

WIGMORE HALL 125

Sunday 23 November 2025
3.00pm

Iestyn Evans piano
Philippa Boyle soprano
Rebecca Hardwick soprano
Diana Moore mezzo-soprano
Michael Bell tenor
Michael Hickman baritone

Hubert Parry (1848-1918)

Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

Muriel Herbert (1897-1984)

Roger Quilter (1877-1953)

Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

Philippa Boyle

My heart is like a singing bird from *English Lyrics, Tenth Set* (1909)

Adoration (1905)

Renouncement (1923)

Music, when soft voices die Op. 25 No. 5 (1926)

Love went a-riding (1914)

~

Michael Hickman

Roger Quilter

3 Shakespeare Songs Op. 6 (1905)

*Come away, Death • O Mistress Mine •
Blow, blow, thou winter wind*

Thomas Dunhill (1877-1946)

The Cloths of Heaven from *The Wind among the Reeds* (1911)

Michael Head (1900-1976)

Limehouse Reach from *6 Sea Songs* (1948)

~

Diana Moore

John Ireland (1879-1962)

A Thanksgiving (1938)

Madeleine Dring (1923-1977)

Take, O take those lips away (c.1960)

Dilys Elwyn-Edwards (1918-2012)

Mae hiraeth yn y Môr (There's longing in the sea) from *Caneuon y Tri Aderyn (Songs of the three birds)* (1962)

Frank Bridge

Come to me in my dreams (1906)

Roger Quilter

Fair house of joy from *7 Elizabethan Lyrics Op. 12* (1908)

~

Michael Bell

Phyllis Tate (1911-1987)

The lark in the clear air (1960)

Roger Quilter

Weep you no more, sad fountains (1908)

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

The dance continued from *A Young Man's Exhortation* Op. 14 (1926-9)

Meirion Williams (1901-1976)

Pan Ddaw'r Nos (1947)

Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

A Prayer to St Anthony of Padua (1925)

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Hark, hark! the lark (pub. 1946)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Silent noon from *The House of Life* (1903)

Meirion Williams

Mai (1939)

Roger Quilter

From 3 songs Op. 3 (1904-5)

Now sleeps the crimson petal • Love's philosophy



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In this afternoon's recital of English and Welsh poetry and song we hear works from a short 60-year period that might be regarded as the second Golden Age of English Song. The first Golden Age, in the time of Elizabeth I, proved a great inspiration for many composers of the early 20th Century, by when British music had just found a new confidence and identity.

We begin in true celebratory manner in a song by **Hubert Parry**, who, as composer and teacher, and as director of the Royal College of Music (RCM) from 1894 until his death in 1918, was one of the founding fathers of this renaissance of British music. Parry's joyous setting of Christina Rossetti's 'A Birthday', 'My heart is a like a singing bird', was published in 1909, in his tenth collection of *English Lyrics*. From this heady anticipation of a lover's arrival, we turn to one in quiet observation of a loved one asleep; a love that eventually overwhelms the attentive watcher, in **Frank Bridge**'s romantic *Adoration*, composed in November 1905. While Bridge attended the RCM early in Parry's tenure as director, **Muriel Herbert** entered the college near its end, in 1917. Her Alice Meynell setting, *Renouncement*, reaches a similarly impassioned climax to that of the Bridge, and was the first of her songs to find a publisher in 1923. In this she was encouraged and aided by Roger Quilter, who was enormously impressed with Herbert's songs. *Renouncement* was dedicated to Quilter in gratitude.

Quilter's own songs draw on the drawing-room ballad tradition in their means, but, in the words of critic Trevor Hold, 'raise it to a perfection never surpassed.' His work punctuates this recital, from some of his many songs to Elizabethan lyrics, in which he found a particular inspiration, to his occasional settings of the Romantic poets. 'Music, when soft voices die' (1926) speaks of the ongoing resonance of music, memory and love, even when it has passed. **Bridge**'s virtuosic *Love went a-riding* (1914) finds the pegasus of love rampaging across the earth, while all it passes plead for it to stay. But love does pass, and bring pain, as told in **Quilter**'s 'Come away, death', the first of his 3 *Shakespeare Songs* of 1905. But, wherever you find it, Shakespeare tells us that most loving is 'mere folly'.

