

WIGMORE HALL

Sunday 22 May 2022 3.00pm

Samantha Hankey mezzo-soprano

Malcolm Martineau piano

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Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Chansons de Bilitis (1897-8)

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

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Einerlei Op. 69 No. 3 (1918)

Lob des Leidens Op. 15 No. 3 (1884-6)

Schlechtes Wetter Op. 69 No. 5 (1918)

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

7 canciones populares españolas (1914)

El paño moruno • Seguidilla murciana • Asturiana • Jota • Nana • Canción • Polo

Alban Berg (1885-1935)

7 frühe Lieder (1905-8)

Nacht • Schilflied • Die Nachtigall • Traumgekrönt • Im Zimmer • Liebesode • Sommertage

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ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND



During the 1890s, **Claude Debussy** was one of the only musicians admitted to the poet Stéphane Mallarmé's exclusive artistic group – which suited the composer rather well, as he preferred conversing with writers and painters than with his fellow musicians. Another member of this circle was the writer Pierre Louÿs, who in 1895, aged 25, published a set of prose poems he called '*Les chansons de Bilitis*', translated from the Greek for the first time by P.L.' He cited a previous German translation, and one reviewer was completely taken in, arguing that the translations were inaccurate. But how could they have been? The 'originals' never existed. The words were entirely Louÿs's invention – a clever parody. Debussy must surely have known the truth, but he does not let on in his musical settings of 1898, *Chansons de Bilitis*, which seductively conjure up an Ancient Grecian idyll.

Debussy had some reservations about the texts, however, a friend recalling that 'he only just brought himself to excuse them for their grace and the frankness of their language ... and even then, not all of them'. Yet he embraced the fluidity of the prose, allowing the voice to float freely over the piano's more regular material. This sense of freedom, achieved via the syllabic, speech-like treatment of the words, was hailed by the writer Romain Rolland as the finest example of French word setting known to him, and is audible in the small, falling intervals of the first song, 'La flûte de Pan', its modal piano writing evoking the work's ancient setting. (This was not Debussy's last encounter with Pan; in 1913 he would revisit the same myth in the solo flute work, *Syrinx*.) In 'La chevelure' the music builds in intensity until the voice unleashes a dramatic gesture at '*bouche*' ('mouth'), whereas 'Le tombeau des naïades' is a chilly song without a clear sense of resolution.

Harsh weather is also the subject of the dramatic 'Schlechtes Wetter' by **Richard Strauss**. To words by Heinrich Heine, the song is the fifth of Strauss's five *Kleine Lieder* Op. 69 (1918). The second is 'Einerlei', to a poem by Ludwig Achim von Arnim paying tribute to the joys of long-term love; Strauss takes the music in wide-ranging harmonic directions via light, animated piano textures and an agile vocal line. Strauss's approach to song-writing was unusual; whereas most composers start with a text, Strauss found words to fit his ideas: '... a song appears in the twinkling of an eye as soon as I come across a poem more or less corresponding to the subject of the imaginary song'. Even so, Strauss favoured certain poets and must have drawn inspiration from their words, even subconsciously. One favourite was Adolf Friedrich von Schack, whose poetry Strauss chose for his Opp. 17 and 19, and for his 5 *Lieder* Op. 15 (1886), from which we hear No. 3, 'Lob des Leidens'. Whereas 'Le tombeau des naïades' contrasts images of spring and winter, this song juxtaposes the qualities of spring and autumn, embracing the bittersweet nature of decay and loss – a theme that

recurs in Strauss's finest works, from *Der Rosenkavalier* to the 4 *Last Songs*.

Sunshine penetrates the gloom in the 7 *canciones populares españolas* (1914) by **Manuel de Falla**, a set that includes both authentic and adapted folksongs to a range of spirited texts. The songs were composed when Falla was still in Paris – where he knew Debussy, among others – but with the outbreak of the First World War he returned to Spain. 'El paño moruno' comes from Murcia, and Falla would reference this tune in association with a Murcian miller in his ballet, *The Three-Cornered Hat*. The 'Seguidilla murciana' is in an urgent triple time and is linked with the same part of Spain, whereas the sensual 'Asturiana' evokes the Asturias region. 'Jota' is a dance form that begins with a rhythmical introduction leading into a spontaneous melody, and 'Nana' is an Andalusian lullaby, its modal inflections shifting between major and minor key areas. In 'Canción', an apparently simple melody unfolds with a poignant undercurrent simmering beneath the surface, and the set ends with 'Polo', an Andalusian tune with strident accompaniment, passionately conveying the lover's tale of woe.

