

WIGMORE HALL

Monday 2 June 2025
1.00pm

Roderick Williams baritone
Elena Urioste violin
Tom Poster piano

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Violin Sonata in A K305 (1778)
I. Allegro di molto • II. Tema. Andante grazioso

Roderick Williams (b.1965)

Come hither, child for baritone, violin and piano (2025)
world première

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Two English Folksongs for voice and violin (?1935)
Searching for Lambs • The Lawyer

How Cold the Wind Doth Blow (The Unquiet Grave) (1912)

Tom Poster (b.1981)

Lost and Found for baritone, violin and piano (2025)
world première

Louis Spohr (1784-1859)

6 Gesänge Op. 154 for baritone, violin and piano (1856)
*Abendfeier • Jagdlied • Töne • Erbkönig •
Der Spielmann und seine Geige • Abendstille*



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This wide-ranging programme features an early Mozart masterpiece, some rarely-heard gems for voice, violin and piano, and world premières by two of today's performers.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote more than 40 violin sonatas across his life. The Sonata in A K305 is one of six that he composed during a job-seeking tour to Mannheim and Paris in 1777-8. He dedicated them to Maria Elisabeth, wife of the Elector of the Palatinate, a region of South-West Germany: they have hence become known as the 'Palatine' Sonatas. K305 – like all but one of the set – is in two movements. The sparkling *Allegro di molto* contains two themes, the first boisterous, the second gentler though still energetic. Throughout, the music is characterised by dynamic contrasts and instrumental brilliance. The more expansive second movement consists of six variations on a graceful theme. The first variation is a *moto perpetuo* for piano alone; the violin comes to the fore in the second; the third is a playful 'call-and-response' between the instruments; and the fourth features a song-like violin melody periodically interrupted by mini-cadenzas from the piano. Darker emotions are briefly explored in the brooding minor-key fifth variation, but in the sixth variation a lively triple-time dance restores good humour and sweeps the sonata to a spirited close.

Roderick Williams's *Come hither, child*, has two distinct influences. While studying the role of Yeletsky in Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades*, Williams became fascinated by the beautiful nostalgic song sung by Paulina in Act I of the opera, and wondered about writing something with a similar lyrical simplicity. Around the same time, he encountered Emily Brontë's poetry through Eleanor Alberga's song cycle *The Soul's Expression* – which he sang at Wigmore Hall in April – and became keen to explore her work further. He was especially drawn to 'Come hither, child' due to its resonances with Schubert's yearning 'Kennst du das Land', which he had programmed alongside Alberga's piece. Brontë's poem, written when she was just 20, is a passionate testimony to music's consolatory power – she herself was a gifted musician. Williams's setting contrasts quasi-improvisatory violin solos with rich-textured passages featuring harp-like piano figuration and a broad-breathed vocal line. The piano is largely silent in the sections depicting the transfiguring music heard by Brontë's protagonist, leaving voice and violin to engage in intense dialogue.

Folksong was one of **Ralph Vaughan Williams's** passions, and from 1903 onwards he collected around 800 examples, and arranged 80 of them for voice and piano or voice and violin. The 2 *English Folksongs* for voice and violin were composed around 1913 but only published in 1935. 'Searching for Lambs' is a tender love song from Somerset, with a beautiful wistful tune augmented here by an equally lovely violin countermelody. The contrastingly comic Sussex folksong 'The Lawyer' tells how a spirited country girl

rejects a rich lawyer for a happy marriage to a 'common man'. Vaughan Williams's jaunty arrangement includes playful pizzicatos (plucked notes) for the violin. *How Cold the Wind Doth Blow* (or *The Unquiet Grave*, 1912) for voice, violin and piano is constructed on a larger scale and is based on a folksong cited by the BBC in 2016 as one of the most disturbing in history. A bereaved spouse's year-long mourning for their beloved is interrupted when their ghost speaks from the grave, begging the surviving partner to let them rest. In Vaughan Williams's poignant setting, the violin symbolises the dead partner's ghost, its melody entwining with the singer's as though in an embrace.

