

WIGMORE HALL 125

Saturday 22 November 2025
7.30pm

Lawrence Brownlee tenor
Iain Burnside piano

Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)

Il sospiro (c.1820)

Me voglio fa'na casa (1837)

Tu porgesti

L'amante spagnuolo 'Corri destrier, deh celere' (1837)

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Pioggia (1909)

Nevicata (1906)

Nebbie (pub. 1906)

Luigi Denza (1846-1922)

Occhi di Fata (1905)

Gabriele Sibella (1880-?)

La Girometta (1918)

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

3 sonetti di Petrarca S270/1 (1842-6)

*Pace non trovo (Sonnet No. 104) • Benedetto sia'l giorno
(Sonnet No. 47) • I' vidi in terra angelici costumi (Sonnet
No. 123)*

Interval

Dominick Argento (1927-2019)

6 Elizabethan Songs (1957)

Spring • Sleep • Winter • Dirge • Diaphenia • Hymn

Ricky Ian Gordon (b.1956)

From *Genius Child* (1995)

*Winter Moon • Kid in the Park • To be somebody •
Troubled woman • Joy*

Robert Owens (1925-2017)

Desire (1975)

Desire • Dream • Juliet • Man

Jasmine Barnes (b.1991)

Peace (2023)

Joel Thompson (b.1988)

My People (2022)



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This evening's programme – a collection of Italian and American works – is united through lyricism: of musical line; of vocal quality; of the holistic blending of lyric poetry – early and modern – with wide-ranging musical inspirations spanning the last two centuries.

Gaetano Donizetti, best known as the extraordinarily prolific composer of *bel canto* opera, also left a legacy of around 200 solo songs. Of the four presented here – a selection from Lawrence Brownlee's ongoing collaboration with Opera Rara – Donizetti's operatic tendencies are immediately apparent. From his writing for piano – redolent of his orchestral scoring – to the virtuosity of the vocal line, these are songs rooted both in traditions and developments of the Italian operatic form and in the history of the Italian chamber song, and its celebration of the sheer beauty of the singing voice.

Otto Respighi was not only a composer but also a musicologist with a profound interest in early music, whose new transcriptions of works from composers including Monteverdi and Porpora formed a crucial part of the 20th-century revival of Renaissance and Baroque musics. The songs presented here do not seek to imitate the style of that earlier Italian tradition, but fully engage its centring of word painting in voice and musical accompaniment, as the weather of each piece prompts a reflection on different aspects of love. This selection moves from *Pioggia*'s shimmering rainfall to the swirling gusts of snow in *Nevicata*, before closing with Respighi's best known solo song, the deeply operatic *Nebbie*, in which the the colours and density of the obscuring mist heighten the compressed intensity of the drama.

Luigi Denza was best known for the staggering success of his comedic song 'Funiculi, Funiculà', which sold over a million copies within the first year of its publication. Denza's popular songs became particular favourites of the legendary Italian tenors – Caruso, Gigli, Pavarotti – and *Occhi di Fata* (Fairy Eyes) is a perfect example of his style: a sentimental love song and rousing crowd-pleaser. In similar fashion, **Gabriele Sibella** was best known for his popular art songs, published by Schirmer throughout the 1910s. While his works have fallen out of public attention, the light-hearted *La Girometta* has maintained a place as a popular favourite.

The 3 *sonneti di Petrarca* date from **Franz Liszt's** Italian travels with his lover Marie d'Agoult, which he would later transform into the Italian section of his *Années de pèlerinage* – including these sonnets, rescored for solo piano. The extraordinary romanticism of these settings are due not only to the source material – one of the great literary loves, the unrequited adoration of Petrarch for his Laura – but from Liszt's personal experiences with the same, reading Petrarch with d'Agoult together in Italy. The three sonnets are as dramatically intense as would be expected: three near-operatic arias, anchored by the rapturous amazement that Laura inspired.

The compositional career of **Dominick Argento** was marked by his focus on and expansion of the possibilities of the vocal form: operas, song cycle, and choral works. He won the Pulitzer for his 1974 monodrama *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf – the Six Elizabethan Songs*, while audibly an earlier work, still hints towards the developments of his later style. This cycle was written in 1957 in Florence, a city Argento first visited as a Fulbright scholar, and which assumed an enormous importance in his compositional career: a place he would return to again and again for inspiration.

