

# WIGMORE HALL

Friday 3 June 2022 10.00pm

**Anne Sofie von Otter** mezzo-soprano

**Brooklyn Rider**

**Johnny Gandelsman** violin

**Colin Jacobsen** violin

**Nicholas Cords** viola

**Michael Nicolas** cello

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**Caroline Shaw** (b.1982)

Schisma (2018)

**Rufus Wainwright** (b.1973)

From *3 Valses Anglaises* (2021) arranged by Colin Jacobsen

Watching the Monarchs Come In • Friend in Common

**Franz Schubert** (1797-1828)

Der Tod und das Mädchen D531 (1817) arranged by Osvaldo Golijov

Einsamkeit from *Winterreise* D911 (1827) arranged by Osvaldo Golijov

Andante con moto from String Quartet in D minor D810 'Death and the Maiden' (1824)

From *Winterreise* D911 (1827) arranged by Osvaldo Golijov

Die Nebensonnen • Der Wegweiser

Abschied von der Erde D829 (1826) arranged by Osvaldo Golijov

**Rufus Wainwright**

From *Songs for Lulu* (2009) arranged by Colin Jacobsen

Give Me What I Want • Sad With What I Have • Who Are You New York?

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'In a word, I feel myself to be the most unhappy and wretched creature in the world...each night, on retiring to bed, I hope I may not wake again, and each morning but recalls yesterday's grief.'

It is impossible to mistake **Schubert's** feelings of hopelessness in this letter to his close friend Leopold Kupelwieser; his misery is almost palpable. At the time, Schubert was suffering from syphilis and a severe nervous disorder and although he did not know it yet, he was only a few years from death. And yet, amidst his feelings of desperation, Schubert uncovered a new burst of creativity. Spurred on by the threat of an uncertain future, it was during this miserable year that Schubert wrote his String Quartet in D minor. One of two quartets that he wrote 'to pave the way towards a grand symphony', it has subsequently assumed the subtitle of '*Der Tod und das Mädchen*' ('Death and the Maiden') – a title derived from the main theme of the second movement, which originally appeared in a song by Schubert of the same name. Like the song, the quartet is a meditation on themes of youth and death, mixing glimpses of fear and reluctance with moments of solemn resignation.

Schubert's quartet is the linchpin in today's programme, itself an exploration of love and death that spans nearly two centuries to encompass music by Rufus Wainwright and Caroline Shaw. And it is **Shaw's** *Schisma* that opens the programme, a work that explores the threat of death in times of war, but which also focusses on places of shelter and the comfort that such havens can provide. 'Schisma is a reference to the phrase "in the cleft of the rock", which appears in many scriptures,' Shaw explains. 'It is essentially a promise of safety, of a makeshift refuge within a crack in something as hard and unforgiving as mountain rock, until the danger has passed. It is a kind of nest, a home.' Shaw's score searches restlessly for this 'cleft', the sense of motion and disquiet evident from the opening bars. Along the way it fragments, regroups and dissolves, but only in the closing bars is that peaceful haven finally found.

This sense of peace segues into the first of two sets of songs by **Rufus Wainwright**. 'Watching the Monarchs Come In' is the second of his *3 Valses Anglaises*, a triptych which explores the limits of our understanding, as humans, of the world around us and our inability to comprehend our own demise. 'Watching the monarchs go by/Means that it's fall and it will soon be cold', Wainwright writes, the vocal line floating gently over the accompaniment with a quiet air of gloom but also of acceptance. 'Friend in Common', meanwhile, seems to hang on to a sense of nervousness and uncertainty. 'We have a friend in common / Or perhaps in this massive universe / There's another happy two of us', he dreams wistfully, if without conviction.

This, then, is where we return to Schubert, and to three songs from his song cycle *Winterreise*, arranged for string quartet by the composer Osvaldo Golijov. Schubert completed *Winterreise* just a matter of months before he died, its 24 poems by Wilhelm Müller (whose work Schubert had set for his earlier cycle *Die schöne Müllerin* in 1823) exploring themes of love, loneliness, despair and death. Schubert himself called it 'a cycle of horrifying (*schauerlicher*) songs... They have cost me more effort than any of my other songs.' Together they present a portrait of a lonely wanderer who sets out in the snow to try and cleanse himself of his lost love, but along the way his sense of anguish, like the cold and dark around him, only grows deeper. In 'Einsamkeit' ('Loneliness') he can see that life around him is bright and joyful, that the air around him is calm, and yet his steps remain weary, his spirits low. In 'Die Nebensonnen' ('The Sun Dogs'), the penultimate song of the cycle, he dreams forlornly of a world without the sun, sighing bitterly 'I should feel happier in the dark'. His fate is sealed and his destination is fixed, as he tells us in 'Die Wegweiser' ('The Signpost'): 'I must travel a road where no one has ever yet returned'. And so, today's Schubert set closes with a curious one-off from his output, a short, nostalgic piece for piano and spoken voice entitled *Abschied von der Erde*, which Schubert composed two years before *Winterreise*, in 1826. 'Farewell beautiful earth!', he calls, 'I can understand you only now, when joy and sorrow pass away from us', the accompaniment ebbing and flowing with its own world-weariness, like the inevitable flow of a river to the sea.