The music of **Thomas Dunhill** is now little known, but he is notable for being the first composer to have set to music the words of Ireland's arch-poet, William Butler Yeats, in 1899. The one work for which Dunhill is now known is 'The Cloths of Heaven', a Yeats setting of simple sadness that he 'scribbled' (as he put it) in early May 1909. While Yeats implores his lover to 'tread softly', that in **Michael Head**'s 'Limehouse Reach' (1948) has already gone off and married another.

Having opened the recital with a heart singing as a bird, in *A Thanksgiving* we encounter more evocations of birdsong in a celebration of an Elizabethan Spring to

words first set by William Cornyshe in 1530. **John Ireland**'s setting is a warm paean, thanking God for nature, first performed in this place in the autumn of 1938.

Returning to Shakespeare, the rocking barcarolle of **Madeleine Dring**'s *Take, O take those lips away* (c.1960) finds someone trying to console themselves in the wake of lost love. The earth comes out in sympathy in **Dilys Elwyn-Edwards**'s 'Mae hiraeth yn y môr' (1962): 'There's longing in the sea, and mountains too', while the wind 'tells its woe'. The translation of the Welsh 'hiraeth' as 'longing' is woefully inadequate, being a word that plumbs the deepest depths of longing, hued with grief and sorrow for what once was. The subject of such 'hiraeth' becomes the stuff only of dreams, as **Frank Bridge** and Matthew Arnold recount in *Come to me in my dreams* (1906).

In spite of love's risks, we cannot help but turn towards that 'Fair house of joy', as told in the first of two songs from **Quilter**'s *Seven Elizabethan Lyrics* (1908). Between these *Elizabethan Lyrics*, the sweet singing of the lark echoes the dear thoughts of one about to see their love, in **Phyllis Tate**'s arrangement of an Irish air.

Sooner or later, however, there comes the final separation; a moment of terrible sorrow for loved ones. However, in **Gerald Finzi**'s 'The Dance Continued' (c.1926-9), one recently departed implores those left behind not to mourn that passing: they will be quite content 'slumbering peacefully' 'beneath the yellowing tree'. **Meirion Williams**'s *Pan Ddaw'r Nos* – 'When night falls' – was written at one such moment of grief, composed on the day that his mother died, in 1947, when she was borne homeward 'to the beautiful dawn'. In spite of the entreaty of **Peter Warlock**'s *Prayer to St. Anthony of Padua* (1925), none may return from that final journey.

While all are lost in time, the cycle of youth and love continues for those that come behind. **Quilter**'s late song *Hark! hark! the lark* (1946) evokes the constant trilling of the lark's song, as the spring begins to show. **Vaughan Williams**'s 'Silent Noon', from his 1903 cycle *The House of Life*, is a radiant, dream-like image of two enrapt lovers, caught up in a sensuously intimate moment. The need to go out in the early morning and witness the emerging spring is extolled in **Meirion Williams**'s impressionistic *Mai* ('May'; 1939). The recital closes with two of **Quilter**'s 3 *Songs*, Op. 3 (1904-5): the simple romantic balladry of 'Now sleeps the crimson petal', and the tumultuous toccata of 'Love's Philosophy', in which the accompaniment depicts both the fountains and rivers of the opening and the heady tumult and passion of falling in love.

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Philippa Boyle

Hubert Parry (1848-1918)

My heart is like a singing bird from *English*

Lyrics, Tenth Set (1909)

Christina Rossetti

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a purple sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of purple and gold;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleur-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love, is come to me.

Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

Adoration (1905)

John Keats

Asleep! O sleep a little while, white pearl!
And let me kneel, and let me pray to thee,
And let me call Heaven's blessing on thine eyes,
And let me breathe into the happy air
That doth enfold and touch thee all about,
Vows of my slavery, my giving up,
My sudden adoration, my great love!

Muriel Herbert (1897-1984)

Renouncement (1923)

Alice Meynell

I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the love that lurks in all delight -
The love of thee - and in the blue heaven's height,
And in the dearest passage of a song.
Oh, just beyond the sweetest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits hidden yet bright;
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.
But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away, -
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gather'd to thy heart.

Roger Quilter (1877-1953)

Music, when soft voices die Op. 25 No. 5 (1926)

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory;
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

Frank Bridge

Love went a-riding (1914)

Mary Coleridge

Love went a-riding over the earth,
On Pegasus he rode ...
The flowers before him sprang to birth,
And the frozen rivers flowed.

Then all the youths and the maidens cried,
'Stay here with us, King of Kings.'
But Love said, 'No! for the horse I ride,
For the horse I ride has wings.'

Michael Hickman

Roger Quilter

3 Shakespeare Songs Op. 6 (1905)

William Shakespeare

Come away, Death

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.
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O, where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there!

O Mistress Mine

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low;
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty;
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind

Blow, blow thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen
Although thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho!
Unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning,
Most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho!
Unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning,
Most loving mere folly
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Thomas Dunhill (1877-1946)

The Cloths of Heaven from *The Wind among the Reeds* (1911)

William Butler Yeats

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths
Enwrought with golden and silver light
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

Michael Head (1900-1976)

Limehouse Reach from *6 Sea Songs* (1948)

Cicely Fox Smith

I fell in love with a Limehouse lass,
But she has proved untrue:
She looked as fresh as a figurehead
That's just been painted new:

But she's took and married a lighterman,
So it's time for me to go,
But I would have loved you so, my dear,
I would have loved you so!

Oh, a shake o' the foresheet pays for all
That a sailor leaves behind,
For an alehouse shot, and a friend forgot,
And a sweetheart false or kind.

And a bloomin' mudhook's off the ground,
For it's time for us to go:
But I would have loved you so, my dear,
I would have loved you so!

Now a long goodbye to Limehouse Reach,
And a last goodbye to you:
A feller's a fool to die for love,
Which I don't mean to do.

There are girls as smart in every port
From here to Callao
But I would have loved you so, my dear,
I would have loved you so!

Diana Moore

John Ireland (1879-1962)

A Thanksgiving (1938)
William Cornish

Pleasure it is
To hear, iwis,
The Birdès sing.
The deer in the dale,
The sheep in the vale,
The corn springing.
God’s purveyance
For sustenance,
It is for man.
Then we always
To give him praise,
And thank him than,
And thank him than.

Madeleine Dring (1923-1977)

Take, O take those lips away (c.1960)
William Shakespeare

Take, O take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn:
But my kisses bring again,
Seals of love, but sealed in vain!

Dilys Elwyn-Edwards (1918-2012)

Mae hiraeth yn y môr
from Caneuon y Tri
Aderyn (1962)
Robert Williams Parry

Mae hiraeth yn y môr a’r
mynydd maith,
Mae hireath mewn
distawrwydd ac mewn cân,
Mewn murmur dyfroedd ar
dragywydd daith,
Yn oriau’r machlud ac yn
fflamau’r tân:
Ond mwynaf yn y gwynt y
dwed ei gŵyn,
A thristaf yn yr hesg y
cwyna’r gwynt,
Gan ddeffro adlais adlais yn
y brwyn,
Ac yn y galon atgof atgof
gynt.

