

WIGMORE HALL

Thursday 2 March 2023
7.30pm

Supported by the Rick Mather David Scrase Foundation

Nina Stemme soprano
Magnus Svensson piano

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

Wesendonck Lieder (1857-8)

*Stehe still! • Der Engel • Im Treibhaus •
Schmerzen • Träume*

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Am stillen Herd aus den *Meistersingern* S448 (1871) *based on
Richard Wagner*

Sigurd von Koch (1879-1919)

Die geheimnisvolle Flöte (1916)

*Die Lotusblumen • Traurige Frühlingsnacht •
Der Unwürdige • Die geheimnisvolle Flöte •
Herbstgefühl*

Interval

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Kindertotenlieder (1901-4)

*Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgehn
Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen
Wenn dein Mütterlein
Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen
In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus*

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

Surabaya Johnny from *Happy End* (1929)

Nannas Lied (1939)

Youkali (1934)

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LOTTERY FUNDED

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In 1849, following his involvement in the Dresden insurrection, **Richard Wagner** needed a quick escape to evade arrest. Sheltering briefly with his friend Franz Liszt in Weimar, he travelled onwards to Switzerland, and settled in Zurich. Among his supporters there was the retired silk merchant Otto Wesendonck, whose second wife Mathilde was a keen amateur poet. (Her name was in fact Agnes; Mathilde was the name of Wesendonck's first wife, and he suggested that upon her death and his remarriage, his new bride might take her predecessor's name!)

Mathilde Wesendonck and Wagner rapidly developed a passionate relationship (though whether it was ever consummated remains unclear). Between 1857 and 1858, he set five of her poems to music – 'our poems' as he came to refer to them in their correspondence – and two were also used as studies for his latest opera, *Tristan und Isolde*. The poems are full of rich imagery, from the gentle benediction of the angel in the first, to the extraordinary description of the sun's weeping in 'Schmerzen'. Wagner transforms each into a mini *scena*: we hear the churning wheel of Time in 'Stehe still!', the heavy drops on the leaves in 'Im Treibhaus' – and of course, the magical, floating dreamworld of 'Träume'.

Liszt was not only an important friend to Wagner in times of need: he was also a crucial artistic ally. In October 1867, Liszt visited Wagner at his home near Lucerne and read through the newly completed score of *Die Meistersinger*. He later produced a solo transcription of 'Am stillen Herd', sung by our hero Walter. In this beautifully lyrical passage – wound with increasingly fantastical filigree in Liszt's transcription – he explains that he has no official Meistersinger teacher: rather, he has studied the works of the legendary Walter von der Vogelweide (his namesake of course), and that nature itself taught him how to sing. 'If he has true Art and is a good guardian of it,' Hans Sachs reasons after Walter's impassioned speech, 'what does it matter who taught him?'

Liszt and Wagner were in their sixties by the time **Sigurd von Koch** was born in the south-east of Stockholm. A pianist, critic and accomplished poet and artist, Koch studied in Germany in the early 1900s – but later became increasingly interested in the music of the French Impressionists. His *Die geheimnisvolle Flöte* of 1916 shares a poetic source with Mahler's slightly earlier *Das Lied von der Erde*: the collection *Die Chinesische Flöte* edited by the German writer Hans Bethge. Bethge carefully labelled his collection 'Nachdichtungen' – adaptation, or paraphrase – since he did not have the necessary linguistic skills to work from the original sources and relied on English, French and German translations. Nevertheless, his volume became an incredibly popular source for musical setting.

Koch's songs are a heady mixture of late-Romantic, almost Mahlerian harmonies and the floating chords

of Debussyian Impressionism – with a sizeable dose of orientalism in the mix. The flute of the cycle's title is present in both the second and fifth numbers, where the pianist's fingers rock between perfumed, compound harmonies beneath a vocal line that is often hypnotic in its use of repeated notes. Elsewhere are twinkling figurations that suggest the flute being played, and rhapsodic harmonies that reveal Koch's Austro-German training.