Tom Poster's *Lost and Found* is a setting of a two-part poem on environmental themes by his father Jem Poster, an award-winning poet and novelist. The first part, 'Lost', explores the damage we have done to our planet, while the second, 'Found', offers 'those who listen' reasons for hope. Of the music, the composer writes: 'the first part evokes a deep sense of loss, with the instrumental textures kept relatively spare, finally leaving voice and violin alone in a moment of reflection; the second part answers with more optimism, richer scoring, and a sense of uplift. The vocal line, taking its cue from the natural imagery of the poems, is essentially lyrical throughout.' The work closes in a quiet recollection of its opening bars. *Lost and Found* was written especially for Roderick Williams and Elena Urioste.

While little of **Louis (Ludwig) Spohr's** music is regularly performed today, in his lifetime he was celebrated as a composer, conductor and virtuoso violinist. His vast *œuvre* includes 36 string quartets, 15 violin concertos, 10 operas and nine symphonies. 6 *Gesänge* Op. 154 (1856) is one of his final compositions, and was a commission from the music-loving Prince Paul Friedrich Emil Leopold of Lippe. Its relatively straightforward vocal style contrasts with an elaborate violin part written for Spohr's former pupil August Kiel. The texts – all but one by minor poets – cover a range of topics. 'Abend-Feier' is a rapt depiction of a beautiful summer evening, with the violin imitating gentle breezes and nightingales. 'Jagdlied' describes the joys of hunting, with plenteous hunting-horn effects in piano and violin. The third and fifth songs are invocations to music, represented by the violin at its most soulful. While it fails to help the lovelorn protagonist of 'Töne' win his beloved, it offers much solace to the spurned minstrel in 'Der Spielmann und seine Geige'. In the fourth song, 'Erlkönig', the violin chiefly characterises the otherworldly Erlking. Spohr's semi-strophic setting of Goethe's famous poem is notably less anguished than Schubert's, reminding us of the text's roots in folk ballads. The closing 'Abendstille' is a quiet hymn to night whose strophic structure and gentle vocal melody, echoed by the violin, create an ambience of calm contentment.

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Violin Sonata in A K305 (1778)

I. Allegro di molto

II. Tema. Andante grazioso

Roderick Williams (b.1965)

Come hither, child for baritone, violin and piano (2025)

Emily Brontë

Come hither, child—who gifted thee
With power to touch that string so well?
How darest thou rouse up thoughts in me,
Thoughts that I would—but cannot quell?

Nay, chide not, lady; long ago
I heard those notes in Ula's hall,
And had I known they'd waken woe
I'd weep their music to recall.

But thus it was: one festal night
When I was hardly six years old
I stole away from crowds and light
And sought a chamber dark and cold.

I had no one to love me there,
I knew no comrade and no friend;
And so I went to sorrow where
Heaven, only heaven saw me bend.

Loud blew the wind; 'twas sad to stay
From all that splendour barred away.
I imaged in the lonely room
A thousand forms of fearful gloom.

And with my wet eyes raised on high
I prayed to God that I might die.
Suddenly in that silence drear
A sound of music reached my ear,

And then a note, I hear it yet,
So full of soul, so deeply sweet,
I thought that Gabriel's self had come
To take me to thy father's home.

Three times it rose, that seraph strain,
Then died, nor breathed again;
But still the words and still the tone
Dwell round my heart when all alone.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Two English Folksongs for voice and violin (?1935)

Searching for Lambs

Traditional

As I went out one May morning,
One May morning betime,
I met a maid from home had strayed,
Just as the sun did shine.

'What makes you rise so soon, my dear,
Your journey to pursue?
Your pretty little feet they tread so sweet,
Strike off the morning dew.'

'I'm going to feed my father's flock,
His young and tender lambs,
That over hills and over dales
Lie waiting for their dams.'

'O stay! O stay! you handsome maid,
And rest a moment here,
For there is none but you alone
That I do love so dear.

'How gloriously the sun doth shine,
How pleasant is the air;
I'd rather rest on a true love's breast
Than any other where.

'For I am thine, and thou art mine,
No man shall uncomf'ort thee;
We'll join our hands in wedded bands
And married we will be!'

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

The Lawyer

Traditional

A lawyer he went out one day,
A-riding through the city,
It was there he met with a handsome maid,
And he thought her so sweet and pretty.

'Good morning to you, pretty maid,
And whither are you going?'
'I am going a-down yonder meadow,' she said,
'Where my father he is a-mowing.'

'I'll take you up to London town,
And all such lovely places;
I will busk you into a silken gown,
Gold rings and gold chains and laces.'

