

WIGMORE HALL

Thursday 26 October 2023
7.30pm

This concert is supported by the Rick Mather David Scrase Foundation

Autumn Leaves

Lucy Crowe soprano • Anna Tilbrook piano

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Erntelied D434 (1816)

Die Herbstnacht D404 (1816)

Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752-1814)

Rastlose Liebe (pub. 1808)

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847)

Im Herbste Op. 10 No. 4 (?1846)

Im Herbst (1844)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Im Herbst Op. 9 No. 5 (1827)

Herbstlied Op. 84 No. 2 (1839)

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

Herbst (1879)

Hans Pfitzner (1869-1949)

Im Herbst Op. 9 No. 3 (1894-5)

Johanna Müller-Hermann (1868-1941)

Herbst Op. 20 No. 2 (pub. 1940)

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

September from *4 Last Songs* (1948)

Interval

Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)

Chanson d'automne from *Chansons grises* (1892)

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Automne Op. 18 No. 3 (1878)

Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944)

Amour d'automne (pub. ?1880)

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Tit for Tat (1928-31, rev. 1968)

*A Song of Enchantment • Autumn
Silver • Virgil • Tit for Tat*

Muriel Herbert (1897-1984)

Autumn (1924)

Amy Beach (1867-1944)

Autumn Song Op. 56 No. 1 (1903-4)

Richard Morrison (b.1954)

To Autumn (2023) *world première*

Joseph Kosma (1905-1969)

Autumn Leaves (pub. 1947) *arranged by Iain Farrington*

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The seasons, their symbols, their sadnesses and celebrations have always inspired poets and composers. This recital takes in a wide cross-section of autumnal atmospheres, from the joyful abundance of harvest-time, to the mysteries of *Waldeinsamkeit*, to invocations of bitterness, nostalgia and hope. First we hear **Schubert's** 1816 harvest song 'Erntelied', which has a rustic, pastoral quality to its joyful vocal line and bouncy staccato accompaniment. This is followed by a more lyrical song from the same year, 'Die Herbstnacht', in which the arpeggiated piano motion evokes the harp conjured in the poem. Goethe's poem 'Rastlose Liebe', written during a snowstorm in May, maps the capriciousness of nature onto the desires of the heart. It has been set to music by a host of composers, and **Reichardt's** version heard here is one of two the composer made in his lifetime..

The siblings **Fanny** (Hensel) and **Felix Mendelssohn** were born four years apart; they shared a musical education and flourished as prodigious composers and pianists. Their futures, however, were determined early on by the oppressive societal gender norms of the time, which family patriarchs enforced: a famous letter from Abraham Mendelssohn to his teenage daughter stated firmly that, while Felix could be professionally ambitious, music must remain for Fanny only 'an ornament'. Hensel's creativity nonetheless thrived in the private sphere: she specialised in the smaller forms of chamber music and Lieder, and hosted a vibrant artistic salon in her Berlin home. Fanny began publishing under her own name – to immediate acclaim – just a year before her premature death in 1847. Before his own death six months later, Felix assembled further sets of his sister's songs for publication, and the Geibel setting 'Im Herbst' – a song that trembles with the fragile pain of loss – became part of her posthumous Op. 10. Within the equally poignant forest scene of 'Im Herbst', the piano's evening bells open up a tender nostalgic realm. Felix's 'Im Herbst' and 'Herbstlied', both settings of his lifelong friend Karl Klingemann, share a common theme: the constancy of love (and hope and faith) through seasonal change.

The next four composers were all born in the 1860s. **Wolf's** 'Herbst' begins taut and terse, but blossoms through mood-shifting harmonic moves and moments of lyrical relief before ending with a confirmation of the song's overarching pessimism. Wolf loomed large as an influence for **Pfitzner**, whose 'Im Herbst' sets the same Eichendorff poem heard earlier in Hensel's adaptation: both were enchanted by the notion of *Waldeinsamkeit* – the particular sense of solitude experienced deep in the forest. Resonances of Robert Schumann's Eichendorff

songs infiltrate Pfitzner's piano writing, especially in the rippling opening arpeggios and the ruminating piano postlude.

