

WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 3 July 2024
1.00pm

Innocence

Echo Vocal Ensemble

Sally Carr soprano
Sam Cobb soprano
Ailsa Campbell soprano
Izzi Blain alto
Tristram Cooke alto
Gabriella Liandu alto
Sarah Latto conductor

Oscar Golden Lee tenor
Jack Harberd tenor
Ben Munden tenor
Tom Herring bass
Ben Tomlin bass

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

O nobilissima viriditas (Ben Munden, Izzi Blain)

Pierre Villette (1926-1998)

Hymne à la Vierge (V2 soloist: Sam Cobb)

Jean Mouton (c.1459-1522)

Nesciens mater Virgo virum

Shivani Rattan (b.1996)

Patake!

Michael Head (1900-1976)

The Singer

Meredith Monk (b.1942)

Panda Chant II from The Games

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Trois Chansons: Nicolette • Trois beaux oiseaux du paradis (Soloist: Sam Cobb) • Ronde

Anna Rocławaska-Musiałczyk (b.1987)

Bibi, Synkù bi

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Hush, no more (adapted from The Fairy Queen)

Lennon/McCartney

I'm only sleeping (improvisation) from Revolver

Howard Skempton (b. 1947)

He wishes for the cloths of heaven

Morrissey & Marr / Heap

There is a light that never goes out / Hide and Seek arranged by Sarah Latto (Soloist: Gabriella Liandu)

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina
(c.1525-1594)

I vaghi fiori

ANOJNI (b.1971)

Why did you separate me from the earth (improvisation)

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Innocence is one of those many-sided concepts that has different meanings and resonances in different places and at different times. It is a concept that is transformed by history — through the shifts in our collective relationships to faith, to tradition and to the natural world — but it is also a concept that contains a notion of history within it: a before and an after. We only know what innocence is after we have lost it. As an ensemble, Echo has a deep investment in exploring the whole breadth of musical history: in listening out for the resonances of the present in the music of the past. The theme of innocence, which is so closely tied to the experience and representation of time — yearnings for the past, warnings for the future — seemed an ideal topic for such an exploration.

Moving freely between musical traditions sacred and secular, composed and improvised, classical and popular, we begin with innocence as a religious virtue, reconfigured by industrialisation and World War into a pastoral longing for a lost world of enchantment and connection to nature, as recorded in folk tales and children's songs. In a sequence of lullabies, we sense the precariousness of these childhood idylls, fragile as dreams, which dissolve in the cold light of day. Yet where innocence is lost, wisdom is gained, and we finish with a consideration of how visions of the past can shape our orientation toward the future.

O Nobilissima Viriditas is a responsory by the 12th-century composer and mystic Hildegard von Bingen, which associates purity and virginity with the divine life-giving force of nature, encapsulated in the word *viriditas*. For Hildegard, faith was deeply connected to the natural world, and we've chosen to continually return to excerpts from her responsory throughout the programme, mirroring the many historical manifestations of this belief, from English Romantics to 1960s counterculture.

As embodied in the figures of the Virgin Mary and the Infant Christ, the virtue of innocence is central to Christianity and hence to the story of Western choral music, as explored in two settings of Marian texts by French composers living 500 years apart.

Hymne à la Vierge (1954) remains one of Villetta's best-known compositions. A student of Maurice Duruflé and contemporary of Pierre Boulez at the Paris Conservatoire, Villetta combines structural simplicity with luxuriously chromatic harmonies in this setting of a text by poet Roland Bouhéret, which ascribes to Mary a kind of primordial divinity. It is a hymn to the creation of the 'Mother of the Creator' — 'Born before the hills...before the stars': a miracle as paradoxical as the virgin birth itself. In Mary's own voice, we hear her thanking God for 'making me before the dawn' and 'covering me with the veil of innocence'.

In Jean Mouton's *Nesciens Mater* — an antiphon for the eighth day of the Nativity, which first appeared in the Medici Codex of 1518 — we encounter the other side of this cycle of miraculous creation, with Mary as the Virgin Mother nursing her newborn infant. Mouton was born in northern France in c.1459, and after holding positions in churches in Grenoble and Amiens, he joined the chapel of the French court in c.1502, remaining in its service for the rest of his life. The motet is written as a quadruple canon, with every phrase in the lower parts repeated two bars later in the higher parts, up a fifth. Yet this somewhat academic-sounding approach conjures up an all-enveloping texture of long rolling phrases and sublime beauty.

