

WIGMORE HALL

Sunday 29 June 2025
3.00pm

Journey 100

Mikhail Timoshenko baritone
Elitsa Desseva piano

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

From *Winterreise* D911 (1827)
Der Leiermann • Im Dorfe

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

From *Songs of Travel* (1901-4)
In dreams • The infinite shining heavens

Franz Schubert

Die Täuschung D230 (1815, rev. 1855-62)

Ralph Vaughan Williams

From *Songs of Travel*
The roadside fire • Let beauty awake

Franz Schubert

From *Winterreise* D911
*Frühlingstraum • Die Wetterfahne • Gefrorene Tränen •
Erstarrung • Der Lindenbaum*

Ralph Vaughan Williams

From *Songs of Travel*
Youth and love

Franz Schubert

From *Winterreise* D911
Der greise Kopf • Die Krähe • Das Wirtshaus • Mut

Ralph Vaughan Williams

From *Songs of Travel*
*Bright is the ring of words • I have trod the upward and
the downward slope*



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This programme's journey visits two major, and very different, landmarks of music history's large corpus of 'wayfaring' or 'wandering' songs. The splitting of cycles and the rapid moves between Schubert and Vaughan Williams encourage us to consider various things beyond their musical and poetic differences – the nature of song programming and performance norms over time, for instance, and the interventions made by composers, authors, performers, publishers and others that trouble perceptions of cycles solely as linear wholes.

The journey to the 24-song *Winterreise* as we know it was not straightforward. In late 1826 or early 1827, **Franz Schubert** encountered a set of 12 poems in the periodical *Urania*, titled *Wanderlieder von Wilhelm Müller*. Die *Winterreise*. He promptly set the poetic cycle to music, and many of those first 12 songs sit firmly in the Romantic tradition of *Wanderlieder* – soul-searching, nature-filled journey-songs. Later in 1827, he discovered that Müller had expanded his 12 poems into a set of 24, and set about appending an additional 12 songs and making some changes to the first half; inevitably, this fundamentally reshaped the overarching vision of the cycle. Schubert's friend Joseph von Spaun recalled that when the composer first played *Winterreise* for a gathering of friends – singing at the piano, as was his custom – they were baffled by its sheer gloominess. Schubert had not previously shied away from existential topics, but there was no precedent for a cycle so long and so unrelentingly bleak. Compared with his previous Müller cycle, *Die schöne Müllerin*, there are clear musical and psychological shifts: similar themes of journeying and loss were transmitted in the earlier cycle through much simpler forms and textures, and the outlook of the earlier protagonist remained naively optimistic for much longer. The cycle was the product of two young minds: Müller died in 1827 at the age of 32, and Schubert in 1828 at 31. We know little about the protagonist of *Winterreise*, but a reference in one song to his 'black hair' suggests that he, too, journeys towards a premature death.

That this concert begins with 'Der Leiermann' uproots any preconceptions that the journey might be linear: the song's status as the stark ending of *Winterreise* is iconic, and placing it at the start allows us to encounter its eerie, repetitive sound-world without the weight of the 23 preceding songs, and without context for the protagonist's unsettling questions. The one song on this programme drawn from elsewhere – 'Die Täuschung', D230 – has a near-namesake in *Winterreise* but was written over a decade earlier and provides a bittersweet reminder of naivety.

The first eight songs of **Vaughan Williams's** *Songs of Travel* were premièred at Wigmore Hall in December 1904. Vaughan Williams was in his early 30s – already older than Schubert and Müller at their deaths – but his voice was still emerging, and positive reviews of the concert spoke encouragingly of his melodic gift and promise. The poems were drawn from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Songs of Travel*. These were written towards the end of his life (1850-94) and capture the

spirit of adventure and wonder that characterise the author's life and work – a worldview inevitably inflected by late-19th-century British colonialism. One poem, 'The Vagabond', was written 'to an air of Schubert', and Vaughan Williams's trudging accompaniment for that song recalls Schubert's 'Gute Nacht'; the removal of both of these opening songs from today's programme decentralises their scene-setting spirits of grim inevitability and gritty determination. Across Vaughan Williams's cycle, prospects of love and domesticity are played off against the freedom (and loneliness) of the wandering lifestyle, and the musical mood shifts from song to song, enhancing poetic visions of bittersweet nostalgia, love and loss, and sheer delight in life, art and nature. The first song heard in this programme is an outlier: 'In dreams' (No. 5) exchanges the melodic beauty of so many of the songs for chromaticism, uncertainty, and anguish.