'I'll have none of your London town,
And all such lovely places.
I will not be busked'n to a silken gown,
Gold rings and gold chains and laces.'

And now she is a poor man's wife,
Her husband dearly loves her;
She lives a sweet and contented life,
There's no lady in town above her.

How Cold the Wind Doth Blow (The Unquiet Grave) (1912)

Traditional, collected by W Percy Merrick

How cold the wind doth blow, dear Love!
How heavy fall the drops of rain!
I never had but one true love,
And in the green woods he was slain.

I'll do as much for my true love
As ever in my power doth lay;
I will sit and mourn upon his grave
Dear love, a twelvemonth and a day.

When this twelvemonth was gone and past
The ghost began to speak at the last,
'Why sit you here all on my grave,
Sweet heart! and will not let me sleep!

O what is it you want of me
Sweet heart! or what of me would have?
'One kiss, one kiss from your snowy white lips
Is all I crave from you dear love.'

'My lips they are so cold as clay,
My breath it doth smell earthy and strong;
If you were to kiss my snowy white lips,
Sweet heart! your time would not be long.'

How cold the wind doth blow, dear love,
How heavy fall the drops of rain!
I never had but one true love,
And in the green-woods he was slain.

Tom Poster (b.1981)

Lost and Found for baritone, violin and piano (2025)

Jem Poster

I

Lost

No, that's a world away, a time
the turning seasons won't bring back. The summers
come and go, but there are none like those – the
mornings
shimmering with promise, light on the flowering
meadows
and on the rippling streams where trout
hung steady in the flow or twisted sideways
with a silver gleam.

Now the flowers
are gone, the waters trickle
sluggish over stone, and nothing stirs
on the dry bankside. New times,
hard times: the parched fields cracking, grain
shrivelling on the stalk, the hum
of small lives silenced.

Where shall we go
for shade and water now, how can we
feed ourselves on husks? The world we spoiled
lies far beyond our grasp. We strain towards it
like woken dreamers as it fades away.

II

Found

Nothing is lost: the dream
sings in the blood, a song
of Paradise restored, and those who listen
will hear it through the roar
of traffic, the alarms of war, the crackle
of burning forests. Always there,
a hymn of grace, reminder of the home
we left so long ago. While this wren
trills in the thicket, while the fragrance
drifts from the dog-rose, while these midges dance
in their shaft of sunlight, nothing
is ended or forgotten, and the heart
lifts with the falcon on the shining air.

Louis Spohr (1784-1859)

6 Gesänge Op. 154 for baritone, violin and piano (1856)

Abendfeier

H Mann

Evening celebration

Leise schleich' ich mich am
Abend
In die Laube von Jasmin,
Wenn die lauen Lüfte
labend
Durch die grünen Blätter
zieh'n.

Softly at evening I
steal
into the jasmine arbour,
when warm refreshing
breezes
waft through the green
leaves,

Wenn der Mond in
Silberhelle
Sich dort spiegelt in der Flut,
Plätschernd kräuselt sich
die Welle,
Und die ganze Schöpfung
ruht.

When the moon is
mirrored,
silver bright, in the sea,
when waves plash and
ripple
and all creation is at
rest.

Horch dem Lied der
Philomele,
O wie ist mir da so wohl,
Wie ist dann die ganze Seele
Mir von hoher Andacht voll!

Listen to the song of the
nightingale,
Ah! how content I then feel,
how my soul then swells
with rapt devotion!

Und es schweift mein Blick
nach oben
Zum besternten
Himmelszelt;
Meinen Schöpfer muss ich
loben,
Gross und schön ist Gottes
Welt!

And my eyes gaze
aloft
to the star-studded
canopy of heaven;
I will praise my
Maker,
His world is great and
beautiful!

Jagdlied

Friedrich Spohr

Hunting song

Seht ihr's dort funkeln in
rosiger Pracht!
Es glänzet das Fröhrot so
milde;
Auf, Brüder! munter! Diana
lacht,
Schon lebt's im Hain, im
Gefilde.

Do you see a glimmer there
of splendid reddish light?
It is the gentle gleam of
rosy dawn;
get up, brothers! Be of good
cheer! Diana laughs,
the thickets and fields are
now alive.

Nicht länger gefrönet der
schläfrigen Ruh,
Die Jagd beut schönere
Stunden,
Wir eilen dem schattigen
Walde zu,
Umklafft von munteren
Hunden.