Raised in the vibrant cultural milieu of Vienna, **Müller-Hermann** worked primarily as a music theory professor; her music was recognised during her lifetime through publication and acclaimed performances, and is now undergoing a renaissance. She wrote both music and words for her melancholic, impassioned 'Herbst', which was published in 1940 but likely written in the 1920s. **Strauss's** *4 letzte Lieder* were written over the summer of 1948, the year before the composer's death, and are resolutely late-Romantic in style. The serene 'September' delicately balances acceptance with aching nostalgia. While best known in the version for full orchestra, the piano transcription distils the orchestral splendour in unexpected and often surprising ways.

After the interval comes a shift from *Herbst* to the French *automne*. **Hahn's** enchanting Verlaine setting 'Chanson d'automne' is seductive in its playful motion, with the piano springing to life to echo the voice's melody before sinking back into stillness. The restless triplet piano motion in **Fauré's** 'Automne' plays with time in a different way, underscoring the song's melancholic themes of wistfulness and regret. **Chaminade** primarily composed and published piano miniatures and mélodies, which were widely distributed and performed; she was also a prominent pianist and recording artist. Her love song 'Amour d'automne' is equally a song of spring.

In 1968, **Britten** revised and compiled five of his teenage settings of de la Mare, composed between 1928 and 1931. The resulting set, *Tit for Tat*, takes the title of the final song – an acerbic morality tale about hunting and animal cruelty, made all the more unsettling by the music's folk-like charm. 'A Song of Enchantment' uses a beguiling melodic line, each stanza bringing new jaunty inflections, while – as with many of tonight's stormy autumn songs – 'Autumn' deploys a restless piano figuration. 'Silver' and 'Vigil' are both fleeting, evocative nocturnal scenes.

Herbert didn't have the middle-class securities or connections available to most of the other women composers on this programme. Her daughter, the writer Claire Tomalin, recalled that Herbert's nascent career after graduating from the RCM was 'divided between private poverty and the intermittent attentions of the rich'. Her song 'Autumn', also to words by de la Mare, was one of several to be published by Augener in the 1920s, but as a single mother, composing fell by the wayside. Herbert's oeuvre was virtually unknown until the 2000s when interest gradually emerged, largely thanks to

Tomalin's perseverance and belief in her mother's songs. 'Autumn', with its developing motivic variation and magical piano embellishments, sits among many gems within a still-neglected canon. Over in New England, **Beach** achieved a level of success during her lifetime that was highly unusual for women of her generation. Her 'Autumn Song' adds affecting, illuminating music to a rather twee poem by her husband Henry, who – while supportive of Beach's composing – limited her performing activities; he died in 1910, and she outlived him by three abundantly creative decades.

Morrison's 'To Autumn', receiving its première tonight, sets Keats's paean to the season, after which the recital closes with **Iain Farrington's** arrangement of **Kosma's** evergreen 'Autumn Leaves'.

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I have always been struck by the parallel lives of John Keats and Franz Schubert. They never met, of course. Quite probably they were unaware of each other's existence. Yet they were born within two years of each other, were both destined to die young, and each created masterpieces - in words or music - that defined the very essence of Romanticism. So when I decided to set Keats's last poem, *To Autumn*, my thoughts inevitably turned towards Schubert's last piece of chamber music, and I wondered audaciously whether I could make some sort of symbolic connection between two works that both seem to celebrate life yet seem heartbreakingly aware of its fragility and brevity.

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Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Erntelied D434 (1816)

Ludwig Heinrich Christoph
Hölty

Sicheln schallen;
Ähren fallen
Unter Sicheltschall;
Auf den Mädchenhüten
Zittern blaue Blüten;
Freud' ist überall.

Sicheln klingen;
Mädchen singen
Unter Sichelklang;
Bis, vom Mond beschimmert,
Rings die Stoppel
flimmert,
Tönt der
Erntesang.

Alles springet,
Alles singet,
Was nur lallen kann.
Bei dem Erntemahle
Isst aus einer Schale
Knecht und Bauersmann.

Jeder scherzet,
Jeder herzet
Dann sein Liebelein.
Nach geleerten
Kannen
Gehen sie von dannen,
Singen und
juchhein!