The status of Vaughan Williams's songs as a cycle has always been complicated: Boosey & Hawkes published the songs in two (non-sequential) groups of four, and some songs have long histories of standalone performance. The ninth ('I have trod the upward and downward slope'), which affirms the cyclic design through recollections of melodies from earlier in the set, was a later addition, and was only rediscovered and published after the composer's death. Additionally, Vaughan Williams went on to orchestrate three of the songs, and Roy Douglas's completion of the cycle's orchestration allowed it to embark upon a parallel journey in an expanded textural guise.

This programme is titled 'Journey 100', commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of the German baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (1925-2012). Fischer-Dieskau was an enormously influential artist, and for many, his voice epitomises a refined, lyrical, articulate manner of performance through which the poetry shines. Between commercial releases and recordings made of concert performances or for radio broadcasts, the available Fischer-Dieskau *Winterreise* discography spans over 50 years, charting the course of the singer's career and capturing his collaborations with pianists including Gerald Moore, Jörg Demus, Alfred Brendel, Maurizio Pollini and many others. In the 19th Century, it was common for single songs or short sequences to be extracted from larger works and performed as part of a mixed programme – a practice that can seem distant from the ideals of completeness and work-fidelity associated with Fischer-Dieskau. This concert's juxtaposition of songs from *Winterreise* and *Songs of Travel* captures a sense of the cycles' evolutions through histories of performance and reception, and for listeners familiar with the songs, the new contexts should bring fresh hearings and new associations. Mood affinities or contrasts, musical resonances, and shared poetic images are used cleverly and sensitively to navigate through these parallel worlds.

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Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

From *Winterreise* D911
(1827)
Wilhelm Müller

Der Leiermann

Drüben hinter'm Dorfe
Steht ein Leiermann,
Und mit starren Fingern
Dreht er was er kann.

Barfuss auf dem Eise
Wankt er hin und her;
Und sein kleiner Teller
Bleibt ihm immer leer.

Keiner mag ihn hören,
Keiner sieht ihn an;
Und die Hunde knurren
Um den alten Mann.

Und er lässt es gehen
Alles, wie es will,
Dreht, und seine Leier
Steht ihm nimmer still.

Wunderlicher Alter,
Soll ich mit dir gehn?
Willst zu meinen
Liedern
Deine Leier drehn?

Im Dorfe

Es bellen die Hunde, es
rasseln die Ketten.
Es schlafen die Menschen in
ihren Betten,
Träumen sich Manches, was
sie nicht haben,
Tun sich im Guten und
Argen erlaben:
Und morgen früh ist Alles
zerflossen. –
Je nun, sie haben ihr Teil
genossen,
Und hoffen, was sie noch
übrig liessen,
Doch wieder zu finden auf
ihren Kissen.

From *Winter
Journey*

The organ-grinder

There, beyond the village,
an organ-grinder stands,
and with numb fingers
plays as best he can.

Barefoot on the ice
he staggers to and fro;
and his little plate
is always empty.

No one cares to listen,
no one looks at him;
and the dogs snarl
around the old man.

And he lets it all happen,
happen as it will,
he turns the handle,
his hurdy-gurdy's never
still.

Strange old man!
Shall I go with you?
Will you grind your hurdy-
gurdy
to my songs?

In the village

Dogs bark, chains
rattle.
People are asleep in
bed,
dreaming of much they
do not possess,
delighting in good things
and bad:
and by morning all will
have vanished. –
Still, they've enjoyed their
share
and hope to find on their
pillows
what is still left to
enjoy.

Bellt mich nur fort, ihr
wachen Hunde,
Lasst mich nicht ruhn in der
Schlummerstunde!
Ich bin zu Ende mit allen
Träumen –
Was will ich unter den
Schläfern säumen?

Bark me on my way,
watchful dogs,
give me no rest in this
hour of sleep!
I'm finished with all
dreaming –
why should I linger
among slumberers?

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

From *Songs of Travel* (1901-4)
Robert Louis Stevenson

In dreams

In dreams unhappy, I behold you stand
As heretofore:
The unremember'd tokens in your hand
Avail no more.

No more the morning glow, no more the grace,
Enshrines, endears.
Cold beats the light of time upon your face
And shows your tears.