Gustav Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* is a curious bringing together of real and imagined loss, as well as a dreadful foreshadowing of the events of the composer's own life. The cycle sets five poems from over 400 written by Friedrich Rückert after the death of two of his children from scarlet fever. When Mahler began the project, he was a bachelor; by the time he had finished, he was a married man and a father himself. His wife Alma considered the project tasteless and tempting fate – and alas, she was proved right. Just two years after the cycle's première, the Mahlers' daughter Maria died of scarlet fever.

The first of the five considers the rising of the sun despite the tragedy of the loss of a child overnight – 'A little lamp went out in my firmament', as Rückert so painfully has it. The loss of light, this time the flames of the child's eyes, is also the theme of 'Nun seh' ich wohl'. The third and fourth numbers are concerned, in different scenarios, with the protagonist's desperate hope that his children have simply gone out and will soon return. Some dramatic catharsis is offered by 'In diesem Wetter', in which the heartbroken chromatic twisting of the earlier songs is whipped into a fearful storm – before the weather subsides, and a gentle heavenly lullaby closes the set.

Mahler died in 1911, before the horrors of the First World War and the deprivation and political instability which was to follow it. Reaching adulthood at precisely this time was **Kurt Weill**, whose musical career took him from a youthful enthusiasm for Wagner, through studies with Busoni, to stage collaborations with Brecht and others, and a keen interest in jazz and American idioms. We hear three of Weill's best-loved numbers. *Surabaya Johnny* is taken from the 1929 show *Happy End*. The song is sung by the show's heroine, Lillian, a Salvation Army preacher aiming to save the gangster Bill Cracker – it is his return to a life of crime that prompts her to sing this number. Weill was living in the USA by the time he composed *Nannas Lied*, another Brecht setting, this time composed for Weill's wife Lotte Lenya. Finally *Youkali* was originally composed as an instrumental tango for the 1934 show *Marie Galante*. 12 years later, one of the show's lyricists added the text we hear tonight: the tale of a fabled exotic island, where you can leave all your worries behind.

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Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

Wesendonck Lieder (1857-8)

Mathilde Wesendonck

Stehe still!

Sausendes, brausendes Rad
der Zeit,
Messer du der Ewigkeit;
Leuchtende Sphären im
weiten All,
Die ihr umringt den
Weltenball;
Urewige Schöpfung, halte
doch ein,
Genug des Werdens, lass
mich sein!

Halte an dich, zeugende
Kraft,
Urgedanke, der ewig
schafft!
Hemmet den Atem, stillt
den Drang,
Schweigend nur eine
Sekunde lang!
Schwellende Pulse, fesselt
den Schlag;
Ende, des Wollens ew'ger
Tag!

Dass in selig süßem
Vergessen
Ich mög alle Wonne
ermessen!
Wenn Auge in Auge wonnig
trinken,
Seele ganz in Seele
versinken;
Wesen in Wesen sich
wiederfindet,
Und alles Hoffens Ende sich
kündet,
Die Lippe verstummt in
staunendem Schweigen,
Keinen Wunsch mehr will das
Innre zeugen:
Erkennt der Mensch des
Ew'gen Spur,
Und löst dein Rätsel, heil'ge
Natur!

Stand still!

Rushing, roaring wheel of
time,
you that measure eternity;
gleaming spheres in the
vast universe,
you that surround our
earthly sphere;
eternal creation –
cease:
enough of becoming, let
me be!

Hold yourselves back,
generative powers,
Primal Thought, that
always creates!
Stop your breath, still
your urge,
be silent for a single
moment!
Swelling pulses, restrain
your beating;
eternal day of the Will –
end!

That in blessed, sweet
oblivion
I might measure all my
bliss!
When eye gazes blissfully
into eye,
when soul drowns utterly
in soul;
when being finds itself in
being,
and the goal of every
hope is near,
when lips are mute in
silent wonder,
when the soul wishes for
nothing more:
then man perceives
Eternity's footprint,
and solves your riddle,
holy Nature!