Die Herbstnacht D404 (1816)

Johann Gaudenz von Salis-
Seewis

Mit leisen
Harfentönen
Sei, Wehmut, mir
gegrüsst!
O Nympe, die der
Tränen
Geweihnten Quell verschliesst!
Mich weht an deiner Schwelle
Ein linder Schauer
an,
Und deines Zwiellichts Helle
Glimmt auf des Schicksals
Bahn.

Harvest song

Sickles ring out;
ears of corn fall
to the sickle's ring;
blue flowers quiver
on girls' bonnets;
joy is everywhere.

Sickles resound;
girls sing
to the sickle's sound;
till, bathed in moonlight,
the stubble shimmers all
around,
and the harvest song
rings out.

Everyone's dancing,
everyone with a voice
sings out.
At the harvest feast
farmer and labourer
eat from the same bowl.

Everyone jests,
everyone then hugs
his sweetheart.
When the tankards are
empty
they go on their way,
singing and shouting with
joy!

Autumn night

With the soft strains of
the harp,
you are welcome,
Melancholy, with me!
O nymph, who can stem
the sacred stream
from which our tears flow!
At your threshold
a soft shudder runs
through me
and your twilight glow
illuminates the path of
destiny.

Du, so die Freude
weinen,
Die Schwermut lächeln heisst,
Kannst Wonn' und Schmerz
vereinen,
Dass Harm in Lust
verfleusst;
Du hellst bewölkte Lüfte
Mit Abendsonnenschein,
Hängst Lampen in die
Grüfte
Und krönst den
Leichenstein.

Du nahst, wenn schon die
Klage
Den Busen sanfter dehnt,
Der Gram an
Sarkophage
Die müde Schläfe lehnt;
Wenn die Geduld gelassen
Sich an die Hoffnung schmiegt,
Der Zähren Tau im nassen,
Schmerzlosen Blick versiegt.

Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752-1814)

Rastlose Liebe

(pub. 1808)
Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe

Dem Schnee, dem Regen,
Dem Wind entgegen,
Im Dampf der Klüfte,
Durch Nebeldüfte,
Immer zu! Immer zu!
Ohne Rast und Ruh!

Lieber durch Leiden
Möcht' ich mich schlagen,
Als so viel Freuden
Des Lebens ertragen.
Alle das Neigen
Der Herzen zu Herzen,
Ach wie so eigen
Schaffet das Schmerzen!

Wie soll ich flieh'n?
Wälderwärts zieh'n?
Alles vergebens!
Krone des Lebens,
Glück ohne Ruh,
Liebe, bist du!

You cause happiness to
weep
and melancholy to smile;
you bring together joy
and pain,
so that grief may mingle
with pleasure.
You brighten cloudy skies
with evening sunshine,
and hang lamps in the
vaults
and crown the
tombstones.

You draw near when my
lament
gently fills my breast,
when the grief of the
sarcophagus
oppresses my weary brow.
When patience calmly
snuggles up to hope,
the dew of tears runs dry
in a damp painless look.

Restless love

Into snow, into rain,
into wind,
through steaming ravines,
through mist and haze,
on and on!
Without respite!

I'd rather fight
my way through affliction
than endure so many
of life's joys.
All this attraction
of heart to heart,
ah, what special
anguish it brings!

How shall I flee?
Fly to the forest?
All in vain!
Crown of life,
joy without rest -
this, Love, is you.

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847)

Im Herbst

Op. 10 No. 4 (?1846)

Emanuel Geibel

Auf des Gartens Mauerzinne,
Bebt noch eine einz'ge Ranke:
Also bebt in meinem Sinne,
Schmerzlich nur noch ein
Gedanke.

Kaum vermag ich ihn zu
fassen,
Aber dennoch von mir lassen
Will er, ach, zu keiner Frist;
Und so denk ich ihn und
trage
Alle Nächte, alle Tage,
Mit mir fort die dumpfe
Klage,
Dass du mir verloren bist.

