Maiennacht?
Was sang doch wohl das
Mägdlein gleich
Durch die stille, schöne
Maiennacht?
Von Frühlingssonne das
Vögelein,
Von Liebeswonne das
Mägdelein.
Wie der Gesang
Zum Herzen drang
Vergess' ich nimmer mein
Leben lang!

Duet

A bird sat perched in the
lilac-bush
one silent, lovely May
night,
a girl sat in the tall grass
below,
one silent, lovely May
night.
When the girl sang, the
bird fell silent,
when the bird sang, the
girl listened,
and their dialogue
echoed far and wide
along the moonlit valley.

What did the bird sing in
the branches
through the silent, lovely
May night?
And what did the girl sing
too
through the silent, lovely
May night?
The bird sang of
springtime sun,
the girl of love'
rapture;
how that song
pierced my heart,
I shall remember all my
life!

Sehnsucht

Emanuel Geibel

Ich blick' in mein Herz und
ich blick' in die Welt,
Bis vom schwimmenden
Auge die Thräne mir fällt,
Wohl leuchtet die Ferne mit
goldenem Licht,
Doch hält mich der Nord, ich
erreiche sie nicht.
O die Schranken so eng, und
die Welt so weit,
Und so flüchtig die Zeit!

Ich weiss ein Land, wo aus
sonnigem Grün,
Um versunkene Tempel die
Trauben glühn,
Wo die purpurne Woge das
Ufer beschäumt,
Und von kommenden Sängern
der Lorbeer träumt;
Fern lockt es und winkt dem
verlangenden Sinn,
Und ich kann nicht hin!

O hätt' ich Flügel, durch's
Blau der Luft
Wie wollt' ich baden im
Sonnenduft!
Doch umsonst! Und Stunde
auf Stunde entflieht -
Vertraure die Jugend,
begrabe das Lied!
O die Schranken so eng, und
die Welt so weit,
Und so flüchtig die Zeit!

Wiegenlied in drei Tönen

*August Heinrich Hoffmann
von Fallersleben*

Alles still in süsser Ruh,
Drum, mein Kind, so schlaf
auch du!
Draussen säuselt nur der
Wind:
Su, susu! schlaf ein, mein
Kind!

Schliess du deine Äugelein,
Lass sie wie zwei Knospen sein!
Morgen, wenn die Sonn'
erglüht,
Sind sie wie die Blum'
erblüht.

Longing

I look in my heart and I
look out into the world,
till tears fall from my
brimming eyes;
though the distant
horizon gleams golden,
the North holds me back,
I cannot reach it.
My life is so narrow and
the world is so wide,
and time so fleeting!

I know a land where
grapevines bloom
among sunny foliage
round sunken temples,
where purple waves foam
on the shore
and the laurel dreams of
poets to come.
It lures from afar, beckons
my yearning mind,
and I cannot go!

Oh for wings to cleave the
blue sky!
How I should bathe in
summer's fragrance!
But in vain! Hour after
hour goes by -
Mourn for lost youth, bury
the song!
My life is so narrow and
the world so wide,
and time so fleeting!

Cradle song on three notes

All is silent in sweet peace,
so go to sleep too, my
child!
The wind is rustling
outside:
Lullaby! go to sleep, my
child!

Shut tight your little eyes,
let them be like two buds!
Tomorrow, when the sun
shines,
they will open like the
flowers.

Und die Blümlein schau' ich
an,
Und die Äuglein küss' ich dann,
Und der Mutter Herz
vergisst,
Dass es draussen Frühling
ist.

Das heimliche Leid

Ernst Koch

Es gibt geheime Schmerzen,
Sie klaget nie der Mund,
Getragen tief im Herzen
Sind sie der Welt nicht kund.
Es gibt ein heimlich Sehnen,
Das scheuet stets das Licht,
Es gibt verborgne Tränen,
Der Fremde sieht sie nicht.

Es gibt ein still Versinken
In eine innre Welt,
Wo Friedensauen
winken,
Von Sternenglanz erhellt,
Wo auf gefallen Schranken
Die Seele Himmel baut,
Und jubelnd den Gedanken
Den Lippen anvertraut.

Es gibt ein still Vergehen
In stummen, öden Schmerz,
Und Niemand darf es sehen,
Das schwergesprengte Herz.
Es sagt nicht was ihm fehlet,
Und wenn's im Grame
bricht,
Verblutend und zerquälet,
Der Fremde sieht sie nicht.

Es gibt einen sanften
Schlummer,
Wo süsser Frieden weilt,
Wo stille Ruh' den Kummer
Der müden Seele heilt.
Doch gibt's ein schöner
Hoffen,
Das Welten überfliegt,
Da wo am Herzen
offen
Das Herz voll Liebe liegt.