Der Engel

In der Kindheit frühen
Tagen
Hört' ich oft von Engeln
sagen,
Die des Himmels hehre
Wonne
Tauschen mit der Erdensonne,

Dass, wo bang ein Herz in
Sorgen
Schmachtet vor der Welt
verborgen,
Dass, wo still es will
verbluten,
Und vergehn in Tränenfluten,

Dass, wo brünstig sein Gebet
Einzig um Erlösung fleht,
Da der Engel niederschwebt,
Und es sanft gen Himmel
hebt.

Ja, es stieg auch mir ein
Engel nieder,
Und auf leuchtendem Gefieder
Führt er, ferne jedem
Schmerz,
Meinen Geist nun himmelwärts!

The angel

In the early days of
childhood
I often heard tell of angels
who exchange heaven's
pure bliss
for the sun of earth,

So that, when a sorrowful
heart
hides its yearning from
the world,
and would silently bleed
away
and dissolve in streams of
tears,

And when its fervent
prayer
begs only for deliverance,
that angel will fly down
and gently raise the heart
to heaven.

And to me too an angel
descended,
and now on shining wings
bears my spirit, free from
all pain,
towards heaven!

Im Treibhaus

Hochgewölbte
Blätterkronen,
Baldachine von Smaragd,
Kinder ihr aus fernen
Zonen,
Saget mir, warum ihr klagt?

Schweigend neiget ihr die
Zweige,
Malet Zeichen in die
Luft,
Und der Leiden stummer
Zeuge
Steiget aufwärts, süsster Duft.

Weit insehendem Verlangen
Breitet ihr die Arme aus,
Und umschlinget
wahnbefangen
Öder Leere nicht'gen Graus.

Wohl, ich weiss es, arme
Pflanze;
Ein Geschicke teilen wir,
Ob umstrahlt von Licht und
Glanze,
Unsre Heimat ist nicht hier!

Und wie froh die Sonne
scheidet
Von des Tages leerem Schein,
Hüllet der, der wahrhaft
leidet,
Sich in Schweigens Dunkel
ein.

Stille wird's, ein säuselnd
Weben
Füllet bang den dunklen
Raum:
Schwere Tropfen seh ich
schweben
An der Blätter grünem
Saum.

Schmerzen

Sonne, weinest jeden
Abend
Dir die schönen Augen
rot,
Wenn im Meeresspiegel
badend
Dich erreicht der frühe Tod;

Doch erstehst in alter
Pracht,

In the greenhouse

High-arching leafy
crowns,
canopies of emerald,
you children who dwell in
distant climes,
tell me, why do you lament?

Silently you bend your
branches,
inscribe your symbols on
the air,
and a sweet fragrance
rises,
as silent witness to your
sorrows.

With longing and desire,
you open wide your arms,
and embrace in your
delusion
desolation's awful void.

I am well aware, poor
plant;
we both share a single fate,
though bathed in
gleaming light,
our homeland is not here!

And just as the sun is
glad to leave
the empty gleam of day,
the true sufferer veils
himself
in the darkness of silence.

It grows quiet, a whirring
whisper
fills the dark room
uneasily:
I see heavy droplets
hanging from
the green edge of the
leaves.

Agonies

Every evening, sun, you
redden
your lovely eyes with
weeping,
when, bathing in the
sea,
you die an early death;

Yet you rise in your old
splendour,

Glorie der düstren Welt,
Du am Morgen neu
erwacht,
Wie ein stolzer
Siegesheld!

Ach, wie sollte ich da klagen,
Wie, mein Herz, so schwer
dich sehn,
Muss die Sonne selbst
verzagen,
Muss die Sonne untergehn?

Und gebietet Tod nur
Leben,
Geben Schmerzen Wonne nur:
O wie dank ich, dass
gegeben
Solche Schmerzen mir Natur!

Träume

Sag, welch wunderbare
Träume
Halten meinen Sinn umfängen,
Dass sie nicht wie leere
Schäume
Sind in ödes Nichts
vergangen?

Träume, die in jeder
Stunde,
Jedem Tage schooner
blühen,
Und mit ihrer
Himmelskunde
Selig durchs Gemüte
ziehn!