Mists descend again in 'Nacht', the first of the 7 *frühe Lieder* by **Alban Berg**, who occupied a dream-like musical realm that looked to the future via techniques developed with his teacher, Schoenberg, yet who never lost sight of what had gone before. As the critic Theodor W Adorno once put it, Berg wrote 'with memory's long, veiled gaze sunk deep into the past, that past which his music, even at its most daring, never forgets to consider'. Berg had already composed these songs when he began lessons with Schoenberg, and had such a powerful affinity with song that his teacher was concerned: 'Alban Berg ... is an extraordinarily gifted composer. But the state he was in when he came to me was such that his imagination could not work on anything but *Lieder*.'

In 'Nacht', the initial murkiness of Carl Hauptmann's imagery gives way to nocturnal clarity, matched by Berg's distinctions between rich harmonies and a soaring vocal line. Lyrical chromaticism characterises the crepuscular 'Schilflied', to words by Nikolaus Lenau, and this recital's contrasts between night and day, between cool and heat, return in Berg's setting of Theodor Storm's 'Die Nachtigall'. 'Traumgekrönt' was composed while Berg was wooing his wife-to-be, Helene Nahowski; he quotes Rilke's poem in a letter written to her just after he had finished the song. Its brilliant white chrysanthemums fade in the contented autumn sunshine of 'Im Zimmer', but a summer breeze eavesdrops on the powerful eroticism of the 'Liebesode', building to the ecstasies of 'Sommertage'.

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Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Chansons de Bilitis

(1897-8)

Pierre Louÿs

La flûte de Pan

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

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

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

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

La chevelure

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

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

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

Songs of Bilitis

The flute of Pan

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

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

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

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

The tresses of hair

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

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

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

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

Le tombeau des naïades

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

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

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

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

Richard Strauss

(1864-1949)

Einerlei Op. 69 No. 3

(1918)

Ludwig Achim von Arnim

Ihr Mund ist stets derselbe,
Sein Kuss mir immer neu,
Ihr Auge noch dasselbe,
Sein freier Blick mir treu;
O du liebes Einerlei,
Wie wird aus dir so mancherlei!

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

The tomb of the Naiads

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

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

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

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

Sameness

Her mouth is always the same,
its kiss is ever new,
her eyes remain the same,
their frank gaze true to me;
O you dear sameness,
the diversity that comes of you!

Lob des Leidens

Op. 15 No. 3 (1884-6)

Adolf Friedrich, Graf von Schack

O, schmäht des Lebens Leiden
nicht!
Seht ihr die Blätter, wenn sie
sterben,
Sich in des Herbstes goldenem
Licht
Nicht reicher, als im Frühling
färben?
Was gleicht der Blüte des
Vergehens
Im Hauche des Oktoberwehens?

Krystallner als die klarste
Flut
Erglänzt des Auges Tränenquelle.
Tief dunkler flammt die
Abendglut,
Als hoch am Tag die Sonnenhelle,
Und keiner kusst so heißen Kuss,
Als wer für ewig scheiden muss.

Schlechtes Wetter

Op. 69 No. 5 (1918)

Heinrich Heine

Das ist ein schlechtes Wetter,
Es regnet und stürmt und
schneit;
Ich sitze am Fenster und schaue
Hinaus in die Dunkelheit.

Da schimmert ein einsames
Lichtchen,
Das wandelt langsam fort;
Ein Mütterchen mit dem Laternchen
Wankt über die Strasse dort.

Ich glaube, Mehl und Eier
Und Butter kaufte sie ein;
Sie will einen Kuchen backen
Fürs grosse Töchterlein.

Die liegt zu Haus im Lehnstuhl,
Und blinzelt schläfrig ins Licht;
Die goldenen Locken wallen
Über das süsse Gesicht.

In praise of sorrow

O do not revile life's
sorrows!
Do you not see dying
leaves,
in autumn's golden
light,
turn a richer hue than in
spring?
What can compare with blooms
that die
in the sighing October breezes?

More crystalline than the
clearest stream
is the glint of tear-welling eyes.
Evening glows deeper and
darker
than the noonday sun overhead,
and no one kisses so ardently
as those who must part forever.

Dreadful weather

This is dreadful weather,
it's raining and blowing and
snowing;
I sit at my window and stare
out into the darkness.

One solitary light flickers out
there,
moving slowly along;
a little old woman with a lantern
totters across the street.

I fancy it's flour and eggs
and butter she's been buying;
she's going to bake a cake
for her big little daughter.

She lolls at home in the armchair,
blinking sleepily into the light;
her golden curls tumble down
over her sweet face.