Innocence is associated first and foremost with childhood, and the experience of childlike joy conjured most vividly in ritual celebration. Shivani Rattan's *Patake!* is a celebration song for Diwali. Joyous musical evocations of traditional customs, treats and decorations — including the titular *patake* or fireworks — are layered on top of one another in a vibrant accumulation that captures the sensory and emotional excess of the festival, which symbolises the spiritual victory of light over darkness.

A rather different notion of musical innocence can be detected in English composer Michael Head's *The Singer*, clearly influenced by the first British folk revival that peaked in the late 19th- and early 20th centuries. The collection, categorisation and publication of traditional songs by individuals such as Cecil Sharp and Ralph Vaughan Williams was marked by an anxiety about the disappearance of traditional ways of life, in the face of accelerating industrialisation, urbanisation and the uprooting of rural communities. We hear this same anxiety dramatised in Head's unaccompanied song, which borrows the musical and lyrical qualities of the folk ballad to describe a magical encounter with a mysterious singer whose fairy song cannot be captured and preserved, but instead disappears into the forest, just as the lilting melody melts into chromaticism.

Meredith Monk's 'Panda Chant' is taken from *The Games* (1983): a science-fiction opera by Monk and Ping Chong. Set on an imaginary planet, *The Games* depicts a post-apocalyptic future where survivors and their descendants are involved in the repetition of ritual games re-enacting Earth's culture, in order to preserve the shards of civilisation. Yet against the background of such horrors, 'Panda Chant' conjures a return to innocence, whereby culture has been reduced to child's play: a kind of primordial soup of communal vocalisation, in which language, melody and identity are all dissolved. While they might function as a warning, compositions like Monk's are

also invitations for us to play — to regress into childhood or devolve into animals — and thus recapture some of our sense of enchantment and innocence, however fleetingly.

In Maurice Ravel's *Trois Chansons* — his sole choral work, for which he also provided original texts — the composer looked to the world of folktales and fairy stories, which had been so central to the European Romantics in their reaction to Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and what sociologist Max Weber called the 'disenchantment' of the modern world, in an age governed by science, rationality and increasing secularism. For Ravel, the world of imagination and enchantment is linked explicitly to youth and childhood, while it is the 'misguided old men and women' who chase away the fairies and monsters, leaving the forest empty and bereft of magic. It is in the central movement — 'Trois Beaux Oiseaux' — that we see a glimpse of the wider context in which the chansons were written, in the repeated parenthetical lament: 'My love has gone to the war'. Ravel began the piece in December 1914, when he was in Paris waiting to be drafted for the First World War. He said of the time: "I have never worked so hard, with such insane, heroic rage...Just think...of the horror of this conflict. It never stops for an instant. What good will it all do?" In this context, these songs record a collective loss of innocence — an idealistic world of youth sacrificed by the old — and yet even in the closing list of all the whimsical beasts and monsters that no longer exist, these pieces afford enduring occasions for play-acting, mischief, and an almost rebelliously naïve sense of childlike joy.

As the light of day becomes colder, the world of sleep and dreams becomes one of the few places where a sense of enchantment can be regained and harsh realities forgotten. This is made chillingly explicit in Polish composer Anna Ročławska-Musiałczyk's setting of Kashubian folk song '**Bibi Synku bi**' — a lullaby for the baby Jesus — in which the mother bids her child to sleep and to dream, so as to protect him from the sad knowledge of his future suffering: 'Don't think about it. Sleep now. Sleep!' In '**Hush, no more**' — a choral extract from Henry Purcell's 1692 semi-opera, *The Fairy-Queen* — the personification of Sleep keeps the titular queen Titania, and her fairy subjects, entranced in 'sweet repose', which melts into an improvised soundscape.

The Lennon/McCartney classic '**I'm Only Sleeping**', taken from the 1966 album *Revolver*, suggests another dimension of this notion of sleep as an escape from the world and retreat into innocence and oblivion. Written in the same year that Timothy Leary coined the phrase 'Turn on, tune in, drop out', the song suggests an awareness of the waking world from the perspective of the sleeper. Mirrored in an improvisatory structure that is shaped by the

individual desires of each singer, the attempt to lull oneself to sleep — to live life as if in a dream — captures some of paradoxes of the '60s counterculture: responding to the ills and injustices of contemporary society by retreating into an interior world of psychedelics and Eastern spiritual practices.