Träume, die wie hehre
Strahlen
In die Seele sich versenken,
Dort ein ewig Bild zu
malen:
Allvergessen,
Eingedenken!

Träume, wie wenn
Frühlingssonne
Aus dem Schnee die Blüten
küsst,
Dass zu nie geahnter
Wonne
Sie der neue Tag begrüsst,

Dass sie wachsen, dass sie
blühen,
Träumend spenden ihren
Duft,
Sanft an deiner Brust
verglühen,
Und dann sinken in die Gruft.

the glory of the dark world,
when you wake in the
morning
as a proud and
conquering hero!

Ah, why should I complain,
why should I see you, my
heart, so depressed,
if the sun itself must
despair,
if the sun itself must set?

If only death gives birth to
life,
if only agony brings bliss:
oh how I give thanks to
Nature
for giving me such agony!

Dreams

Say, what wondrous
dreams are these
embracing all my senses,
that they have not, like
bubbles,
vanished to a barren
void?

Dreams, that with every
hour
bloom more lovely every
day,
and with their heavenly
tidings
float blissfully through
the mind!

Dreams, that with
glorious rays
penetrate the soul,
there to paint an eternal
picture:
forgetting all,
remembering one!

Dreams, as when the
Spring sun
kisses blossoms from the
snow,
so the new day might
welcome them
in unimagined bliss,

So that they grow and
flower,
bestow their scent as in a
dream,
fade softly away on your
breast
and sink into their grave.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Am stillen Herd aus den *Meistersingern*

S448 (1871)

based on Richard Wagner

Sigurd von Koch (1879-1919)

**Die geheimnisvolle
Flöte** (1916)

**The Mysterious
Flute**

Die Lotusblumen

Hans Bethge, after Li Bai

The lotus-flowers

Im Mondlicht glitzern
tausend kleine Wellen,
Das helle Grün des Wassers
ist wie Silber,
Man meint, es seien
ungezählte Fische,
Die auf dem Strom hinab
zum Meere ziehn.

A thousand little waves
glitter in the moonlight,
the water's bright green
resembles silver,
as though there were fish
without number
floating downriver to the
sea.

Ich gleite einsam in dem
leichten Nachen,
Nur hin und wieder reg ich
meine Ruder,
Die Nacht und ihre
Einsamkeit erfüllen
Mein Herz, mein junges Herz
mit Traurigkeit.

Lonely, I drift in the light
skiff,
only rarely plying my
oars,
night and its solitude
fill
my heart, my young heart
with sadness.

Ich seh im Mondlicht
tausend Lotosblumen,
Mit Riesenblüten, die wie
Perlen gleissen,
Ich kose sie mit meinen
Bambusrudern,
Sie rauschen auf, als
sprächen sie vom Glück.

I see in the moonlight a
thousand lotus-flowers,
with huge blossoms
glistening like pearls,
I caress them with my
bamboo oars,
they murmur, as though
speaking of bliss.

Sie neigen sich und winken,
liebestrunken,
Sie flüstern Trost in meine
arme Seele;
Ich blicke ganz beseligt auf
sie nieder,
Und meine Schwermut, die
mich so bedrückte,
Sinkt wie ein dunkler
Schatten von mir ab.

They bend and beckon,
drunk with love,
they whisper comfort to
my poor soul;
utterly rapt, I gaze down
upon them,
and the melancholy that
so oppressed me
falls away like a dark
shadow.

**Traurige
Frühlingsnacht**

*Hans Bethge, after Li-Song-
Flu*

Sad spring night

Geschrei der silbernen
Fasanen
Klang melancholisch durch
die Nacht,
Ich spielte dir auf meiner Flöte
Ein Lied, das auch nicht
fröhlich war.

The cry of silver
pheasants
sounded sadly through
the night,
I played for you a song
on my flute that was not
happy either.

In dumpfer Trauer lag die
Erde,
Wir wussten keinen Grund zu
nennen,
Dass unsre Augen
überflossen, -
Das Leben war wie Blei in
uns.

The earth lay in gloomy
mourning,
we knew no
reason
why our eyes should brim
with tears, -
life weighed us down like
lead.