Ricky Ian Gordon – a composer of opera and also of musical theatre – brings an interdisciplinary blurring of boundaries to this song cycle setting of works by Langston Hughes. Not only Gordon's compositional sensitivity, but also his talents as a poet, are apparent in his response to Hughes's words: lines which combine the naturalistic and conversational with the deliberately song-like; language which turns lush, cutting, wry, and nakedly vulnerable – echoed within and back from Gordon's music.

The three final works of this evening's programme are taken from Lawrence Brownlee's *Rising* project: a musical celebration of the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance, featuring six new commissions from leading African-American composers alongside older works. In Brownlee's own words: 'It is those themes of uplift, elevation, and rebirth that we have tried to focus on with this new project...to create something that speaks not just to our struggles, but to our triumphs.'

Robert Owens was a composer, pianist, and actor; he first set Langston Hughes's poetry to music at Hughes's own invitation, and to his subsequent high praise. *Desire* opens with a sense of landing in media res, the listener instantly plunged into the locktight combination of music and poetry. In a perfect accompaniment to Hughes's style, Owens's keeps his settings short and both viscerally and intellectually immediate.

Jasmine Barnes is an Emmy Award-winning composer and vocalist, her deep understanding of the voice clear both from her compositional focus on opera and song and from the intense lyricism and ease of her vocal writing. *Peace* is a setting of the words of Georgia Douglas Johnson, a prolific playwright and poet – through Barnes's music the promise of the words finds their fulfilment in the sheer, powerful, still beauty of the sound.

Joel Thompson – Emmy Award-winning composer, pianist and conductor – is currently Composer in Residence for Houston Grand Opera while studying for his DMA in Composition at Yale School of Music. *My People*, another setting of Langston Hughes, marries Thompson's skills with both piano and voice in this questioning, questing work, finishing this evening's programme with the disarming power of the virtuosic voice, blending strength and grace in equal measure.

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Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)

Il sospiro (c.1820)

Carlo Guaita

Donna infelice, stanca
d'amore,
L'eterno sonno chiedi
all'avel?
Deh! non rammenti, che qui
v'è un core
Che, te perduta, perduto ha
il ciel?

L'Eden ridente quaggiù la
speme
Rinnovellata ci può donar.
Se implori morte, moriamo
insieme,
Angiol mio caro, non mi
lasciar.

Ma se ricusi ch'or teco
stretto
Nel riso eterno debba
salir,
Onde la vita mi resti in
petto,
Dammi l'estremo caldo
sospir.

Me voglio fa'na casa

(1837)

Anonymous

Me voglio fa 'na casa miez'o
mare
Fravecata de penne de
pavune,
Tralla la le la...

D'oro e d'argiento li scaline
fare
E de prete preziuse li
barcune,
Tralla la le la...

Quanno Nennella mia se va a
facciare
Ognuno dice 'mò sponta lu
sole',
Tralla la le la...

The sigh

Unhappy lady, weary of
love,
do you call on the grave
for eternal sleep?
Have you forgotten
there's a heart here
which, if it loses you, has
lost heaven?

Renewed hope can give
us
a blissful Eden here on earth.
If you beg for death, then
let us die together,
my beloved angel, do not
abandon me.

But if you will not allow
me to hold you close
and soar up with you
towards eternal joy,
then give me one last
warm sigh
to keep life alive within
my breast.

I want to build a
house

I want to build a house in
the middle of the sea,
all made of peacock
feathers,
tralla la le la...

With stairs of silver and
gold,
and balconies of precious
stones,
tralla la le la...

When my Nennella
appears at the window,
everyone will say, 'Now
the sun is rising',
tralla la le la...

Tu porgesti

Cristino Rasponi

Tu porgesti a me l'anello,
Casto pegno dell'amore,
Sempre bacio quel gioiello
Me l'accosto ognora al core;
Deh, risorgi in braccio a me,
Ti ho serbata la mia fé.

Io promisi a te da
viva,
Tel giurai appena
spenta,
La mia mano la ravviva,
Il tuo cener l'alimenta;
Deh, risorgi in braccio a me,
Ti rinnovo la mia fé.