The fragility of dreams, as famously captured by W.B. Yeats' in his poem '**He wishes for the cloths of heaven**', provides the perfect subject for English composer Howard Skempton. Emerging from the experimental milieu of the Scratch Orchestra in the '70s, Skempton's approach to harmony is almost provocatively diatonic. Within the late 20th-century context of modernist complexity and post-modern irony, this radiant C major setting from 1999 can be heard as a gesture of open-hearted vulnerability, an appeal to earnestness, and an enduring faith in beauty without illusions: a conscious aesthetic project that has seen Skempton included under the banner of the 'New Simplicity' which emerged among contemporary composers in the 1980s.

Around the same time, a comparable aesthetic project was being cultivated by a very different group of musicians. The Smiths' nostalgic rejection of '80s synths and futurism was explicitly informed by English Romanticism, and by British pop music and culture of the '50s and early '60s. '**There Is a Light That Never Goes Out**', from their 1986 album *The Queen is Dead*, is an exemplification of the band's excessive, militant vulnerability, which has become the soundtrack to generations of teenage idealism. In this original arrangement by Sarah Latto, the soloist's puritanical faith in the power of love is undercut by the bitter disillusion of singer-songwriter/composer Imogen Heap's '**Hide and Seek**' (2005), sung by the rest of the choir. The flickering torch invoked by the soloist in her final repeated phrase is eventually extinguished, to be enveloped in directionlessness and bewilderment: 'Where are we? What the hell is going on?'

It is this experience of disillusion in which we return to the theme of *viriditas*. Palestrina's madrigal *I vaghi fiori*, a setting of an anonymous text, begins with a lovingly varied description of the natural world in all its detail, as a source of pleasure and restoration. And yet, following a moment of painful realisation — "Lasso me!" (Poor me!) — and a turning inward, all these natural qualities are dismissed as a blur of undifferentiated impressions or a catalogue of empty words — "flowersbranchesgrassaircavernswavesweaponsbowsshadowsbreezes" — no longer able to grant any pleasure or reprieve.

With the increasing urgency of the climate crisis, the topic of humanity's alienation from the natural world has never been more pertinent. The 2016 album

Hopelessness by singer-songwriter ANOHNI remains one of the most singularly devastating artworks to address this crisis, and her song **'Why Did You Separate Me from the Earth?'** reinvokes the themes of Villette's Marian hymn to quite different ends. In this improvised rendition, a wordless chorus cycles through a harmonic sequence from which individual voices emerge, only to lament their separation and castigate their creator. In a furious address to a 'Father' God, the lyrics repudiate the original moment of creation as one of alienation from nature, setting in motion a chain of environmental exploitation and

destruction that is described in vivid and violent terms. In a strange echo of Pierre Villette's Virgin Mary — the divine primordial mother, born 'before the dawn' — ANOHNI's voices vow defiantly to 'be born into the past... born before you're born'. Here, as for so many human cultures throughout history, a return to the Earth means a return to the feminine, to a divine maternal energy: the life-giving force of *viriditas*.

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Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

O Nobilissima Viriditas

Hildegard of Bingen

R. O nobilissima viriditas,
que radicas in sole
et que in candida
serenitate
lucet in rota
quam nulla terrena excellentia
comprehendit:

V. Tu rubes ut aurora et ardes
ut solis flamma.

R. O most noble greenness
you're rooted in the sun
and in the white calm
you shine within a wheel
no earthly excellence
can comprehend:

V. As morning's dawn you blush,
as sunny flame you burn

Pierre Villette (1926-1988)

Hymne à la Vierge

Roland Bouhéret

O toute belle, Vierge Marie,
Votre âme trouve en Dieu le parfait amour
Il vous revêt du manteau de la Grâce
Comme une fiancée parée de ses bijoux.
Alleluia.
Je vais chanter ta louange, Seigneur,
Car tu as pris soin de moi,
Car tu m'as enveloppée du voile de l'innocence.

Vous êtes née avant les collines
O sagesse de Dieu,
Porte du Salut,
Heureux ce lui qui marche dans vos traces
Qui apprête son cœur à la voix de vos conseils.
Alleluia.
Je vais chanter ta louange, Seigneur,
Car tu m'as faite avant le jour,
Car tu m'as fait précéder le jaillissement des
sources.

Avant les astres vous étiez présente
Mère du Créateur

au profond du ciel
Quand Dieu fixait
les limites du monde
Vous partagiez son cœur étant à l'œuvre avec lui,
Alleluia.
O toute belle Vierge Marie.

O most beautiful Virgin Mary,
Your soul finds in the Lord perfect love;
He clothes you in robes of grace
Like a bride attired with jewels.
Alleluia.
I will sing your praises, O Lord,
For you have looked after me,
and covered me with the veil of innocence.