Uns war so bange wie den
Blumen,
Du liessest deine Hände
hängen,
Du sahst mich an und
sprachest müde:
„Sei still, es wird vorübergehn.“

We were as frightened as
the flowers,
you let your hands fall to
your side,
you looked at me and
spoke wearily:
'Be quiet, it will pass.'

Der Unwürdige

Hans Bethge, after La-Ksu-Feng

Schön ist die Linie deiner
Augenbrauen,
Wie Porzellan sind deine
Handgelenke,
Und deine Wangen sind wie
Pfirsiche.

The unworthy one

The line of your eyebrows
is beautiful,
your wrists resemble
porcelain,
and your cheeks are like
peaches.

Du wandelst wie ein Reh mit
scheuen Füßen;
Und bringst du deinen
Ahnen Totenopfer,
So scheinst du gross wie
eine Priesterin.

You wander timidly like a
deer;
and bring sacrifices to
your ancestors,
thus you appear great as
a priestess.

Du bist die schönste Frau am
Gelben Flusse
Und rein wie Neuschnee.
Keine böse Zunge
Wagt deines Herzens
Reinheit anzutasten.

You are the fairest woman
on the Yellow River,
and pure as fresh snow.
No evil tongue
dares to violate your
heart's purity.

Ich bin nicht würdig, deines
Herzens Neigung
Je zu besitzen. Ich bin
schlecht und niedrig,
Doch du bist einer Göttin
strahlend Kind.

I am not worthy ever to
possess
your heart's affection. I
am bad and base,
but you are a goddess's
gleaming child.

Gewähre mir, dass ich von
ferne stehe;
Ich will ein Lied auf meiner
Laute suchen,
Das meine Lust und Qual dir
künden soll.

Allow me to linger
afar;
I will play a song on my
lute
that shall tell you of my
joy and pain.

Die geheimnisvolle Flöte

Hans Bethge, after Li Bai

An einem Abend, da die
Blumen dufteten
Und alle Blätter an den
Bäumen, trug der Wind mir
Das Lied einer entfernten
Flöte zu. Da schnitt
Ich einen Weidenzweig vom
Strauche, und
Mein Lied flog, Antwort
gebend, durch die
blühende Nacht.

The mysterious flute

One evening, when the
flowers were fragrant,
and all the leaves on the
trees, the wind wafted
towards me the song of a
distant flute. I cut
a sprig of willow from the
bush, and
my song flew, in reply,
through the
blossoming night.

Seit jenem Abend hören,
wenn die Erde schläft,
Die Vögel ein Gespräch in
ihrer Sprache.

Since that evening the birds,
when the earth sleeps,
hear a conversation in
their language.

Herbstgefühl

Hans Bethge, after Lo-Tschan-Nai

Die Laute herab von der
Wand!
Deine und meine Schmerzen
will ich singen,
Verblutender Herbst im
Land.

Take the lute from the
wall!
I shall sing of your agony
and mine,
haemorrhaging autumn
landscape.

Ihr schwarzen Schwäne im
Dunkelblau
Segelt wie meine schwarzen
Gedanken
Langsam und müde über die
schlummernde Au.

You black swans against
the dark blue
sail like my black
thoughts
slowly and wearily across
the sleeping meadow.

Du stolzer Aglajabaum am
Rain!
Wo sind nun deine Blätter?
Deine Äste
Ragen wie eine schwarze
Harfe im Abendschein.

You proud aglaia tree by
the bank!
Where are your leaves
now? Your boughs
loom like a black harp in
the gloaming.

Interval

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Kindertotenlieder (1901-4)

Friedrich Rückert

Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgehn

Nun will die Sonn' so hell
aufgehn,
Als sei kein Unglück die
Nacht geschehn.

Now the sun will rise as
bright,
as though no misfortune
had befallen in the night.

Das Unglück geschah nur
mir allein,
Die Sonne, sie scheint
allgemein.

The misfortune befell me
alone,
the sun, it shines on all
mankind.

Du musst nicht die Nacht in
dir verschränken,
Musst sie ins ew'ge Licht
versenken.