Today's programme closes with three songs from Rufus Wainwright's 2010 album *Songs for Lulu*, arranged (like the *3 Valses Anglaises*) for string quartet and soprano by Brooklyn Rider's own Colin Jacobsen. As a trio they are united by a tangled sense of despair, disillusionment, and defiance. 'Give me What I Want', as Wainwright himself has explained, is a personal attack on his critics who always seem to have made up their minds before even hearing his music, his irritation and anger bubbling up through the coarse textures of the song. 'Sad with What I Have', by contrast, is its rather more morose counterpart. 'Never met a more unimpressed, depressed lad', the singer declares forlornly, sadness tempered only by the fact that they are loved: 'Sad with what I have, except for you.' The final song, 'Who Are You New York?', seems to ripple with activity and momentum but at the centre of this busy city is a lonely soul, its sentiment altogether reminiscent of Schubert's 'Die Einsamkeit'.

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**Caroline Shaw** (b.1982)

**Schisma** (2018)

**Rufus Wainwright** (b.1973)

**From 3 Valses Anglaises** (2021)

arranged by Colin Jacobsen

*Rufus Wainwright*

**Watching the Monarchs Come In**

Watching the monarchs come in

Paper wings over the ocean

Realize a butterfly's sting

Is to be noble over everything

Watching the monarchs go by

Means that it's fall and it will soon be cold

Realize a butterfly's cry

Is always goodbye see you again when I'm old

One must be a monarch in the dark

Watching the monarchs go round.

Makes me feel sad that you're not around

Realize a butterfly's crown

Is understanding the world upside down

Oh how I wish I could understand

The way this upside-down world should be

Realize a butterfly's pain

Is hardly the pin prick that death brings to claim it for me

One must be a monarch in the dark

Watching the monarchs come in

**Friend in Common**

We have a friend in common

Or shall we say a person

You've spoken to this someone

And so have I

We have a friend in common

All right let's say a human

You've gazed upon them somewhat

And here are we

And perhaps there's a tiny molecule

That's escaped from me inside of you

Or from you to me

We have a friend in common

Or perhaps in this massive universe

There's another happy two of us

Or is it just

We have a friend in common

Wearing a cape and have my hair down

I've slipped on the ice and now it's snowing

Or is it just

We have a friend in common

**Franz Schubert** (1797-1828)

**Der Tod und das**

**Mädchen D531** (1817)

arranged by Osvaldo Golijov

*Matthias Claudius*

*Das Mädchen*

Vorüber! Ach, vorüber!

Geh, wilder Knochenmann!

Ich bin noch jung, geh Lieber!

Und rühre mich nicht an.

*Der Tod*

Gib deine Hand, du schön und  
zart Gebild!

Bin Freund, und komme nicht,  
zu strafen.

Sei gutes Muts! Ich bin nicht wild,

Sollst sanft in meinen Armen  
schlafen!

**Death and the Maiden**

*The maiden*

Away! Ah, away!

Away, fierce man of bones!

I am still young, go, please go!

And do not touch me.

*Death*

Give me your hand, you lovely,  
tender creature!

I am a friend, and do not come  
to punish.

Be not afraid! I am not fierce,

you shall sleep softly in my  
arms!

**Einsamkeit from**

**Winterreise D911** (1827)

arranged by Osvaldo Golijov

*Wilhelm Müller*

Wie eine trübe Wolke

Durch heitre Lüfte geht,

Wenn in der Tanne Wipfel

Ein mattes Lüftchen weht:

So zieh' ich meine Strasse

Dahin mit tragem Fuss,

Durch helles, frohes Leben,

Einsam und ohne Gruss.

Ach, dass die Luft so ruhig!

Ach, dass die Welt so licht!

Als noch die Stürme tobten,

War ich so elend nicht.

Like a dark cloud

drifting across clear skies,

when a faint breeze

blows through the fir-tops:

I go on my way

with dragging steps,

through life's bright joys,

lonely and ignored.

Alas, why is the air so calm!