Im Herbst (1844)

*Joseph, Freiherr von
Eichendorff*

Der Wald wird falb, die
Blätter fallen,
Wie öd und still der
Raum!
Die Bächlein nur gehn durch
die Buchenhallen
Lind rauschend wie im
Traum.
Und Abendglocken schallen
Fern von des Waldes
Saum.

Was wollt ihr mich so wild
verlocken,
Hier in der Einsamkeit?
Wie in der Heimat klingen
diese Glocken
Aus stiller Kinderzeit –
Ich wende mich erschrocken,
Ach, was mich liebt, ist
weit!

So brecht hervor nur, alte
Lieder,
Und brecht das Herz mir
ab!
Noch einmal grüss ich aus
der Ferne wieder,
Was ich nur Liebes hab.
Mich aber zieht es
nieder
Vor Wehmut wie ins Grab.

In Autumn

High on the garden wall
one last vine quivers:
likewise in my mind quivers
one single painful
thought.

I can hardly comprehend
it,
yet it will not leave me,
alas, for a single moment;
and so I think it and carry
it
every day and every night
around with me, this
numb lament –
that you are lost to me.

In autumn

The wood turns fallow,
the leaves fall,
such silence, such
desolation!
Only the streams still flow
through the beeches,
gently murmuring as in
dreams.
And evening bells ring out
far beyond the forest's
edge.

Why entice me so
wildly
in this solitude?
These bells sound as once
in gentle childhood
in my native land –
I turn round in horror,
ah! those who love me are
far away!

So break out again, old
songs,
and in doing so break my
heart!
Once more I greet from
afar
all those I love.
But sadness drags me
down,
as though into my grave.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Im Herbst Op. 9 No. 5

(1827)

Karl Klingemann

Ach, wie schnell die Tage
fliehen,
Wo die Sehnsucht neu
erwacht,
Wo die Blumen wieder
blühen
Und der Frühling wieder
lacht!
Alle Wonne soll erstehen,
In Erfüllung alles
gehen.
Ach, wie schnell die Tage
fliehen,
Wo die Sehnsucht neu
erwacht!

Seht, die Tage gehn und
kommen,
Zieh'n vorüber
blütenschwer,
Sommerlust ist bald
verglommen,
Und der Herbstwind rauscht
daher.
Ach, das rechte Blühen und
Grünen,
Es ist wieder nicht
erschienen!
Ach, wie schnell die Tage
fliehen,
Wo die Sehnsucht neu
erwacht!

In Autumn

Alas, how swiftly those
days flee away,
when longing wakens
anew,
when the flowers bloom
again
and spring smiles once
more.
All joys shall come to pass,
everything will be
brought to fulfilment.
Alas, how swiftly those
days flee away,
when longing wakens
anew!

See how the days come
and go,
they are past and gone,
heavy with blossom;
summer's joy soon fades
away,
and the rushing autumn
wind is upon us.
Alas, the true season of
verdant blooming
has disappeared once
again.
Alas, how swiftly those
days flee away,
when longing wakens
anew!

Herbstlied

Op. 84 No. 2 (1839)

Karl Klingemann

Im Walde rauschen dürre
Blätter,
Es schweigt der Sang, das
Grün verdorrt,
Im Fluge zieh'n, wie Wind
und Wetter,
Der Sommer und die Säng'er
fort.
Was zagst du, Herz? Was
zagst du trübe?
Die Liebe bleibt, dir bleibt die
Liebe!

Die reifen Garben sind
geschnitten,
Der Wind fährt über's
Stoppelfeld,
Ein Schnitter kommt daher
geschritten,
Der and're dunkle Ernten
hält.
Was bangst du, Herz?
Bangst so betroffen?
Das Hoffen bleibt, dir bleibt
das Hoffen!

Will denn die Welt ganz
einsam stehen,
Wenn alles zieht und mich
verlässt?
Wenn Lenz und Lieb' und
Jugend gehen,
Was bleibt denn mir? was
hält noch fest?
Was sorgst du, Herz? was
sorgst auf's Neue?
Die Treue bleibt, dir bleibt
die Treue!

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

Herbst (1879)

Nikolaus Lenau

Nun ist es Herbst, die Blätter
fallen,
Den Wald durchbraust des
Scheidens Weh,
Den Lenz und seine
Nachtigallen
Verträumt' ich auf der
wüsten See.