You must not enclose the
night within you,
you must immerse it in
eternal light.

Ein Lämplein verlosch in
meinem Zelt,
Heil sei dem Freudenlicht
der Welt!

A little lamp went out in
my firmament,
hail to the joyful light of
the world!

Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen

Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so
dunkle Flammen
Ihr sprühet mir in manchem
Augenblicke,
O Augen, gleichsam, um voll
in einem Blicke
Zu drängen eure ganze
Macht zusammen.

Now I see clearly why you
so often
flash such dark flames at
me,
O eyes, to compress, as it
were, all your power
into a single
glance.

Dort ahnt' ich nicht, weil Nebel
mich umschwammen,
Gewoben vom
verblendenden Geschicke,
Dass sich der Strahl bereits
zur Heimkehr schicke
Dorthin, von wannen alle
Strahlen stammen.

Yet I could not guess, for
mists surrounded me,
woven by fate to dazzle
me,
that your brightness was
already making for home,
towards that place
whence all light comes.

Ihr wolltet mir mit eurem
Leuchten sagen:
Wir möchten nah dir bleiben
gerne,
Doch ist uns das vom
Schicksal abgeschlagen.

With your shining light
you wished to tell me:
we'd love to stay here by
your side,
but this our destiny
denies us.

Sieh' uns nur an, denn bald
sind wir dir ferne.
Was dir nur Augen sind in
diesen Tagen,
In künft'gen Nächten sind es
dir nur Sterne.

Look at us well, for soon
we shall be far away.
What now are merely
eyes to you,
in nights to come shall be
merely stars.

Wenn dein Mütterlein

Wenn dein Mütterlein
Tritt zur Tür herein,
Und den Kopf ich drehe,
Ihr entgegen sehe,
Fällt auf ihr Gesicht
Erst der Blick mir nicht,
Sondern auf die Stelle,
Näher nach der Schwelle,
Dort, wo würde dein
Lieb Gesichtchen sein,
Wenn du freudenhelle
Trätest mit herein,
Wie sonst, mein Töchterlein.

When your dear mother
comes in through the door
and I turn my head
to look at her,
my gaze falls first,
not on her face,
but on that place
nearer the threshold
where your
dear little face would be,
if you, bright-eyed,
were entering with her,
as you used, my daughter.

Wenn dein Mütterlein
Tritt zur Tür herein
Mit der Kerze Schimmer,
Ist es mir, als immer
Kämst du mit herein,
Huschtest hinterdrein,
Als wie sonst in's Zimmer.
O du, des Vaters Zelle,
Ach, zu schnelle
Erlosch'ner
Freudenschein!

When your dear mother
comes in through the door
with the flickering candle,
I always think
you are coming too,
stealing in behind her,
as you used.
O you, the joyful light,
ah, too soon extinguished,
of your father's flesh and
blood!

Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen

Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur
ausgegangen,
Bald werden sie wieder nach
Hause gelangen,
Der Tag ist schön, o sei nicht
bang,
Sie machen nur einen weiten
Gang.

I often think they have
only gone out,
they will soon be coming
home again,
it is a beautiful day, ah, do
not be afraid,
they have only gone for a
long walk.

Ja wohl, sie sind nur
ausgegangen,
Und werden jetzt nach
Hause gelangen,
O sei nicht bang, der Tag ist
schön,
Sie machen nur den Gang zu
jenen Höhn.

Yes, they have only gone
out
and will now be coming
home again,
do not be afraid, it is a
beautiful day,
they are only walking to
those hills.

Sie sind uns nur voraus
gegangen
Und werden nicht wieder
nach Haus verlangen.
Wir holen sie ein auf jenen
Höhn
Im Sonnenschein, der Tag ist
schön auf jenen Höhn.

They have merely gone
on ahead of us
and will not ask to come
home again,
we shall overtake them
on those hills
in the sunshine, the day is
beautiful on those hills.

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus,
Nie hätt' ich gesendet die Kinder hinaus;
Man hat sie getragen, getragen hinaus,
Ich durfte nichts dazu sagen.