You were born before the hills,
O wisdom of the Lord,
Gate of Redemption,
Blessed is he who walks in your steps
And tunes his heart to the counsels of your voice.
Alleluia.
I will sing your praises, O Lord,
For you made me before the dawn,
For you made me, before the springs poured
forth.

Before the stars you were there,
Mother of the Creator
in the highest Heaven;
When God was setting
the limits of the world
You shared his love as you laboured with him,
Alleluia.
O most beautiful Virgin Mary.

Jean Mouton (c.1459-1522)

Nesciens mater

Nesciens mater Virgo virum, peperit sine dolore
Salvatorem saeculorum,
ipsum Regem angelorum.
Sola Virgo lactabat,
ubera de caelo plena.

Knowing no man, the Virgin mother bore, without
pain,
the Saviour of the world.
Him, the king of angels,
only the Virgin suckled,

breasts filled by heaven.

Patake!

पटाके

Shivani Rattan

Patake!

पटाके

Diwali, light a candle.

Eat sweets, make sweets.

Fireworks, ta! ta! ta! ta! Happiness!

Diwali, light a candle.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Trois Chansons

Text by Maurice Ravel

Nicolette

Nicolette, à la vesprée,

S'allait promener au pré,

Cueillir la pâquerette,

la jonquille et la muguet,

Toute sautillante, toute guillerette,

Lorgnant ci, là de tous les côtés.

Nicolette, at twilight:

Went for a walk through the fields,

To pick daisies,

daffodils, and lilies of the valley.

Skipping around, completely jolly,

Spying here, there, and everywhere.

Rencontra vieux loup grognant,

Tout hérissé, l'œil brillant;

Hé là! ma Nicolette,

viens tu pas chez Mère Grand?

A perte d'haleine, s'enfuit Nicolette,

Laisant là cornette et socques blancs.

She met an old, growling wolf,

On alert, eyes a-sparkle:

"Hey there! Nicolette, my dear,

won't you come to Grandmother's house?"

Out of breath, Nicolette fled,

Leaving behind her cornette and white clogs.

Rencontra page joli,

Chausses bleues et pourpoint gris,

"Hé là! ma Nicolette,

veux tu pas d'un doux ami?

Sage, s'en retourna, très lentement,

le cœur bien marri.

She met a cute page,

Blue shoes and gray doublet:

"Hey there! Nicolette dear,
wouldn't you like a sweetheart?"

Wisely, she turned 'round, poor Nicolette,
very slowly, with a contrite heart.

Rencontra seigneur chenu,

Tors, laid, puant et ventru

"Hé là! ma Nicolette,

veux tu pas tous ces écus?

Vite fut en ses bras, bonne Nicolette

Jamais au pré n'est plus revenue.

She met an old gentleman,

Twisted, ugly, smelly and pot-bellied:

"Hey there! Nicolette dear,
don't you want all this money?"

She ran straight into his arms, good Nicolette,

Never to return to the fields again.

Trois Beaux Oiseaux

Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis

(Mon ami z-il est à la guerre)

Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis

Ont passé par ici.

Three beautiful birds of paradise

(My love has gone to the war)

Three beautiful birds of paradise

Have passed by here.

Le premier était plus bleu que ciel,

(Mon ami z-il est à la guerre)

Le second était couleur de neige,

Le troisième rouge vermeil.

The first was more blue than the sky

(My love has gone to the war)

The second was the colour of snow

The third was red as vermillion.

Beaux oiselets du Paradis,

(Mon ami z-il est à la guerre)

Beaux oiselets du Paradis,

Qu'apportez par ici?

Beautiful little birds of paradise

(My love has gone to the war)

Beautiful little birds of paradise

What do you bring here?

"J'apporte un regard couleur d'azur"

(Ton ami z-il est à la guerre)

"Et moi, sur beau front couleur de neige,

Un baiser dois mettre, encore plus pur.”

"I carry an azure glance"
(Your love has gone to the war)
"And I must leave on a snow-white forehead
A kiss, even purer."

Oiseau vermeil du Paradis,
(Mon ami z-il est à la guerre)
Oiseau vermeil du Paradis,
Que portez vous ainsi?

Red bird of paradise
(My love has gone to the war)
Red bird of paradise
What are you bringing me?"