L'amante spagnuolo

(1837)

Leopoldo Tarantini

Corri, destrier, deh,
celere!
Corri! La via divora!
Recami accanto all'angelo
Che la mia vita infiora.
Deh, pria che l'alba in cielo
Spanda il suo roseo velo,
L'avverta il tuo nitrito
Che il suo fedel tornò.
E il volto a lei di giubilo
Tu scintillar farai,
E de' suoi dì delizia,
O mio destrier, sì,
sarai.
Verrà la man pudica
A carezzarti amica,
E men di te felice
Io stesso allor sarò.

You handed me

You handed me the ring,
A chaste pledge of love,
I always kiss that jewel,
I always press it to my heart;
Ah, rise up in my arms,
I have kept my faith in you.

I promised you when you
were alive,
I swore to you when you
died,
My hand revives it
Your ashes revive it;
Ah, rise up in my arms,
I renew my faith in you.

The Spanish Lover

Run, my fine steed, fly
along now!
Run, run! Devour the miles!
Bear me to the angel
who fills my life with grace.
Ah, before dawn casts
its rosy veil across the sky,
let your whinny alert her
that her faithful lover is back.
You will make her face
light up with joy,
and you, my fine horse,
will be the delight of her
days.
She will gently stroke you
with her chaste hand,
and my happiness
will pale before yours.

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Pioggia (1909)
Vittoria Aganoor Pompilj

Piovea: per le finestre
spalancate
A quella tregua di ostinati
odori
Saliano dal giardin fresche
folate
D'erbe risorte e di risorti
fiori.

S'accettava il tumulto dei
colori
Sotto il vel delle goccioline
implorate;
E intorno ai pioppi ai frassini
agli allori
Beveano ingorde le zolle
assetate.

Esser pianta, esser foglia,
esser stelo
E nell'angoscia dell'ardor
(pensavo)
Così largo ristoro aver dal
cielo!

Sul davanzal protesa io gli
arboscelli,
I fiori, l'erbe guardavo
guardavo
E mi battea la pioggia sui
capelli.

Nevicata (1906)
Ada Negri

Sui campi e sulle
strade,
Silenziosa e lieve,
Volteggiando, la neve
Cade.

Danza la falda Bianca
Nell'ampio ciel scherzosa,
Poi sul terren si posa
Stanca.

In mille immote
forme
Sui tetti e sui
camini,
Sui cippi e nei giardini
Dorme.

Rainfall

Raining: through the
windows thrust open
to that respite of
persistent scents,
rising from the garden,
fresh gusts
of grasses and flowers
resurrected.

The tumult of colours was
appeased
beneath the veil of
imploring drops;
and from the poplars to the
ash trees to the laurels,
the thirsty clods of earth
drank greedily.

To be a plant, to be a leaf,
to be a stem
and in the anguish of this
ardour (I thought)
obtain such great
refreshment from the sky!

On the windowsill I
leaned; the saplings,
the flowers, the grasses, I
was watching, watching,
and the rain beat down on
my hair.

A little snowfall

On the fields and on the
streets,
silent and light,
swirling, the snow
falls.

The white layer dances
in the vast sky, jokingly,
then settles on the earth
exhausted.

In a thousand motionless
shapes
on rooftops and on
chimneys,
on stones and in gardens,
it sleeps.

Tutto dintorno è pace:
Chiuso in oblio profondo,
Indifferente il mondo
Tace ...

Ma ne la calma immensa
Torna ai ricordi il core,
E ad un sopito amore
Pensa.

Nebbie (pub. 1906)
Ada Negri

Soffro, lontan lontano
Le nebbie sonnolente
Salgono dal tacente
Piano.

Alto gracchiando, i corvi,
Fidati all'ali
nere,
Traversan le brughiere
Torvi.

Dell'aere ai morsi crudi
Gli addolorati tronchi
Offron, pregando, i bronchi
Nudi.

Come ho freddo! Son sola:
Pel grigio ciel sospinto
Un gemito distinto
Vola

E mi ripete: Vieni;
È buia la vallata.
O triste, o
disamata,
Vieni! Vieni!