In this weather, this raging storm,
I'd never have sent the children out;
they were carried, carried from the house,
there was nothing I could say.

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Saus,
Nie hätt' ich gelassen die Kinder hinaus,
Ich fürchtete, sie erkranken,
Das sind nun eitle Gedanken.

In this weather, this howling gale,
I'd never have let the children out;
I feared that they would fall ill,
these are now but idle thoughts.

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Graus,
Nie hätt' ich gelassen die Kinder hinaus,
Ich sorgte, sie stürben morgen,
Das ist nun nicht zu besorgen.

In this weather, this dreadful blast,
I'd never have let the children out;
I feared they might die next day,
there is no cause for such fears now.

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Graus,
Nie hätt' ich gesendet die Kinder hinaus;
Man hat sie hinaus getragen;
Ich durfte nichts dazu sagen.

In this weather, this dreadful blast,
I'd never have sent the children out;
they were carried from the house,
there was nothing I could say.

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Saus, in diesem Braus,
Sie ruhn, als wie in der Mutter Haus,
Von keinem Sturm erschreckt,
Von Gottes Hand bedeckt,
Sie ruhn wie in der Mutter Haus.

In this weather, this howling gale, this raging storm,
they rest, as if in their mother's house,
frightened by no storm,
protected by God's hand,
they rest, as if in their mother's house.

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

Surabaya Johnny from Happy End (1929)
Bertolt Brecht

Surabaya Johnny

Ich war jung, Gott, erst sechzehn Jahre
Du kamest von Burma herauf
Und sagtest, ich solle mit dir gehen
Du kämest für alles auf

I was young, god, just sixteen years old;
you came up from Burma
and said that I should go with you -
it was all your idea.

Ich fragte nach deiner Stellung
Du sagtest, so wahr ich hier steh
Du hättest zu tun mit der Eisenbahn
Und nichts zu tun mit der See.
Du sagtest viel, Johnny
Kein Wort war wahr, Johnny
Du hast mich betrogen, Johnny, in der ersten Stund
Ich hasse dich so, Johnny
Wie du da stehst und grinst, Johnny
Nimm die Pfeife aus dem Maul, du Hund.

I asked about your position
and you said, as I stand here,
you had something to do with the railways
and nothing to do with the sea.
You said a lot of things, Johnny;
not a word was true, Johnny;
you deceived me, Johnny, from the first hour.
How I hate you, Johnny;
how you stand there and grin, Johnny;
take that pipe out of your mouth, you hound.

Surabaya-Johnny, warum bist du so roh?
Surabaya-Johnny, mein Gott, ich liebe dich so.
Surabaya-Johnny, warum bin ich nicht froh?
Du hast kein Herz, Johnny, und ich liebe dich so.

Surabaya Johnny, why are you so cruel?
Surabaya Johnny, my god, I love you so.
Surabaya Johnny, why aren't I happy?
You have no heart, Johnny, and I love you so.

Zuerst war es immer Sonntag
So lang, bis ich mitging, mit dir
Aber schon nach zwei Wochen
War dir nichts mehr recht an mir
Hinauf und hinab auf den Pandschab
Den Fluss entlang bis zur See.
Ich sehe schon aus im Spiegel
Wie eine Vierzigjährige
Du wolltest nicht Liebe, Johnny
Du wolltest Geld, Johnny
Ich aber sah, Johnny, nur auf deinen Mund
Du verlangtest alles, Johnny
Ich gab dir mehr, Johnny
Nimm die Pfeife aus dem Maul, du Hund.

At first every day was like Sunday
with you, until I went with you -
but after just two weeks
I couldn't do anything right for you any more.
Up and down across the Punjab
along the the river to the sea;
in the mirror, I already look like a forty-year-old.
You didn't want love, Johnny,
you wanted money, Johnny,
but, Johnny, all I saw was your face;
you wanted it all, Johnny;
I gave you more, Johnny.
Take that pipe out of your mouth, you hound.

Surabaya-Johnny ...

Surabaya Johnny ...