"Un joli coeur tout cramoisi"
(Ton ami z-il est à la guerre)
Ha! je sens mon coeur qui froidit...
Emportez le aussi

"A loving heart, all crimson."
(Your love is gone to the war)
Ah, I feel my heart growing cold . . .
Take that with you as well.

Ronde

[Les vieilles:]
N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde,
Jeunes filles, n'allez pas au bois:
Il y a plein de satyres, de centaures, de malins
sorcières,
Des farfadets et des incubes, des ogres, des
lutins,
Des faunes, des follets, des lamies,
Diables, diablots, diabolins,
Des chèvre-pieds, des gnomes,
des démons,
Des loups-garous, des elfes, des myrmidons,
Des enchanteurs et des mages,
des stryges, des sylphes,
des moines-bourrus,
des cyclopes, des djinns,
gobelins, korrigans, nécromants, kobolds ... Ah!
N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde,
N'allez pas au bois.

[*The old women*]
Do not go into Ormonde forest,
Young ladies, do not go into the forest:
It is full of satyrs, of centaurs, of evil sorcerers,
Of sprits and incubuses, ogres, pixies,
Fauns, hobgoblins, spooks,

Devils, imps, and fiends,
Goat-footed folk, gnomes,
Of demons,
Of werewolves, elves, warriors,
Enchanters and conjurers,
Of witches, sylphs
Of surly hermits,
Cyclopes, Djinns,
Spirits, gremlins, necromancers, trolls ... Ah!
Do not go into Ormonde forest,
Do not go into the forest.

[Les vieux]
N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde,
Jeunes garçons, n'allez pas au bois:
Il y a plein de faunes,
de bacchantes et de males fées,
garçons, n'allez pas au bois.
Des satyresses,
des ogresses,
Et des babaïagas,
Des centaures et des diabesses,
Goules sortant du sabbat,
Des farfadettes et des démons,
Des larves, des nymphes,
des myrmidones,
Il y a plein de démons,
D'hamadryades, dryades,
naiades,
ménades, thyades,
follettes, lémures,
gnomides, succubes,
gorgones, gobelins ...
N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde.

[*The old men*]
Do not go into Ormonde forest,
Young men, do not go into the forest:
It is full of female fauns,
Of Bacchae and evil spirits,
Young men, do not go into the forests.

Of female satyrs,
Ogresses,
And Baba Yagas,
Of female centaurs and devils,
Ghouls going out from the sabbath,
Elves and demons,
Ghosts, nymphs,
Of warriors,
It is full of demons,
Tree spirits and dryads,
Naiads,
Bacchantes, oreads,

*Hobgoblins, ghosts,
Gnomes, succubuses,
Gorgons, monsters,
Do not go into Ormonde forest.*

[Les filles / Les garçons:]
N'irons plus au bois d'Ormonde,
Hélas! plus jamais n'irons au bois.

Il n'y a plus de satyres,
plus de nymphes ni de males fées.
Plus de farfadets, plus d'incubes,
Plus d'ogres, de lutins,
Plus d'ogresses,
De faunes, de follets, de lamies,
Diabes, diablots, diabolins,
De satyresses, non.
De chèvre-pieds, de gnomes,
de démons,
Plus de faunes, non!
De loups-garous, ni d'elfes,
de myrmidons
Plus d'enchanteurs ni de mages,
de stryges, de sylphes,
de moines-bourus,
De centaures, de naiades,
de thyades,
Ni de ménades, d'hamadryades,
dryades,
folletes, lémures, gnomides, succubes, gorgones,
gobelins,
de cyclopes, de djinns, de diabloteaux, d'éfrits,
d'aegyptiens,
de sylvains, gobelins, korrigans, nécromans,
kobolds ...
Ah!

N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde,
N'allez pas au bois.
Les malavisées vieilles,
Les malavisés vieux
les ont effarouchés -- Ah!

*[The young ladies / men:]
We won't go into Ormonde forest any more,
Alas! Never more we'll go into the forest.*

*There are no more satyrs there,
No more nymphs or evil spirits.
No more sprites, no more incubuses,
No ogres, no pixies,
No more ogresses,
No more fauns, hobgoblins or spooks,*

*Devils, imps, or fiends,
No female satyrs, no.
No more goat-footed, no gnomes,
No demons.
No more female fauns, no!
Nor werewolves, nor elves,
No warriors,
No more enchanters or conjurers,
No fairies, no sylphs,
No surly hermits,
No female centaurs or naiads,
No more oreads,
No more Bacchantes or tree spirits,
No dryads,
Hobgoblins, ghosts, gnomes, succubuses,
gorgons, goblins,
No cyclops, nor djinns, nor fiends, no ifrits, no
Aegipan,
No tree spirits, goblins, gremlins, necromancers,
trolls..
Ah!*