Autumn song

Dry leaves rustle in the
forest,
the songs are silent, the
green has withered,
summer and carollers
depart
just like the wind and
weather.
Why hesitate, O heart?
Why hesitate so sadly?
Love remains – love
remains for you!

The ripe sheaves have
been reaped,
the wind blows over fields
of stubble,
a reaper comes striding
along,
gathering a dark harvest
of a different kind.
What do you fear, O
heart? So uneasily?
Hope remains – hope
remains for you!

Shall the world stand all
alone,
when everyone moves on
and leaves me?
When spring and love
and youth depart,
what is left, what remains
for me?
Why worry, O heart, why
worry again?
Faith remains – faith
remains for you!

Autumn

Autumn is come, the
leaves are falling,
the ache of parting sighs
through the wood,
spring and its nightingales I
dreamt away,
as I sailed on the desolate
sea.

Der Himmel schien so mild,
so helle,
Verloren ging sein warmes
Licht;
Es blühte nicht die
Meereswelle,
Die rohen Winde sangen
nicht.

Und mir verging die Jugend
traurig,
Des Frühlings Wonne blieb
versäumt;
Der Herbst durchweht mich
trennungsschaurig,
Mein Herz dem Tod
entgegenträumt.

The heavens seemed so
mellow, so clear,
their warm light has
vanished;
the ocean waves did not
blossom,
the biting winds did not
sing.

And my youth passed
sadly by,
the joys of spring were
not tasted;
autumn pierces me with a
parting shudder,
my heart dreams on
towards death.

Hans Pfitzner (1869-1949)

Im Herbst Op. 9 No. 3

(1894-5)

Joseph, Freiherr von
Eichendorff

Der Wald wird falb, die
Blätter fallen,
Wie öd und still der
Raum!
Die Bächlein nur gehn durch
die Buchenhallen
Lind rauschend wie im
Traum.
Und Abendglocken schallen
Fern von des Waldes
Saum.

Was wollt ihr mich so wild
verlocken,
Hier in der Einsamkeit?
Wie in der Heimat klingen
diese Glocken
Aus stiller Kinderzeit –
Ich wende mich erschrocken,
Ach, was mich liebt, ist
weit!

So brecht hervor nur, alte
Lieder,
Und brecht das Herz mir
ab!
Noch einmal grüss ich aus
der Ferne wieder,
Was ich nur Liebes hab.
Mich aber zieht es
nieder
Vor Wehmut wie ins Grab.

In autumn

The wood turns fallow,
the leaves fall,
such silence, such
desolation!
Only the streams still flow
through the beeches,
gently murmuring as in
dreams.
And evening bells ring out
far beyond the forest's
edge.

Why entice me so
wildly
in this solitude?
These bells sound as once
in gentle childhood
in my native land –
I turn round in horror,
ah! those who love me are
far away!

So break out again, old
songs,
and in doing so break my
heart!
Once more I greet from
afar
all those I love.
But sadness drags me
down,
as though into my grave.

Johanna Müller-Hermann (1868-1941)

Herbst Op. 20 No. 2

(pub. 1940)

Johanna Müller-Hermann

Autumn

| | |
|---|---|
| Sonne, bist du müd' geworden, Dass so früh du gehst zur Ruh'? | Sun, have you beome weary that you go to rest so early? |
| Abendwind mit leisem Schauer Weht mir Herbstesodem zu. | The evening wind, with a quiet shudder, blows autumn breath towards me. |
| In den Lüften schwärmen Schwalben, Sie lehren ihre Jungen, Im Flug das Sonnenland erreichen, O, O lehrten sie's auch mich! | Swallows swarm in the air, they teach their young to fly to sunlit lands, oh, oh if they taught me, too! |
| Wann meiner Seele tiefes Sehnen, Wann wirst du stiller? Auf den Wellen meines Bächleins Seh' ich welke Blätter treiben. Dämmerfleier sinken nieder, Und es dunkelt mir im Herzen. | When, deep longing of my soul, when will you be calmer? On the waves of my brook I see withered leaves drifting. Veils of twilight fall, and my heart falls dark. |