Ich habe es nicht beachtet
Warum du den Namen hast
Aber auf der ganzen langen Küste
Warst du ein bekannter Gast

I never thought to wonder why you had that name
but all along the coast
you were a well-known guest.

Eines morgens in einem Sixpencebett	One morning in a flophouse
Werd ich donnern hören die See	I'll hear the sea thundering
Und du gehst, ohne etwas zu sagen	and you'll go, without a word;
Und dein Schiff liegt unten am Kai	your ship is down at the dock.
Du hast kein Herz, Johnny	You have no heart, Johnny,
Du bist ein Schuft, Johnny	you're a scoundrel, Johnny,
Du gehst jetzt weg, Johnny, sag mir den Grund	and now you're leaving, Johnny, tell me why!
Ich liebe dich doch, Johnny	I still love you, Johnny,
Wie am ersten Tag, Johnny	like the first day, Johnny -
Nimm die Pfeife aus dem Maul, du Hund!	take that pipe out of your mouth, you hound!

Surabaya-Johnny ...	Surabaya Johnny ...
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Nannas Lied (1939)

Bertolt Brecht

Meine Herren, mit siebzehn
Jahren
Kam ich auf den
Liebesmarkt,
Und ich habe viel
erfahren.
Böses gab es viel,
Doch das war das Spiel.
Aber manches hab ich doch
verargt.
(Schliesslich bin ich ja auch
ein Mensch.)

Gott sei Dank geht alles
schnell vorüber
Auch die Liebe und der
Kummer sogar.
Wo sind die Tränen von
gestern Abend?
Wo ist der Schnee vom
vergangenen Jahr?

Freilich geht man mit den
Jahren
Leichter auf den
Liebesmarkt
Und umarmt sie dort in
Scharen.
Aber das Gefühl
Wird erstaunlich kühl,
Wenn man damit allzuwenig
kargt.
(Schliesslich geht ja jeder
Vorrat zu Ende.)

Gott sei Dank ...

Und auch wenn man gut das
Handeln
Lernte auf der Liebesmess':
Lust in Kleingeld zu
verwandelnit's
Wird doch niemals leicht.
Nun, es wird erreicht.
Doch man wird auch älter
unterdes.
(Schliesslich bleibt man ja
nicht immer siebzehn.)

Gott sei Dank ...

Nanna's Song

Gentlemen, I was only
seventeen
when I landed on the love
market.
And I learned a lot of
things –
mostly bad,
but that was the game.
Still I resented much of
it.
(After all, I am a human
being.)

Thank God, it all goes by
quickly –
both the love and the
sorrow.
Where are the tears of
last night?
Where are the snows of
years gone by?

As the years go
by,
it gets easier on the love
market -
and to embrace a whole
crowd there.
But it's amazing how
feelings become cold
when you hand them out
to all and sundry.
(After all, every supply
runs out.)

Thank God ...

And although you learn
the tricks of the trade
on the love market,
it's never easy to
convert
lust into small change.
Still, it can be done,
but meanwhile you get a
little older.
(After all, you can't stay
seventeen forever.)

Thank God ...

Youkali (1934)
Roger Fernay

Youkali

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C'est presqu' au bout du monde, Ma barque vagabonde ...	Almost to the end of the world, my errant barque, drifting at the will of the waves, led me one day. The island is very small, but the sprite who inhabits it politely invites us to tour it.
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Youkali,
it's the land of our desires,
Youkali,
it's happiness and pleasure,
Youkali,
it's the land where we leave our cares behind,
it's like a beacon in our night.
The star we follow,
it's Youkali.

Youkali,
it's where we keep our promises,
Youkali,
it's the land of shared love,
it's hope
which is at the heart of all human kind,
the salvation
we are all waiting for,
Youkali,
it's the land of our desires,
Youkali,
it's happiness, it's pleasure,
but it's a dream, a folly,
there is no Youkali!

And life drags us along,
tedious and mundane,
yet the poor human soul,
seeking oblivion everywhere,
knew how, as it left this earth,
to find the mystery
where our dreams are buried
in some Youkali.

Youkali ...

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