He came and went. Perchance you wept awhile
And then forgot.
Ah me! but he that left you with a smile
Forgets you not.

The infinite shining heavens

The infinite shining heavens
Rose, and I saw in the night
Uncountable angel stars
Showering sorrow and light.

I saw them distant as heaven,
Dumb and shining and dead,
And the idle stars of the night
Were dearer to me than bread.

Night after night in my sorrow
The stars looked over the sea,
Till lo! I looked in the dusk
And a star had come down to me.

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

Franz Schubert

Die Täuschung D230

(1815, rev. 1855-62)

Ludwig Theobul

Kosegarten

Deception

Im Erlenbusch, im
Tannenhain,
Im Sonn- und Mond- und
Abendschein
Umlächelt mich ein Bildnis,
Vor seinem Lächeln klärt
sich schnell
Die Dämmerung in
Himmelhell,
In Paradies die
Wildnis.

In the alder grove, in the
pine wood,
By the light of sun, moon
and stars,
An image smiles upon me.
At that
smile
Dusk quickly changes to
celestial brightness,
And the wilderness turns
to paradise.

Es säuselt in der
Abendluft,
Es dämmt in dem
Morgenduft,
Es tanzt auf der Aue,
Es flötet in der Wachtel Schlag,
Und spiegelt sich im klaren
Bach,
Und badet sich im Taue.

It whispers in the evening
air;
It drowns in the morning
fragrance;
It dances in the meadow;
It sings like the quail;
It is reflected in the clear
brook,
And bathes in the dew.

O fleuch voran, ich folge
dir.
Bei dir ist Seligkeit; nicht hier.
Sprich, wo ich dich
erfasse
Und ewig aller Pein entrückt,
Umstrickend dich, von dir
umstrickt,
Dich nimmer, nimmer
lasse.

O flee hence! I shall follow
you!
Bliss is with you, not here!
Tell me where I may hold
you,
And never, ever leave you,
Eternally freed from all
pain,
Embracing and
embraced by you!

Ralph Vaughan Williams

From *Songs of Travel*

Robert Louis Stevenson

The roadside fire

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night,
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests, and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom;
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

Let beauty awake

Let beauty awake in the morn from beautiful dreams,
Beauty awake from rest!
Let beauty awake
For beauty's sake
In the hour when the birds awake in the brake
And the stars are bright in the west!

Let beauty awake in the eve from the slumber of day,
Awake in the crimson eve!
In the day's dusk end
When the shades ascend,
Let her wake to the kiss of a tender friend,
To render again and receive!

Franz Schubert

From *Winterreise* D911

(1827)

Wilhelm Müller

From *Winter*

Journey

Frühlingstraum

Ich träumte von bunten
Blumen,
So wie sie wohl blühen im
Mai,
Ich träumte von grünen
Wiesen,
Von lustigem
Vogelgeschrei.

Dream of Spring

I dreamt of colourful
flowers,
such as might bloom in
May,
I dreamt of green
meadows
and happy singing of
birds.

Und als die Hähne
krähten,
Da ward mein Auge wach;
Da war es kalt und finster,
Es schrieten die Raben vom
Dach.

And when the cocks
crowed,
my eyes awoke;
it was dark and cold,
the ravens screamed
from the roof.

Doch an den
Fensterscheiben
Wer malte die Blätter da?
Ihr lacht wohl über den
Träumer,
Der Blumen im Winter sah?

But who painted those
leaves
on the window-panes?
Are you mocking the
dreamer
who saw flowers in winter?

Ich träumte von Lieb' um Liebe,
Von einer schönen Maid,
Von Herzen und von
Küssen,
Von Wonne und Seligkeit.

I dreamt of love requited,
dreamt of a beautiful girl,
of caressing and of
kissing,
of rapture and of joy.

Und als die Hähne
krähten,
Da ward mein Herze wach;
Nun sitz' ich hier alleine
Und denke dem Traume
nach.

And when the cocks
crowed,
my heart awoke;
now I sit here alone,
and think about the
dream.