All around is peace:
closed in deep oblivion,
indifferent, the world
is silent ...

But in the immense calm,
the heart turns to memories,
and on a faded love
reflects.

Mists

I suffer; far, far away;
the drowsy mists
rise from the silent
heath.

Shrilly cawing, the crows,
on their steadfast black
wings,
traverse the sinister
moors.

To the air's pitiless bite
the mournful tree trunks
offer, praying, their naked
branches.

How cold I am! I am alone:
driven through the grey sky
a dying cry
flies

And repeats to me: 'Come,
the valley is dark.
Oh, sad one; oh, unloved
one,
come! Come!'

Luigi Denza (1846-1922)

Occhi di Fata (1905)
Tremacoldo

O begl'occhi di fata,
O begl'occhi stranissimi e
profondi,
Voi m'avete rubata
La pace della prima
gioventù.
Bella signora dai capelli
biondi,
Per la mia giovinezza che
v'ho data,
Mi darete di
più?

O sì, voi mi darete
Dei vostri baci la febbre e
l'ardore!
Voi pallida cadrete
Tra le mie braccia aperte e
sul mio cor.
Della mia gioventù prendete
il fiore.
Del mio giovine sangue il fior
prendete,
Ma datemi
l'amor!

Fairy eyes

O beautiful fairy eyes,
o beautiful eyes so
strange and deep,
you have spirited away
the peace of my early
youth.
Fair lady with your golden
tresses,
will you give me
something in return
for the youth I have given
you?

Oh yes, you will give me
the fever and passion of
your kisses!
Lily-white, you will fall
into my arms and on to
my heart.
Take the flower of my
youth.
Take the flower of my
youthful blood,
but give me your love in
return!

Gabriele Sibella (1880-?)

La Girometta (1918)
Anonymous

Chi t'ha fatto quelle
scarpette
Che ti stan sì ben?
Girometta, che ti stan sì
ben?
Me l'ha fatte lo mio
Amore,
Che mi vol gran ben,
Girometta, che mi vol gran
ben.

Chi t'ha fatto quelle
calzette,
Che ti stan sì ben?
Girometta, che ti stan sì
ben?
Me l'ha fatte lo mio
Amore,
Che mi vol gran ben,
Girometta, che mi vol gran
ben.

The Spinner

Who made you those
little shoes
That fit you so well?
Girometta, that fit you so
well!
My beloved made them
for me,
He loves me so dearly.
Girometta, he loves me so
dearly.

Who made you those
little stockings
That fit you so well?
Girometta, that fit you so
well!
My beloved made them
for me,
He loves me so dearly.
Girometta, he loves me so
dearly.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

3 sonetti di Petrarca S270/1 (1842-6)
Petrarch

Pace non trovo (Sonnet No. 104) I find no peace

Pace non trovo, e non ho da
far guerra,
E temo, e spero, ed
ardo, e son un
ghiaccio:
E volo sopra 'l cielo, e
giaccio in terra;
E nulla stringo, tutto 'l
mondo abbraccio.

Tal m'ha in prigion,
che non m'apre, né
serra,
Né per suo mi ritien,
né scioglie il
laccio,
E non m'accide Amor, e non
mi sferra;
Né mi vuol vivo, né mi trahe
d'impaccio.

Veggio senz'occhi; e non ho
lingua e grido;
E bramo di perir, e cheggio
aita;
Ed ho in odio me stesso, ed
amo altrui:

Pascomi di dolor; piangendo
rido;
Egualemente mi spiace morte
e vita.
In questo stato son, Donna,
per Voi.

I find no peace, and am
not inclined for war;
and I fear, and I hope, and
burn, and am turned to
ice,
and I soar in the air, and
lie upon the ground;
and I hold nothing, though I
embrace the world.

Love has me in a prison,
which he neither opens
nor locks;
he neither claims me for
his own, nor loosens my
halter;
and Love neither slays
me, nor unshackles me;
he would not have me live,
yet he torments me.

I see without eyes; and
cry without a tongue;
I long to perish, and plead
for help;
I hate myself and love
another:

I feed on grief; weeping I
laugh;
death, like life, repels
me.
You have reduced me,
my lady, to this state.