There’s longing in
the sea from Songs
of the three birds

There’s longing in the
sea, and mountains too,
There’s longing both in
silence and in song,
In murm’ring waters as
they gently flow,
In sunset hours and in
firelight’s glow;
But sweetest in the wind
it tells its woe,
And saddest in the reeds
the sad winds sigh
Awaking echoes echo as
they go
And ancient memories of
long ago:

Fel pan wrandawer yn y cyfddydd hir	As when one listens in the early light
Ar gân y ceiliog yn y glwyd gerllaw	The cockrell crowing on a gate nearby
Yn deffro caniad ar ôl caniad clir	Awaking singing after singing bright,
O’r gerddi agos, nes o’r llechwedd draw	From gardens close at hand till from a hill
Y cwyd un olaf ei leferydd ef,	Far off a late one raises up his voice,
A mwynder trist y pellter yn ei lef.	Its crowing full of gentle, distant joys.

Frank Bridge

Come to me in my dreams (1906)
Matthew Arnold

Come to me in my dreams, and then
By day I shall be well again!
For then the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day.

Come, as thou cam’st a thousand times,
A messenger from radiant climes,
And smile on thy new world, and be
As kind to all the rest as me.

Or, as thou never cam’st in sooth,
Come now, and let me dream it truth;
And part my hair, and kiss my brow,
And say: My love! why suffrest thou?

Come to me in my dreams, and then
By day I shall be well again!
For then the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day.

Roger Quilter

Fair house of joy from 7 Elizabethan Lyrics
Op. 12 (1908)
Anonymous

Fain would I change that note
To which fond Love hath charm’d me
Long, long to sing by rote,
Fancying that that harm’d me:

Yet when this thought doth come
‘Love is the perfect sum
Of all delight!’
I have no other choice
Either for pen or voice
To sing or write.

O Love! they wrong thee much
That say thy sweet is bitter,
When thy rich fruit is such
As nothing can be sweeter.

Fair house of joy and bliss,
Where truest pleasure is,
I do adore thee:
I know thee what thou art,
I serve thee with my heart,
And fall before thee.

Michael Bell

Phyllis Tate (1911-1987)

The lark in the clear air (1960)

Samuel Ferguson

Dear thoughts are in my mind, and my soul soars
enchanted
As I hear the sweet lark sing in the clear air of the day
For a tender beaming smile to my hope has been
granted,
And tomorrow she shall hear all my fond heart would say.

I shall tell her all my love, all my soul's adoration,
And I think she will hear and will not say me nay.
It is this that gives my soul all its joyous elation,
As I hear the sweet lark sing in the clear air of the day.

Roger Quilter

Weep you no more, sad fountains (1908)

Anonymous

Weep you no more, sad fountains;
What need you flow so fast?
Look how the snowy mountains
Heaven's sun doth gently waste!
But my Sun's heavenly eyes
View not your weeping,
That now lies sleeping,
Softly now, softly lies
Sleeping.

Sleep is a reconciling,
A rest that peace begets;
Doth not the sun rise smiling
When fair at even he sets?
Rest you, then, rest, sad eyes!
Melt not in weeping,
While she lies sleeping,
Softly now, softly lies
Sleeping.

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

The dance continued from *A Young Man's Exhortation Op. 14* (1926-9)

Thomas Hardy

Regret not me;
Beneath the sunny tree
I lie uncaring, slumbering peacefully.

Swift as the light
I flew my faery flight;
Ecstatically I moved, and feared no night.

I did not know
That heydays fade and go,
But deemed that what was would be always so.

I skipped at morn
Between the yellowing corn,
Thinking it good and glorious to be born.

I ran at eves
Among the piled-up sheaves,
Dreaming, 'I grieve not, therefore nothing grieves'

Now soon will come
The apple, pear, and plum,
And hinds will sing, and autumn insects hum.

Again you will fare
To cider-makings rare,
And junketings; but I shall not be there.

Yet gaily sing
Until the pewter ring
Those songs we sang when we went gipsying.

And lightly dance
Some triple-timed romance
In coupled figures, and forget mischance;

And mourn not me
Beneath the yellowing tree;
For I shall mind not, slumbering peacefully.