Die Augen schliess' ich wieder, Noch schlägt das Herz so warm. Wann grünt ihr Blätter am Fenster? Wann halt' ich mein Liebchen im Arm?	I close my eyes again, my heart still beats so warm. Leaves on my window, when will you turn green? When shall I hold my love in my arms?
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Die Wetterfahne

The weather-vane

Der Wind spielt mit der Wetterfahne Auf meines schönen Liebchens Haus. Da dacht' ich schon in meinem Wahne, Sie pfiß' den armen Flüchtling aus.	The wind plays with the weather-vane on my beloved's house. In my folly I thought it mocked the wretched fugitive.
Er hätt' es eher bemerken sollen, Des Hauses aufgestecktes Schild, So hätt' er nimmer suchen wollen Im Haus ein treues Frauenbild.	He should have noticed it sooner, this sign fixed on the house, he'd never then have thought to find a faithful woman there.
Der Wind spielt drinnen mit den Herzen, Wie auf dem Dach, nur nicht so laut. Was fragen sie nach meinen Schmerzen? Ihr Kind ist eine reiche Braut.	The wind plays with hearts inside, though less loudly than on the roof. What is my torment to them? Their child's a rich bride.

Gefrorne Tränen

Frozen tears

Gefrorne Tropfen fallen Von meinen Wangen ab: Ob es mir denn entgangen, Dass ich geweinet hab'?	Frozen drops fall from my cheeks: did I, then, not notice I've been weeping?
Ei Tränen, meine Tränen, Und seid ihr gar so lau, Dass ihr erstarrt zu Eise, Wie kühler Morgentau?	Ah tears, my tears, are you so tepid that you turn to ice like cool morning dew?
Und dringt doch aus der Quelle Der Brust so glühend heiss, Als wolltet ihr zerschmelzen Des ganzen Winters Eis.	And yet you spring from my heart with such fierce heat, as if you would melt all the winter's ice.

Erstarrung

Numbness

Ich such' im Schnee vergebens Nach ihrer Tritte Spur, Wo sie an meinem Arme Durchstrich die grüne Flur.	In vain I seek her steps in the snow, where we walked arm in arm through the green field.
--	--

Ich will den Boden küssen, Durchdringen Eis und Schnee Mit meinen heissen Tränen, Bis ich die Erde seh'.	I shall kiss the ground, pierce ice and snow with my hot tears, till I see the earth.
Wo find' ich eine Blüte, Wo find' ich grünes Gras? Die Blumen sind erstorben, Der Rasen sieht so blass.	Where shall I find a flower where shall I find green grass? The flowers have withered, the grass looks so pale.

Soll denn kein Angedenken Ich nehmen mit von hier? Wenn meine Schmerzen schweigen, Wer sagt mir dann von ihr?	Is there no keepsake, then, for me to take from here? Who, when my grief is silent, will speak to me of her?
---	--

Mein Herz ist wie erstorben, Kalt starrt ihr Bild darin: Schmilzt je das Herz mir wieder, Fliesst auch ihr Bild dahin.	My heart seems dead, her cold image numb within: should my heart ever thaw, her image too will melt.
--	--

Der Lindenbaum

The linden tree

Am Brunnen vor dem Tore Da steht ein Lindenbaum: Ich träumt' in seinem Schatten So manchen süßen Traum.	By the well, before the gate, stands a linden tree: I used to dream in its shade so many a sweet dream.
Ich schnitt in seine Rinde So manches liebe Wort; Es zog in Freud' und Leide Zu ihm mich immer fort.	I used to carve in its bark so many a word of love; in joy and in sorrow I felt ever drawn to it.

Ich musst' auch heute wandern Vorbei in tiefer Nacht, Da hab' ich noch im Dunkel Die Augen zugemacht.	I had to pass it again today at dead of night, and even in the dark, I closed my eyes.
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Und seine Zweige rauschten, Als riefen sie mir zu: Komm her zu mir, Geselle, Hier findest du deine Ruh'!	And its branches rustled, as though calling me: come to me, my friend, here you shall find rest!
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Die kalten Winde bliesen Mir grad' in's Angesicht, Der Hut flog mir vom Kopfe, Ich wendete mich nicht.	The cold winds blew full into my face, my hat flew from my head, I did not turn back.
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Nun bin ich manche Stunde Entfernt von jenem Ort, Und immer hör' ich's rauschen: Du fändest Ruhe dort!	Many hours have passed since I left that place, yet still I hear the rustling: there shall you find rest!
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Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

Ralph Vaughan Williams

From *Songs of Travel*

Robert Louis Stevenson

Youth and love

To the heart of youth the world is a highwayside.
Passing for ever, he fares; and on either hand,
Deep in the gardens golden pavilions hide,
Nestle in orchard bloom, and far on the level land
Call him with lighted lamp in the eventide.