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

**Benedetto sia'l giorno
(Sonnet No. 47)**

Benedetto sia 'l giorno, e 'l
mese, e l'anno,
E la stagione, e 'l
tempo, e l'ora, e 'l
punto
E 'l bel paese e 'l
loco, ov'io fui
giunto
Da' duo begli occhi che
legato m'anno;

E benedetto il primo dolce
affanno
Ch'i' ebbi ad esser con Amor
congiunto,
E l'arco e la saette ond' i' fui
punto,
E le piaghe, ch'infinò al cor
mi vanno.

Benedette le voci tante,
ch'io
Chiamando il nome di mia
Laura ho sparte,
E i sospiri e le lagrime e 'l
desio.

E benedette sian tutte le
carte
Ov'io fama le acquisto, e il
pensier mio,
Ch'è sol di lei, sì, ch'altra non
v'ha parte.

**I' vidi in terra angelici
costumi (Sonnet No.
123)**

I' vidi in terra angelici
costumi,
E celesti bellezze al mondo
sole;
Tal che di rimembrar mi
giova, e dole:
Che quant'io miro, par sogni,
ombre, e fumi.

E vidi lagrimar que' duo bei
lumi,
Ch'han fatto mille volte
invidia al sole;
Ed udi' sospirando dir
parole
Che farian gir i monti, e stare
i fiumi.

Blessed be the day

Blessed be the day, the
month, the year,
and the season, and the
time, and the hour, and
the moment,
and the lovely landscape,
and the spot where I
was enthralled
by two lovely eyes that
have enslaved me.

And blessed be the first
sweet pang I suffered,
when Love overwhelmed
me,
the bow and the arrows
which stung me,
and the wounds which
penetrate my heart.

Blessed be the many voices
that have echoed
when I have called my
Laura's name,
and the sighs and the
tears, and the longing.

And blessed be all those
writings,
in which I have spread her
fame, and my thoughts,
which stem from her
alone.

**I beheld on earth
angelic grace**

I beheld on earth angelic
grace
and heavenly beauty
unmatched in this world,
such as rejoice and pain
my memory,
which is clouded with
dreams, shadows, mists.

And I beheld tears spring
from those lovely eyes,
which many a time have
put the sun to shame.
And I heard words
uttered with such sighs,
that mountains would be
moved and rivers halted.

Amor! senno! valor, pietate,
e doglia
Facean piangendo un più
dolce concerto
D'ogni altro, che nel mondo
udir si soglia.

Ed era 'l cielo all'armonia
s'intento
Che non si vedea in ramo
mover foglia.
Tanta dolcezza avea pien
l'aer e 'l vento.

Love! wisdom! valour, pity
and grief
created in that lament a
sweeter concert
than any other to be
heard on earth.

And heaven was so intent
on that harmony,
that not a leaf was seen to
move on the bough;
such sweetness had filled
the air and the wind.

Interval

Dominick Argento (1927-2019)

**6 Elizabethan Songs (1957)
Spring**

Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherd pipes all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
Spring! The sweet Spring!

Sleep

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,
Relieve my anguish and restore thy light,
With dark forgetting of my cares, return;
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventur'd youth:
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease, dreams, th' images of day-desires
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising sun approve you liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain;
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

Winter

When icicles hang by the wall
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail;
When blood is nipt and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl:
Tu-who!
Tu-whit! Tu-who! - A merry note!
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl
Then nightly sings the staring owl:
Tu-who!
Tu-whit! Tu-who! - A merry note!
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

Dirge

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be [thrown]4:
Lay me, O where
True lover never find my grave,
To weep there!

Diaphenia

Diaphenia, like the daffadowndilly,
White as the sun, fair as the lily,
Heigh ho, how I do love thee!
I do love thee as my lambs
Are belovèd of their dams:
How blest were I if thou would'st prove me.

Diaphenia, like the spreading roses,
That in thy sweets all sweets encloses,
Fair sweet, how I do love thee!
I do love thee as each flower
Loves the sun's life-giving power;
For dead, thy breath to life might move me.

Diaphenia, like to all things blessèd,
When all thy praises are expressèd,
Dear joy, how I do love thee!
As the birds do love the spring,
Or the bees their careful king, -
Then in requite, sweet virgin, love me!