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

Meirion Williams (1901-1976)

Pan Ddaw'r Nos (1947) <i>Howell Elvet Lewis (Elfed)</i>	When night falls
Pan ddaw'r nos a'i bysedd tawel I ddadwneud cylmau'r dydd Bydd yr hwyliau yn yr awel A meddyliau'n mynd yn rhydd.	When night falls and its silent fingers untie the knots of day, the sails in the breeze and all senses will be released.
Ni gawn ado'r glannau llwydion, A phryderon dynion byw, A bydd gofal ein breuddwydion Ar yr angel wrth y llyw.	We cannot depart from the grey shores, nor the distresses of humankind, but our dreams will be cared for by the angel at the helm.
Yn ddidwrf mewn myrdd o fydoedd Nofia'r nefoedd heibio i ni A darlunnir i'n hysbrydoedd Nefoedd arall yn y lli.	Calmly, through a myriad of worlds swims heaven before us as the ghosts of souls past echo through the waters.
O mor esmwyth, O mor dawel Fydd mordwyo gyda'r nos, Mynd o flaen rhyw ddwyfol awel Adref at y wawrddydd dlos.	Oh how smooth, Oh how silent will sailing be at night, to go beyond a divine breeze home towards the beautiful dawn.

Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

A Prayer to St Anthony of Padua (1925)
Arthur Symons

Saint Anthony of Padua whom I bear
In effigy about me, hear my prayer:
Kind Saint, who findest what is lost, I pray,
Bring back her heart - I lost it yesterday.

Rebecca Hardwick

Roger Quilter

Hark, hark! the lark (pub. 1946)
William Shakespeare

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes:
With every thing that pretty bin,
My lady sweet, arise.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Silent noon from *The House of Life* (1903)
Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass, –
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms:
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
‘Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.

All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
Are golden kingcup fields with silver edge
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn hedge.
‘Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragonfly
Hangs like a blue thread loosen’d from the sky: –
So this wing’d hour is dropt to us from above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
This close-companion’d inarticulate hour
When twofold silence was the song of love.

Meirion Williams

Mai (1939)
Eliseus Williams (Eifion Wyn)

Gwn ei ddyfod fis y
mêl,
Gyda'i firi yn yr
helyg,
Gyda'i flodau fel y
barrug –
Gwyn fy myd bob tro y
dêl.

Eis yn fore tua'r
waun
Er mwyn gweld y gwlith ar
wasgar,
Ond yr oedd y gweryll cynnar
Wedi codi o fy mlaen.

Eistedd wnes tan brennau'r
Glog,
Ar ddyfodiad y
deheuwynt;
Edn glas ddisgynnodd
arnynt
Gan barablu enw'r
gog.

Ni roes gam ar lawr y
wig
Heb fod clychau'r haf o tano,
Fel diferion o ryw
lasfro
Wedi disgyn rhwng y brig.

Gwn ei ddyfod fis y
mêl,
Gyda'i firi, gyda'i
flodau,
Gyda dydd fy ngeni innau,
Gwyn fy myd bob tro y
dêl.

May

I sense its arrival, the
month of honey
with its merriment in the
willow,
with its flowers like the
hoarfrost –
blessed I am each time it
comes.

At dawn towards the
meadow I went
to see the scattered
dewdrops,
but the early birds
had already risen before me.

I sat beneath the
branches,
and at the rising of the
southern wind
a bluebird landed upon
them,
and called for the
cuckoo's song.

I dared not place a step
on the grove
without bluebells underfoot,
like drops from some
blue vale
had fallen from the tree tops.

I sense its arrival, the
month of honey
with its merriment, with
its blooms,
with the day of my own birth,
blessed I am each time it
comes.

Roger Quilter

From 3 songs Op. 3 (1904-5)

Now sleeps the crimson petal
Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.
Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

Love's philosophy
Percy Bysshe Shelley

The fountains mingle with the River
And the Rivers with the Ocean,
The winds of Heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle.
Why not I with thine? –

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What are all these kissings worth
If thou kiss not me?