*Do not go into the Ormonde forest,
Do not go into the forest.
The misguided old women,
The misguided old men
Have chased them all away – Ah!*

Anna Rocławska-Musiałczyk (b. 1987)
Bibi, synkù, bi
*Traditional Kashubian
Translation by Barbara Howard*

Parafraza koledy kaszubskiej
Paraphrase of the Kashubian Christmas Carol
Witostawy Frankowskiej

"Sleep, Son, Sleep"
Bibi, Synkù, bi...
Sleep, son, sleep,
Na saneckù spij!
Sleep on the hay,
Bibi, Synkù, bi,
Sleep, son, sleep,
spik stodzëchny miéj!
Have a sweet dream,
Premruze môté oczãta,
Close your little eyes,
W gniôzdku usnãte ptôszãta,
Birds fell asleep in the nest,
Noc je koto, spii ju, spij!
Night is all around, sleep now, sleep!
Bibi, Synku, bi...
Sleep, son, sleep,
Na saneczkù spij!

Sleep on the hay,
Bibi, Synkù, bi,
Sleep, son, sleep,
O matuchnie snij!
Dream for your mummy,
Szopa zmieni sã w jizdebka,
The shed will turn into a small chamber,
Kumk premieni sã w kolibkã,
The crib will become a cradle,
Cechò wkoto, spij ju, spij!
Silence is all around, sleep now, sleep!
Bibi, Synkù, bi...
Sleep, son, sleep,
Na saneczkù spij!
Sleep on the hay,
Spil, Jezusku, spil,
Sleep, son, sleep,
O swim zecu snij!
Dream about your life,
Nabierz mòce, bò Ce czekô
Gather strength because
Droga cãzkô i dalekô,
A hard and long way awaits you,
Nie mësł ò tim, spij ju, spij!
Don't think about it, sleep now, sleep!*

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Hush, no more

Thomas Betterton

Hush, no more, be silent all.
Sweet repose has clos'd her eyes,
soft as feather'd snow does fall!
Softly, softly steal from hence.
No noise disturb her sleeping sense.

I'm only sleeping

When I wake up early in the morning
Lift my head, I'm still yawning
When I'm in the middle of a dream
Stay in bed, float up stream (float up stream)

Please, don't wake me
No, don't shake me
Leave me where I am
I'm only sleeping

Everybody seems to think I'm lazy
I don't mind, I think they're crazy
Runnin' everywhere at such a speed
'Til they find there's no need

Please, don't spoil my day
I'm miles away
And after all
I'm only sleeping

Lennon/ McCartney

I'm only sleeping (improvisation) - from Revolver (1966)

Howard Skempton (b. 1947)

He wishes for the cloths of heaven

WB Yeats

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

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594)

I vaghi Fiori

Anonymous

Translation by Laurie Stras

I vaghi fiori e l'amorose fronde
e l'erba e l'aria altrui diletto danno.
Porgon riposo gli antri e piacer l'onde,
levano l'arme e gl'archi ogn'aspro affanno.
L'ombra soave al cor dolcezz' infonde;
fuggir le gravi angosce l'aure fanno.
Lasso mel che mia vita non restaura
fior', frond', erb', aria, antr', ond', arm', arch', ombr',
aura.

The beautiful flowers, and the amorous leafy
branches,
and the grass and the air give delight to others.
The caverns give rest and the waves pleasure,
weapons and bows take away every bitter burden.
The gentle shade infuses the heart with
sweetness;
the breezes make bitter anguish flee.
Poor me! because my life is not restored by
flowers, leafy branches, grass, air, caverns, waves,
weapons, bows, shadows, or breezes.

ANOHNI (b.1971)

Why did you separate me from the earth?

Why did you separate me from the earth?

Oh my God, my father
You drew lines miles high
In steel or nuclear
The forests of borneo
White water in your mouth
I don't want your future
I'll never return
I'll be born into the past
I'm never coming home

Why did you separate me from the earth?
What did you stand to gain?
The rotten bodies threaded gold
The pitch of hair and sticky meat
The sea life cut with plastic
A white cross gilded gold
A case of white doves
Laying in the boiling snow
A sharp knife of concrete
The blue line of tuna's throat

I don't want your future
I'm never coming home
I don't want your future
I'll be born before you're born
Why did you separate me from the earth?
What did you have to gain?