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

September from 4 Last Songs (1948)

Hermann Hesse

| | |
|--|--|
| Der Garten trauert, Kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen. Der Sommer schauert Still seinem Ende entgegen. | The garden mourns, the cool rain sinks into the flowers. Summer shudders quietly to its close. |
| Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt Nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum. Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt In den sterbenden Gartentraum. | Leaf after golden leaf falls from the tall acacia. Summer smiles, astonished and drained, into the garden's dying dream. |
| Lange noch bei den Rosen Bleibt er stehn, sehnt sich nach Ruh. Langsam tut er die Müdgewordnen Augen zu. | For a long time it lingers by the roses, yearning for rest. Slowly it closes its now wearied eyes. |

Interval

Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)

Chanson d'automne from *Chansons grises*

(1892)

Paul Verlaine

Autumn Song

| | |
|---|---|
| Les sanglots longs Des violons De l'automne Blessent mon cœur D'une langueur Monotone. | With long sobs the violins of autumn wound my hear with languorous monotony. |
| Tout suffocant Et blême, quand Sonne l'heure, Je me souviens Des jours anciens Et je pleure; | All choking and pale, when the hour sounds, I remember departed days and I weep; |
| Et je m'en vais Au vent mauvais Qui m'emporte Deçà, delà, Pareil à la Feuille morte. | And I go where ill winds blow, buffeted to and fro, like a dead leaf. |

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Automne Op. 18 No. 3 (1878)

Armand Silvestre

Autumn

| | |
|---|---|
| Automne au ciel brumeux, aux horizons navrants, Aux rapides couchants, aux aurores pâlies, Je regarde couler, comme l'eau du torrent, Tes jours faits de mélancolie. | Autumn of misty skies and heart-breaking horizons, of swift sunsets and pale dawns, I watch flow by, like torrential water, your days imbued with melancholy. |
| Sur l'aile des regrets mes esprits emportés, – Comme s'il se pouvait que notre âge renaisse! – Parcourent, en rêvant, les coteaux enchantés Où jadis sourit ma jeunesse! | My thoughts, borne away on the wings of regret, – as though our time could come round again! – roam in reverie the enchanted hills, where long ago my youth once smiled. |
| Je sens, au clair soleil du souvenir vainqueur Reflleurir en bouquet les roses déliées, Et monter à mes yeux des larmes, qu'en mon cœur, Mes vingt ans avaient oubliées! | In the bright sun of triumphant memory I feel untied roses reflower in bouquets, and tears rise to my eyes, which in my heart at twenty had been forgotten! |

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

Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944)

Amour d'automne

(pub. ?1880)

Armand Silvestre

Love in autumn

L'âpre hiver a passé sur
nous
Sans toucher à notre
tendresse.
L'an nouveau vers Avril
s'empresse
Et me retrouve à vos genoux.

The harsh winter passed
over us
leaving our tenderness
unscathed.
New year to April rushed
by
and found me once again
at your feet.

Que votre beauté ne
s'étonne
Si mes vœux sont restés
constants,
Madame, voici le
printemps,
Nous nous aimâmes en
automne.

May your beauty feel no
surprise
that my wishes have
stayed the same -
Madame, here comes the
spring;
we fell in love in
autumn.

Les rosiers n'avaient plus de
fleurs
Et les soirs hâtaient leur
venue.
Les hirondelles sous la
nue
S'enfuyaient vers des cieux
meilleurs.

No more flowers on the
rose bushes
and the evenings came
on fast.
The swallows under the
cloudy heavens
fled towards better
skies.

Les vigneronns fêtaient la
tonne
Et nos cœurs étaient
palpitants.
Madame, voici le
printemps,
M'aimerez-vous comme en
automne?

The winemakers
celebrated the harvest
and our hearts were
pounding...
Madame, here comes the
spring,
will you love me as you
did in autumn?

Sur les rosiers de neige
las
Renaît la parure des
roses.
Le glas joyeux des temps
moroses
Sonne aux clochettes des
lilas.

Weary of snow, the rose
bushes
are once more bejewelled
with roses.
The joyful knell banishing
gloomy weather
rings in the little lilac
bells.