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

7 canciones populares españolas (1914)

Traditional

El paño moruno

Al paño fino, en la tienda,
Una mancha le cayó.
Por menos precio se vende,
Porque perdió su valor.
¡Ay!

Seguidilla murciana

Cualquiera que el tejado
Tenga de vidrio,
No debe tirar piedras
Al del vecino.
Arrieros semos;
¡Puede que en el camino,
Nos encontremos!
Por tu mucha inconstancia,
Yo te comparo
Con peseta que corre
De mano en mano.
Que al fin se borra,
Y creyéndola falsa
Nadie la toma!

Asturiana

Por ver si me consolaba
Arrimeme a un pino verde.
Por verme llorar, lloraba.
Y el pino como era verde,
Por verme llorar, lloraba!

Jota

Dicen que no nos queremos,
Porque no nos ven hablar.
A tu corazón y al mío,
Se lo pueden preguntar.

Ya me despido de tí,
De tu casa y tu ventana.
Y aunque no quiera tu
madre.
Adiós, niña, hasta mañana.

The Moorish cloth

On the delicate fabric in the shop
there fell a stain.
It sells for less,
for it has lost its value.
Ay!

Seguidilla from Murcia

People who live
in glass houses
shouldn't throw stones
at their neighbour's.
We are drovers;
it may be
we'll meet on the road!
For your many infidelities
I shall compare you
to a peseta passing
from hand to hand,
till finally it's worn down –
and believing it false
no one will take it.

Asturian song

To see if it might console me
I drew near a green pine
to see me weep, it wept.
And the pine, since it was green,
wept to see me weeping!

Jota

They say we're not in love
since they never see us talk;
let them ask
your heart and mine!

I must leave you now,
your house and your window,
and though your mother
disapprove,
goodbye, sweet love, till tomorrow.

Nana

Duérmete, niño, duerme,
Duerme, mi alma,
Duérmete, lucerito,
De la mañana.
Nanita, nana,
Duérmete, lucerito
De la mañana.

Lullaby

Sleep, little one, sleep,
sleep, my darling,
sleep, my little
morning star.
Lullay, lullay,
sleep, my little
morning star.

Canción

Por traidores, tus ojos,
Voy a enterrarlos.
No sabes lo que cuesta
'Del aire'.
Niña, el mirarlos
'Madre, a la orilla'.

Song

Since your eyes are treacherous,
I'm going to bury them;
you know not what it costs.
'del aire',
dearest, to gaze into them.
'Mother, a la orilla'.

Dicen que no me quieres,
Ya me has querido.
Váyase lo ganado
'Del aire'.
Por lo perdido,
'Madre, a la orilla'.

They say you do not love me,
but you loved me once.
Make the best of it
'del aire',
and cut your losses,
'Mother, a la orilla'.

Polo

¡Ay!
Guardo una pena en mi pecho
Que a nadie se la diré.

Polo

Ay!
I have an ache in my heart
of which I can tell no one.

¡Malhaya el amor, malhaya
Y quien me lo dió a entender
¡Ay!

A curse on love, and a curse
on the one who made me feel it!
Ay!

Alban Berg (1885-1935)

7 frühe Lieder (1905-8)

7 Early Songs

Nacht

Carl Hauptmann

Night

Dämmern Wolken über Nacht
und Tal.
Nebel schweben. Wasser
rauschen sacht.
Nun entschleierte sich's mit
einem Mal.
O gib acht! gib acht!

Clouds loom over night and
valley.
Mists hover, waters softly
murmur.
Now at once all is
unveiled.
O take heed! take heed!

Weites Wunderland ist aufgetan,
Silbern ragen Berge traumhaft
gross,

A vast wonderland opens up,
silvery mountains soar
dreamlike tall,

Stille Pfade silberlicht
talan
Aus verborg'nem Schoss.

silent paths climb silver-bright
valleywards
from a hidden womb.

Und die hehre Welt so traumhaft
rein.
Stummer Buchenbaum am
Wege steht
Schattenschwarz – ein Hauch
vom fernen Hain
Einsam leise weht.

And the glorious world so
dreamlike pure.
A silent beech-tree stands by
the wayside
shadow-black – a breath from
the distant grove
blows solitary soft.

Und aus tiefen Grundes
Düsterheit
Blinken Lichter auf in stummer
Nacht.
Trinke Seele! trinke Einsamkeit!
O gib acht! gib acht!

And from the deep valley's
gloom
lights twinkle in the silent
night.
Drink soul! drink solitude!
O take heed! take heed!