Wallow no longer in
gentle sleep,
the chase offers finer
hours,
we'll hasten to the shady
woods,
surrounded by our baying
hounds.

Schön schmeckt es im
Grünen bei fröhlicher Rast,
Viel besser als heim in der
Klausen,
Die schattige Eiche wird
unser Palast,
Und Frohsinn herrschet
beim Schmause.

It feels far better to sleep
in the open,
far more than at home in
our little room,
the shade-giving oak
becomes our palace,
and happiness rules at
the feast.

Uns spendet die Quelle den
labenden Trank,
Es rufen die schallenden
Hörner,
Wir winden uns mutig zum
buschigen Hang
Durch Brombeer, Ranken
und Dörner.

The spring refreshes us
with its water,
we are summoned by
echoing horns,
we boldly find our way to
the bushy slope
through brambles,
tendrils and thorns.

Dort zeigt sich der Eber, der
Hirsch mit Geweih,
Und lauschet an rieselnder
Quelle,
Doch krachend trifft sie das
tötende Blei,
Stark schweisend blüht
sich die Stelle.

There the boar and the
antlered stag appear,
listening to the rippling
stream,
but crack! they'll be killed
by a lead bullet,
the spot will be marked
by all their blood.

Viel Freuden beut uns die
herrliche Jagd,
Sie macht uns so rüstig, so
munter,
Am Abend ist lustiges
Waidwerk vollbracht,
Froh geht's zur Heimat
hinunter.

The splendid chase gives
us such joy,
it makes us so hale and
hearty,
in the evening we rest
from the merry hunt
and happily we return to
our homes.

Töne

Rudolph Otto

Worte hab ich nicht, um dir
zu sagen,
Was für dich im tiefsten
Herzen glüht,
Worte find' ich nicht, um dir
zu klagen,
Wie der Sehnsucht Weh die
Brust durchzieht.

Höre denn der Saiten leises
Flehen,
Höre denn der Töne
mächt'gen Klang,
Liebe flüsternd wie des
Zephyrs Wehen,
Brausend wie der Strom in
wildem Drang.

Nah'n sie dir auf ihren
Geisterschwingen,
Und du lauschest meinen
Boten nicht,
Mögen sie verzaubern und
verklingen,
Wie mein Herz in stiller
Wehmut bricht.

Erlkönig

*Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe*

Wer reitet so spät durch
Nacht und Wind?
Es ist der Vater mit seinem
Kind:
Er hält den Knaben wohl in
dem Arm,
Er hält ihn sicher, er hält ihn
warm.

„Mein Sohn, was birgst du so
scheu dein Gesicht?“
„Siehst, Vater, du den
Erlkönig nicht?
Den Erlenkönig mit Kron'
und Schweif?“
„Mein Sohn, es ist ein
Nebelstreif.“

Music

I have no words to tell
you
what glows for you deep
in my heart,
I find no words to lament
to you
what longing pervades
my breast.

Listen then to the strings'
soft pleading,
listen to the music's
mighty sound,
love whispering like the
zephyr's breath,
raging like the torrent in
wild spate.

If they then bring to you
my message
and you do not listen to
what they say,
they will fade and die
away,
just as my heart breaks in
silent sadness.

The Erl king

Who rides so late through
the night and wind?
It is the father with his
child.
He has the boy in his
arms;
he holds him safely, he
keeps him warm.

'My son, why do you shyly
hide your face?'
'Father, can you not see
the Erlking?
The Erlking with his
crown and tail?'
'My son, it is a streak of
mist.'

„Du liebes Kind, komm, geh
mit mir!
Gar schöne Spiele spiel' ich
mit dir;
Viel' bunte Blumen sind am
Strand,
Meine Mutter hat manch
guld'nes Gewand.“

„Mein Vater, mein Vater, und
hörest du nicht,
Was Erlenkönig mir heimlich
verspricht?“
„Sei ruhig, bleibe ruhig, mein
Kind:
In dürrn Blättern säuselt
der Wind.“

„Willst, feiner Knabe, du mit
mir gehn?
Meine Töchter sollen dich
warten schön;
Meine Töchter führen den
nächtlichen Reihn
Und wiegen und tanzen und
singen dich ein.“

„Mein Vater, mein Vater, und
siehst du nicht dort
Erlkönigs Töchter am
düstern Ort?“
„Mein Sohn, mein Sohn, ich
seh es genau:
Es scheinen die alten
Weiden so grau.“

„Ich liebe dich, mich reizt
deine schöne Gestalt;
Und bist du nicht willig, so
brauch ich Gewalt.“
„Mein Vater, mein Vater,
jetzt fasst er mich an!
Erlkönig hat mir ein Leids
getan!“

Dem Vater grauset, er
reitet geschwind,
Er hält in Armen das
ächzende Kind,
Erreicht den Hof mit Mühe
und Not:
In seinen Armen das Kind
war tot.