Au lieu d'un habit monotone
Le ciel en porte d'éclatants.
Madame, voici le
printemps,
Aimons-nous donc plus
qu'en automne.

In place of dreary attire
the sky is in radiant finery.
Madame, here comes the
spring -
let us love one another even
more than in autumn.

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Tit for Tat (1928-31, rev. 1968)

Walter de la Mare

A Song of Enchantment

A song of Enchantment I sang me there,
In a green-green wood, by waters fair,
Just as the words came up to me
I sang it under the wild wood tree.

Widdershins turned I, singing it low,
Watching the wild birds come and go;
No cloud in the deep dark blue to be seen
Under the thick-thatched branches green.

Twilight came: silence came:
The planet of evening's silver flame;
By darkening paths I wandered through
Thickets trembling with drops of dew.

But the music is lost and the words are gone
Of the song I sang as I sat alone,
Ages and ages have fallen on me –
On the wood and the pool and the elder tree.

Autumn

There's a wind where the rose was;
Cold rain where sweet grass was;
And clouds like sheep
Stream o'er the steep
Grey skies where the lark was.

Nought gold where your hair was;
Nought warm where your hand was;
But phantom, forlorn,
Beneath the thorn,
Your ghost where your face was.

Sad winds where your voice was;
Tears, tears where my heart was;
And ever with me,
Child, ever with me,
Silence where hope was.

Silver

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees;

One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;

A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws, and silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

Virgil

Dark is the night,
The fire burns faint and low,
Hours – days – years,
Into grey ashes go;
I strive to read,
But sombre is the glow.

Thumbed are the pages,
And the print is small;
Mocking the winds
That from the darkness call;
Feeble the fire that lends
Its light withal.

O ghost, draw nearer;
Let thy shadowy hair,
Blot out the pages
That we cannot share;
Be ours the one last leaf
By Fate left bare!

Let's Finis scrawl,
And then Life's book put by;
Turn each to each
In all simplicity:
Ere the last flame is gone
To warm us by.

Tit for Tat

Have you been catching of fish, Tom Noddy?
Have you snared a weeping hare?
Have you whistled 'No Nunny' and gunned a poor bunny,
Or blinded a bird of the air?

Have you trod like a murderer through the green woods,
Through the dewy deep dingles and glooms,
While every small creature screamed shrill to Dame Nature
'He comes – and he comes!'

Wonder I very much do, Tom Noddy,
If ever, when you are a-roam,
An ogre from space will stoop a lean face,
And lug you home:

Lug you home over his fence, Tom Noddy,
Of thorn-sticks nine yards high,
With your bent knees strung round his old iron gun
And your head a dan-dangling by:

And hung you up stiff on a hook, Tom Noddy,
From a stone-cold pantry shelf,
Whence your eyes will glare in an empty stare,
Till you're cooked yourself!

Muriel Herbert (1897-1984)

Autumn (1924) *Walter de la Mare*

There is a wind where the rose was;
Cold rain where sweet grass was;
And clouds like sheep
Stream over the steep
Grey skies were the lark was.

Nought gold where your hair was;
Nought warm where your hand was;
But phantom, forlorn,
Beneath the thorn,
Your ghost where your face was.

Sad winds where your voice was;
Tears, tears where my heart was;
And ever with me,
Child, ever with me,
Silence where hope was.

Amy Beach (1867-1944)

Autumn Song Op. 56 No. 1 (1903-4)

Henry Harris Aubrey Beach

Happy days and summer roses
Vanish one by one;
Ev'ry rose her petals loses,
Ev'ry day its sun.

Now the goldenrod is swinging
Radiant in the air,
The wild grape still is clinging
High in purple rare.
Ah!

Happy days and joyous roses,
Come again in Spring;
Winter then in sleep reposes
And to thee I'll sing,
To thee I'll sing!

Richard Morrison (b.1954)

To Autumn (2023)

John Keats

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozeings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Joseph Kosma (1905-1969)

Autumn Leaves (pub. 1947)

arranged by Iain Farrington

Jacques Prévert

The fallen leaves drift by the window ...

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