Schilflied

Nikolaus Lenau

Auf geheimem Waldespfade
Schleich' ich gern im
Abendschein
An das öde Schilfgestade,
Mädchen, und gedenke dein!

Reed song

Along a secret forest path
I love to steal in the evening
light
to the desolate reedy shore
and think, my girl, of you!

Wenn sich dann der Busch
verdüstert,
Rauscht das Rohr geheimnisvoll,
Und es klaget und es flüstert,
Dass ich weinen, weinen soll.

When the bushes then grow
dark,
the reeds pipe mysteriously,
lamenting and whispering,
that I must weep, must weep.

Und ich mein', ich höre wehen
Leise deiner Stimme Klang,
Und im Weiher untergehen
Deinen lieblichen Gesang.

And I seem to hear
the soft sound of your voice,
and your lovely singing
drowning in the pond.

Die Nachtigall

Theodor Storm

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

The nightingale

It is because the nightingale
has sung throughout the night,
that from the sweet sound
of her echoing song
the roses have sprung up.

Sie war doch sonst ein wildes Blut,
Nun geht sie tief in Sinnen;
Trägt in der Hand den Sommerhut
Und duldet still der Sonne Glut
Und weiss nicht, was beginnen.

She was once a wild creature,
now she wanders deep in thought;
in her hand a summer hat,
bearing in silence the sun's heat,
not knowing what to do.

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;

It is because the nightingale
has sung throughout the night,

Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

that from the sweet sound
of her echoing song
the roses have sprung up.

Traumgekrönt

Rainer Maria Rilke

Das war der Tag der weissen
Chrysanthemen, –
Mir bangte fast vor seiner
Pracht...
Und dann, dann kamst du mir
die Seele nehmen
Tief in der Nacht.

That was the day of the white
chrysanthemums –
its brilliance almost frightened
me...
And then, then you came to take
my soul
at the dead of night.

Mir war so bang, und du kamst
lieb und leise, –
Ich hatte grad im Traum an dich
gedacht.
Du kamst, und leis wie eine
Märchenweise
Erklang die Nacht...

I was so frightened, and you
came sweetly and gently,
I had been thinking of you in my
dreams.
You came, and soft as a fairy
tune
the night rang out...

Im Zimmer

Johannes Schlaf

Herbstsonnenschein.
Der liebe Abend blickt so still
herein.
Ein Feuerlein rot
Knistert im Ofenloch und loht.

Autumn sunshine.
The lovely evening looks in so
silently.
A little red fire
crackles and blazes in the hearth.

So! – Mein Kopf auf deinen
Knie'n. –
So ist mir gut;
Wenn mein Auge so in deinem
ruht.

Like this! – with my head on
your knees. –
Like this I am content;
when my eyes rest in yours like
this.

Wie leise die Minuten ziehn!...

How gently the minutes pass!...

Liebesode

Otto Erich Hartleben

Im Arm der Liebe schliefen wir
selig ein.
Am offenen Fenster lauschte der
Sommerwind,
Und unsrer Atemzüge
Frieden
Trug er hinaus in die helle
Mondnacht. –

In love's arms we fell blissfully
asleep.
The summer wind listened at
the open window,
and carried the peace of our
breathing
out into the moon-bright
night. –

Und aus dem Garten tastete
zagend sich
Ein Rosenduft an unserer Liebe
Bett
Und gab uns wundervolle Träume,
Träume des Rausches – so
reich an Sehnsucht!

And from the garden a scent of
roses
came timidly to our bed of
love
and gave us wonderful dreams,
ecstatic dreams – so rich in
longing!

Sommertage

Paul Hohenberg

Nun ziehen Tage über die Welt,
Gesandt aus blauer Ewigkeit,
Im Sommerwind verweht die
Zeit.
Nun windet nächtens der Herr
Sternenkränze mit seliger Hand
Über Wander- und
Wunderland.

Summer days

Days, sent from blue eternity,
journey now across the world,
time drifts away in the summer
wind.
The Lord at night now garlands
star-chains with his blessed hand
across lands of wandering and
wonder.

O Herz, was kann in diesen Tagen
Dein hellstes Wanderlied denn
sagen
Von deiner tiefen, tiefen Lust:
Im Wiesensang verstummt die
Brust,
Nun schweigt das Wort, wo Bild
um Bild
Zu dir zieht und dich ganz
erfüllt.

In these days, O heart, what can
your brightest travel-song
say
of your deep, deep joy?
The heart falls silent in the
meadows' song,
words now cease when image
after image
comes to you and fills you
utterly.

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