And I'll gaze at the little
flowers,
and kiss those little eyes,
and your mother's heart
shall forget
that it's Spring outside.

Secret grief

There is a secret ache
that lips never utter,
borne deep in the heart,
unknown to the world.
There is a secret longing
that always shuns the light,
there are hidden tears
the stranger does not see.

There is a quiet sinking
into an inner world,
where peaceful meadows
beckon,
lit by gleaming stars,
where on fallen barriers
the soul erects a heaven
and joyfully entrusts
thoughts to its lips.

There is a quiet dying
in desolate, mute grief,
and not a soul may see
the heaviness of heart.
It does not say what ails it,
and when it breaks in
anguish,
bleeding and tormented,
the stranger does not see.

There is a gentle
peace
where sweet peace dwells,
where quiet rest heals
the weary soul's sorrow.
Yet there is a sweet hope
too
that flies above the earth,
where a heart brimming
with love
rests against an open heart.

Wach auf!

Rudolf Kulemann

Was stehst du bange
Und sinnest nach?
Ach! schon so lange
Ist Liebe wach!

Hörst du das Klingen
Allüberall?
Die Vöglein singen
Mit süßem Schall.

Aus Starrem spriesset
Baumblättlein weich,
Das Leben fließet
Um Ast und Zweig.

Das Tröpflein schlüpfet
Aus Waldesschacht,
Das Bächlein hüpfet
Mit Wallungsmacht.

Der Himmel neiget
In's Wellenklar,
Die Bläue zeigt
Sich wunderbar.

Ein heit'res Schwingen
Zu Form und Klang,
Ein ew'ges Fügen
Im ew'gen Drang!

Was stehst du bange
Und sinnest nach?
Ach! schon so lange
Ist Liebe wach!

Awaken!

Why stand their fearfully,
lost in thought?
Ah, love has been awake
so long!

Can you hear the sound
all about you?
The birds are singing
sweet songs.

Leaves shoot gently
from bare trees,
life flows
around branches and twigs.

Droplets slip down
the woodland ravines,
the little stream
swirls along.

The sky leans down
to the limpid water,
its blueness mirrored
wondrously clear.

Joy vibrates
in shapes and sounds,
eternally part
of eternal creation!

Why stand their fearfully,
lost in thought?
Ah, love has been awake
so long!

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Trio in B flat Op. 97 'Archduke' (1810-1)

I. Allegro moderato

II. Scherzo. Allegro

III. Andante cantabile ma però con moto -

IV. Allegro moderato

Interval

Translations of Spohr by Richard Stokes. Schubert 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.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen D965 (1828)

Wilhelm Müller (stanzas 1-4 & 7)

Karl August Varnhagen von Ense (stanzas 5 & 6)

Wenn auf dem höchsten Fels
ich steh',
In's tiefe Tal hernieder
seh',
Und singe,

Fern aus dem tiefen dunkeln
Tal
Schwingt sich empor der
Widerhall
Der Klüfte.

Je weiter meine Stimme
dringt,
Je heller sie mir wieder
klingt
Von unten.

Mein Liebchen wohnt so weit
von mir,
Drum sehn' ich mich so heiss
nach ihr
Hinüber.

In tiefem Gram verzehr ich
mich,
Mir ist die Freude hin,
Auf Erden mir die Hoffnung
wich,
Ich hier so einsam bin.

So sehndend klang
im Wald das
Lied,
So sehndend klang es durch
die Nacht,
Die Herzen es zum Himmel
zieht
Mit wunderbarer Macht.

Der Frühling will kommen,
Der Frühling, meine Freud',
Nun mach' ich mich fertig
Zum Wandern bereit.

The shepherd on the rock

When I stand on the
highest rock,
look down into the deep
valley
and sing,

From far away in the deep
dark valley
the echo from the
ravines
rises up.

The further my voice
carries,
the clearer it echoes back
to me
from below.

My sweetheart lives so far
from me,
therefore I long so to be
with her
over there.

Deep grief consumes
me,
my joy has fled,
all earthly hope has
vanished,
I am so lonely here.

The song rang out so
longingly through the
wood,
rang out so longingly
through the night,
that it draws hearts to
heaven
with wondrous power.

Spring is coming,
spring, my joy,
I shall now make ready
to journey.

Piano Quintet in A D667 'Trout' (1819)

I. Allegro vivace

II. Andante

III. Scherzo. Presto

IV. Thema. Andantino - Allegretto

V. Finale. Allegro giusto