Hymn

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heav'n to clear when day did close;
Bless us then with wishèd sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
And thy crystal shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short so-ever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright.

Ricky Ian Gordon (b.1956)

From *Genius Child* (1995)
Langston Hughes

Winter Moon

How thin and sharp is the moon tonight!
How thin and sharp and ghostly white
Is the slim curved crook of the moon tonight!

Kid in the Park

Lonely little question mark
on a bench in the park:

See the people passing by?
See the airplanes in the sky?
See the birds
flying home
before
dark?

Home's just around
the corner
there –
but not really
anywhere.

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

To be somebody

Little girl
Dreaming of a baby grand piano
(Not knowing there's a Steinway bigger, bigger)
Dreaming of a baby grand to play
That stretches paddle-tailed across the floor,
Not standing upright
Like a bad boy in the corner,
But sending music
Up the stairs and down the stairs
And out the door
To confound even Hazel Scott
Who might be passing!

Oh!

Little boy
Dreaming of the boxing gloves
Joe Louis wore,
The gloves that sent
Two dozen men to the floor.
Knockout!
Bam! Bop! Mop!

There's always room,
They say,
At the top.

Troubled woman

She stands
In the quiet darkness,
This troubled woman
Bowed by
Weariness and pain
Like an
Autumn flower
In the frozen rain,
Like a
Wind-blown autumn flower
That never lifts its head
Again.

Joy

I went to look for Joy,
Slim, dancing Joy,
Gay, laughing Joy,
Bright-eyed Joy –
And I found her
Driving the butcher's cart
In the arms of the butcher boy!
Such company, such company,
As keeps this young nymph, Joy!

Robert Owens (1925-2017)

Desire (1975)

Langston Hughes

Desire

Desire to us
Was like a double death,
Swift dying
Of our mingled breath,
Evaporation
Of an unknown strange perfume
Between us quickly
In a naked
Room.

Dream

Last night I dreamt this most strange dream an
everywhere I saw –
What did not seem could ever be: you were not there with
me!
Awake, I turned and touched you asleep, face to the wall.
I said how dreams can lie! But you were not there at all!

Juliet

There are wonder and pain and terror, and sick and silly
songs of sorrow,
And the marrow of the bone of life smeared across her
mouth.
The road from Verona to Mantova is dusty with the
drought.

Man

I was a boy then I did not understand I thought that
friendship lay in the grip of hand to hand
I thought that love must be her body close to mine
I thought that drunkenness was real in wine.
But I was a boy then, I didn't understand the things a
young lad learns so soon, when he's a man, a man, a
man.

Jasmine Barnes (b.1991)

Peace (2023)

Georgia Douglas Johnson

Peace on a thousand hills and dales.
Peace,
Peace in the hearts of men
While kindliness reclaims the soil
Where bitterness,
Where bitterness has been.
Peace.

The night of strife is drifting past,
The storm of shell has ceased.
Disrupted is the cordon fell,
Sweet charity released.
Peace,
Forth from the shadow,
Swift we come
Wrought in the flame together.
All men as one beneath the sun
In the brotherhood forever
Peace.

Joel Thompson (b.1988)

My People (2022)

Langston Hughes

Dream-singers,
Story-tellers,
Dancers,
Loud laughs in the hands of Fate—
My People...
Dish-washers,
Elevator-boys,
Ladies' maids,
Crap-shooters,
My people...
Cooks,
Waiters,
Jazzers,
My People...
Nurses of babies,
Loaders of ships,
Rounders
My People...
Number writers,
Comedians in vaudeville
And band-men in circuses—
Dream-singers all,—
My People...
Story-tellers all,—
My people,
And dancers—
God! What dancers!
Singers—
God! What singers!
Singers and dancers,
Dancers and laughs.
Laughs?
Yes, laughs!
Laughs...
Ha! Ha! Ha!
Dream-singers,
Story-tellers,
Dancers,
And loud-mouthed laughs in the hands...
Loud-mouthed laughs in the hands of Fate –
My People!

Translations of Donizetti Il sospiro, Me voglio fa'na casa & L'amante spagnolo, and Denza by © Susannah Howe. Liszt by © Richard Stokes.

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