Alas, why is the world so bright!

While storms were still raging,

I was not so wretched.

**Andante con moto from String Quartet in D minor**

**D810 'Death and the Maiden'** (1824)

## From *Winterreise* D911 (1827)

Wilhelm Müller

### Die Nebensonnen (1827)

arranged by Osvaldo Golijov

Drei Sonnen sah ich am Himmel  
stehn,  
Hab' lang' und fest sie angesehen;  
Und sie auch standen da so  
stier,  
Als wollten sie nicht weg von  
mir.  
Ach, meine Sonnen seid ihr nicht!  
Schaut Andern doch in's Angesicht!  
Ja, neulich hatt' ich auch wohl drei:  
Nun sind hinab die besten zwei.  
Ging' nur die dritt' erst hinterdrein!  
Im Dunkeln wird mir wohler sein.

### Phantom suns

I saw three suns in the  
sky,  
long and hard I stared at them;  
and they too stood there so  
fixedly,  
as though they'd never leave  
me.  
Alas, you are not my suns!  
You gaze into other faces!  
Lately, yes, I did have three:  
but the best two now are down.  
If only the third would follow!  
I'd fare better in the dark.

### Der Wegweiser (1827)

arranged by Osvaldo Golijov

Was vermeid' ich denn die Wege,  
Wo die andern Wanderer gehn,  
Suche mir versteckte Stege  
Durch verschneite  
Felsenhöhn?

### The signpost

Why do I avoid the paths  
that other wanderers tread,  
seek out hidden ways  
through snow-bound rocky  
heights?

Habe ja doch nichts begangen,  
Dass ich Menschen sollte scheun –  
Welch ein törichtes Verlangen  
Treibt mich in die Wüstenein?

I have, after all, done no wrong,  
that I should shun mankind –  
what foolish desire  
drives me into the wilderness?

Weiser stehen auf den Wegen,  
Weisen auf die Städte zu,  
Und ich wandre sonder Massen,  
Ohne Ruh', und suche Ruh'.

Signposts stand along the way,  
pointing to the towns,  
and I wander on and on  
restlessly in search of rest.

Einen Weiser seh' ich stehen  
Unverrückt vor meinem Blick;  
Eine Strasse muss ich gehen,  
Die noch Keiner ging  
zurück.

One signpost I see standing,  
firmly before my eyes;  
one road I must travel  
from which no man has ever  
returned.

### Abschied von der Erde D829 (1826)

arranged by Osvaldo Golijov

Adolf von Pratobevera

Leb' wohl, du schöne Erde!  
Kann dich erst jetzt verstehn,  
Wo Freude und wo Kummer  
An uns vorüber wehn.

### Farewell to the earth

Farewell, beautiful earth!  
Only now do I understand you,  
when joy and sorrow  
pass away from us.

Leb' wohl, du Meister Kummer!  
Dank dir mit nassem Blick!  
Mit mir nehm' ich die Freude,  
Dich lass' ich hier zurück.

Farewell, Master Sorrow!  
I thank you with tearful eyes!  
take joy with me,  
you I leave behind.

Sei nur ein milder Lehrer,  
Führ alle hin zu Gott,  
Zeig' in den trübsten Nächten  
Ein Streiflein Morgenrot!

Try to be a kindly teacher,  
lead all men to God,  
reveal in the darkest of nights  
a little streak of dawn!

Lasse sie die Liebe ahnen,  
So danken sie dir noch,  
Der früher und der später,  
Sie danken weinend doch.

Let them sense what love is,  
and they will thank you for it,  
some sooner, some later,  
all will thank you with tears.

Dann glänzt das Leben heiter,  
Mild lächelt jeder Schmerz,  
Die Freude hält umfangen  
Das ruh'ge, klare Herz.

Life will then be radiant,  
all sorrows will gently smile,  
joy will hold in its embrace  
the pure and tranquil heart.

## Rufus Wainwright

### Songs for Lulu (2009)

arranged by Colin Jacobsen

*Rufus Wainwright*

*Due to copyright reasons, we are unable to print the text for the below three songs.*

### Give Me What I Want

Give me what I want  
And give it to me now! ...

### Sad With What I Have

Sad with what I have  
Never met a more unimpressed, depressed lad ...

### Who Are You New York?

Saw you on the corne  
Saw you in the park ...

*Watching the Monarchs Come In and Friend in Common text by Rufus Wainwright, printed with his kind permission. All Schubert translations by Richard Stokes from The Book of Lieder published by Faber & Faber, with thanks to George Bird, co-author of The Fischer-Dieskau Book of Lieder published by Victor Gollancz Ltd.*