'Sweet child, come with
me.
I'll play wonderful games
with you.
Many a pretty flower
grows on the shore;
my mother has many a
golden robe.'

'Father, father, do you not
hear
what the Erlking softly
promises me?'
'Calm, be calm, my
child:
the wind is rustling in the
withered leaves.'

'Won't you come with me,
my fine lad?
My daughters shall wait
upon you;
my daughters lead the
nightly dance,
and will rock you, and dance,
and sing you to sleep.'

'Father, father, can you
not see
Erlking's daughters there
in the darkness?'
'My son, my son, I can see
clearly:
it is the old grey willows
gleaming.'

'I love you, your fair form
allures me,
and if you don't come
willingly, I'll use force.'
'Father, father, now he's
seizing me!
The Erlking has hurt
me!'

The father shudders, he
rides swiftly,
he holds the moaning
child in his arms;
with one last effort he
reaches home;
the child lay dead in his
arms.

Der Spielmann und seine Geige

Henriette von Schorn

Vor Gottes Aug', dem
Abendrot,
Gab sie mir Ring und
Schwur;
Der Ring zersprang, die
Treu' ist tot,
Mir blieb die Sehnsucht
nur.

Ein Stutzer lockte schmuck
und leicht
Mit süßem Flitterton;
Sie folgte, lächelnd ward
gereicht
Mein brechend' Herz zum
Lohn.

Durch schwarz' Gewölk die
Sonne blinkt!
Freud' steht mit Leid im Bund;
Mein Gram lebt ewig,
nimmer sinkt
Sein Thron am bleichen
Mund.

Lös', Geige, der Dämonen
Schar,
Es winkt mein Zauberstab,
Stürm, Wahnsinn, dunkles
Schlangenhaar,
Sei meiner Leiden Grab!

Doch leise, Äolsharfen gleich,
Besänftigt sie mein Herz;
Ihr Seelenklang, an Balsam
reich,
Stillt meinen tiefen Schmerz.

Abendstille

Johann Koch

Der Tag hat sich zur Ruh'
gelegt,
Die Lüfte schlummern
allzumal;
Kaum dass ein Blatt im Wald
sich regt,
Und kaum ein Halm im
Wiesental.

The minstrel and his fiddle

With God and the sunset
as witnesses,
She gave me ring and
vow;
The ring snapped in two,
she broke her faith,
My longing was all that
remained.

A dandy, handsome and
flighty,
Lured her with empty words;
She followed; with smiles
she offered
My breaking heart as
reward.

The sun gleams through
dark clouds!
Joy is allied with pain;
My grief abides for ever, it
will always
Reign upon these pale
lips.

Set free, O fiddle, the host
of demons,
My magic wand beckons
Rage, O madness; dark
serpent locks,
Be my sorrow's grave!

Be my sorrow's grave!
She soothes my heart;
The sound of her balm-
drenched soul
Assuages my deep pain.

Evening stillness

Day has laid itself to
rest,
all the breezes are now at
slumber;
scarcely a leaf stirs in the
wood,
or a blade of grass in the
valley meadow.

Ein milder, warmer
Sommerhauch
Durchzieht den
mondbeglänzten Raum,
Und über meine Seele auch
Legt Frieden seinen weichen
Flaum.

O stille, heit're, milde
Nacht,
Wenn tief die Welt in
Schlummer liegt,
Wenn nur der Friedensengel
wacht
Und selig ein die Seele
wiegt.

A gentle, warm summer
breeze
passes through the
moonlit wood,
and onto my soul
peace lays its soft
down.

O silent, serene and
gentle night,
when the world lies deep
in slumber,
when only the angel of
peace is awake
and blissfully rocks the
soul to sleep.