Thick as stars at night when the moon is down,
Pleasures assail him. He to his nobler fate
Fares; and but waves a hand as he passes on,
Cries but a wayside word to her at the garden gate,
Sings but a boyish stave and his face is gone.

Franz Schubert

From *Winterreise* D911

Wilhelm Müller

From *Winter Journey*

Der greise Kopf

Der Reif hat einen weissen
Schein
Mir über's Haar gestreuet.
Da glaubt' ich schon ein
Greis zu sein,
Und hab' mich sehr gefreuet.

Doch bald ist er hinweggetaut,
Hab' wieder schwarze Haare,
Dass mir's vor meiner
Jugend graut –
Wie weit noch bis zur Bahre!

Vom Abendrot zum
Morgenlicht
Ward mancher Kopf zum
Greise.
Wer glaubt's? Und meiner
ward es nicht
Auf dieser ganzen
Reise!

Die Krähe

Eine Krähe war mit mir
Aus der Stadt gezogen,
Ist bis heute für und für
Um mein Haupt
geflogen.

The hoary head

The frost has sprinkled a
white sheen
on my hair.
I believed I was an old
man
and was overjoyed.

But soon it melted,
my hair is black again,
so that I shudder at my
youth –
how far still to the grave!

Between dusk and
dawn,
many a head has turned
grey.
Yet mine, would you
believe it, has not,
throughout this whole
journey!

The crow

One crow came with me
from the town,
and to this day
has steadily circled my
head.

Krähe, wunderliches Tier,
Willst mich nicht
verlassen?
Meinst wohl bald als Beute hier
Meinen Leib zu fassen?

Nun, es wird nicht weit mehr
gehn
An dem Wanderstabe.
Krähe, lass mich endlich sehn
Treue bis zum Grabe!

Das Wirtshaus

Auf einen Totenacker
Hat mich mein Weg gebracht.
Allhier will ich einkehren:
Hab' ich bei mir gedacht.

Ihr grünen Totenkränze
Könnt wohl die Zeichen sein,
Die müde Wanderer laden
In's kühle Wirtshaus ein.

Sind denn in diesem Hause
Die Kammern all' besetzt?
Bin matt zum Niedersinken,
Bin tödlich schwer verletzt.

O unbarmherz'ge Schenke,
Doch weisest du mich ab?
Nun weiter denn, nur weiter,
Mein treuer Wanderstab!

Mut

Fliegt der Schnee mir in's
Gesicht,
Schüttl' ich ihn herunter.
Wenn mein Herz im Busen
spricht,
Sing' ich hell und munter.

Höre nicht, was es mir sagt,
Habe keine Ohren,
Fühle nicht, was es mir klagt,
Klagen ist für Toren.

Lustig in die Welt hinein
Gegen Wind und Wetter!
Will kein Gott auf Erden sein,
Sind wir selber Götter.

O crow, strange creature,
do you not wish to leave
me?
Do you intend soon
to seize my body as prey?

Well, I've not much
further
to journey with my staff.
O crow, let me at last see
faithfulness unto death!

The inn

My journey has brought me
to a graveyard.
Here, I thought, is where
I shall rest for the night.

You green funeral wreaths
must be the signs
that invite weary travellers
inside the cool inn.

Are all the rooms, then
taken in this house?
I am weary, ready to sink,
wounded unto death.

O pitiless inn,
yet you turn me away?
On, then, ever onwards,
my trusty staff!

Courage

If snow drives into my
face,
I shake it off.
If my heart speaks in my
breast,
I sing loud and merrily.

I don't hear what it tells me,
I have no ears,
I don't feel what it laments,
lamenting is for fools.

Cheerfully out into the world
against wind and weather!
If there's no god on earth,
then we ourselves are gods.

Ralph Vaughan Williams

From *Songs of Travel*

Robert Louis Stevenson

Bright is the ring of words

Bright is the ring of words
When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs
When the singer sings them,
Still they are carolled and said -
On wings they are carried -
After the singer is dead
And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies
In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
The swains together.
And when the west is red
With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings
And the maid remembers.

I have trod the upward and the downward slope

I have trod the upward and the downward slope;
I have endured and done in days before;
I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope;
And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.