

# WIGMORE HALL

Friday 3 November 2023  
7.30pm

Dame Sarah Connolly mezzo-soprano  
Hélène Clément viola  
Joseph Middleton piano

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)      Märzveilchen Op. 40 No. 1 (1840)  
Muttertraum Op. 40 No. 2 (1840)  
Der Soldat Op. 40 No. 3 (1840)  
Der Spielmann Op. 40 No. 4 (1840)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)      2 Songs with viola Op. 91 (1863-84)  
*Gestillte Sehnsucht • Geistliches Wiegenlied*

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)      Kindertotenlieder (1901-4)  
*Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgeh'n • Nun seh' ich wohl,  
warum so dunkle Flammen • Wenn dein Mütterlein •  
Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen • In diesem  
Wetter, in diesem Braus*

Interval

Frank Bridge (1879-1941)      3 songs for voice, viola and piano (1906-7)  
*Far, far from each other • Where is it that our soul doth  
go? • Music, when soft voices die*

Ivor Gurney (1890-1937)      Thou didst delight mine eyes (pub. 1952)

Ernest John Moeran (1894-1950)      Twilight (1920)

Edmund Rubbra (1901-1986)      2 Sonnets by William Alabaster Op. 87 (1955)  
*Upon the Crucifix • On the Reed of our Lord's Passion*

Richard Rodney Bennett (1936-2012)      A History of the Thé Dansant (1994)  
*Foxtrot • Slow Foxtrot • Tango*

Errollyn Wallen (b.1958)      Night Thoughts (2023) *London première*  
*Sleep • Bright Lights • There's a certain  
Slant of light • Night Thoughts*



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This evening's recital weaves together thematic and musical threads. The songs explore the delights and fears of parenthood, alongside the consolations and threats of nature. A chronological journey traces stylistic connections between 19th-century German lyricism and 20th- and 21st-century British song, as well as the affinity between viola and alto.

The evening opens with **Schumann's** settings of poetry by Hans Christian Andersen. Schumann wrote to Andersen that the music 'will probably appear rather odd to you at first glance, but your poems seemed equally so to me'. Yet Andersen was delighted with the songs, which, as Jon Finson points out, recall the older genre of 'Bänkelgesang', gruesome cautionary tales declaimed by minstrels. The transparent 'Märzveilchen' is followed by the Gothic horror of 'Muttertraum', describing a doting mother, while ravens plan to feast on her child's flesh. No less distressing is 'Der Soldat', a march describing the execution of a soldier by his comrade, possibly his lover. In 'Der Spielmann', a bride and the wedding violinist are tormented by their secret love.

Motherhood also features in **Brahms's** Op. 91 songs. 'Gestillte Sehnsucht' is an autumnal reflection but the 'Geistliches Wiegenlied' captures his friendship with the great violinist/violist Joseph Joachim and his wife, alto Amalie Schneeweiss. The lullaby was a gift upon the birth of their first son, Johannes, in 1864. The viola plays a medieval *cantio* 'Resonet in laudibus', associated with the words 'Joseph, lieber Joseph mein', while the text is sung from the perspective of the Virgin Mary. By 1884, when the songs were published, the Joachims were acrimoniously divorced. Brahms's songs capture his affection and admiration.

**Gustav Mahler's** words, 'the pale figures of my life pass by me like the shadow of long-lost happiness', recall the deaths of numerous siblings in childhood. The *Kindertotenlieder* have also been linked to his own near-death from haemorrhage in 1901, when he wrote the first songs. When he returned to Rückert's words in 1904, his then wife Alma - mother of his two children - was distressed by the dreadful texts. Three years later, their daughter Putzi (Maria Anna) died, and Mahler afterwards observed that having endured the loss himself, he could no longer have composed the songs.

The English composer **Frank Bridge** was a superb all-round musician. The 3 songs, with their rich textures and lavish harmonies, reveal his early love of German late Romanticism. The expansive 'Far, far from each other' develops themes of nature and wind heard earlier. Heine, original author of the second poem, was arguably the most popular song poet ever; Bridge's pulsing accompaniment asks imploringly about the mysterious nature of death. Shelley's 'Music, when soft voices die' closes with memories of experience.

Love's transience also underpins **Gurney's** 'Thou didst delight mine eyes'. He was described as 'totally unself-conscious, lost in the clouds, he walked in a poet's dream...He would talk of Schubert by the hour and might have been his reincarnation.' He joined the military in 1915

but never recovered from his traumatic experiences. He experienced an outpouring of songs in 1919-21, but was later institutionalised and died in 1937. Friends and admirers, including Marion Scott, Herbert Howells and Gerald Finzi, arranged the publication of selected songs, including 'Thou didst delight mine eyes', which appeared in 1952.

**Ernest John Moeran** also led a short and unhappy life. Family wealth supported concerts of his music in the early 1920s; however, he developed a dependency on alcohol, and despite some success during World War II, he could not recover. The gentle lilt of 'Twilight' reveals not only his long immersion in Irish melodies, but also echoes themes heard earlier, namely the pastoral setting, the rooks recalling the crows of 'Muttertraum', and death.

**Edmund Rubbra's** journey towards eventually becoming a critic, pianist and composer was aided by a supportive family and several scholarships. His conversion to Catholicism after World War II is reflected in many of his texts including the 2 *Sonnets* (also recalling Brahms's 'Geistliches Wiegenlied'). The poems are by another Catholic, the English Renaissance writer William Alabaster. One critic noted the songs' 'positively Counter-Reformation air'. Alabaster's poetry is laden with sexual imagery, matched by Rubbra's throbbing chords and sensual chromaticism.

Few composers were as eclectic as **Richard Rodney Bennett**, who moved between classical, jazz and screen composition. *A History of the Thé Dansant* connects three poems by his sister Meg, with whom he often collaborated. The poems were inspired by the discovery of photographs of their parents on holiday in the South of France in the 1920s. Peacock's poems trace exquisite visual details – the coil of cigarette smoke, the wrinkled sea. Each song alludes to popular dances, though none is a true dance. Only at the end of 'Tango' do we realise that these are memories, accounting for their fragmentary quality.

The evening closes with **Errollyn Wallen's** cycle *Night Thoughts*, commissioned by Joseph Middleton and Dame Sarah Connolly. Wallen sets four texts, by Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson, and herself. 'Sleep' sets an extract from *Macbeth*, the music weaving a ghostly web around the voice. In 'Bright Lights', Wallen imagines the thoughts of a 17-year-old Ella Fitzgerald in her career-launching performance in the amateur night at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem. Years ago, the psychiatrist Sidney Gottlieb told the composer that Ella Fitzgerald had revealed to him that her first wish was to be a ballerina – a wish Wallen shared. 'There's a certain Slant of light' arose from a conversation Wallen had with her schoolfriend, Trish Mersh, who mentioned this unique poem by Emily Dickinson. 'Night Thoughts' is a tribute to one of Howard Hodgkins's last paintings; it was inspired by Wallen recalling the timbre of Ella Fitzgerald's voice when she heard an early recording of Connolly singing jazz, accompanying herself the piano.

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## Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

### Märzveilchen

#### Op. 40 No. 1 (1840)

*Hans Christian Andersen*  
*trans. Adelbert von Chamisso*

Der Himmel wölbt sich rein  
und blau,  
Der Reif stellt Blumen aus  
zur Schau.

Am Fenster prangt ein  
flimmernder Flor.  
Ein Jüngling steht, ihn  
betrachtend, davor.

Und hinter den Blumen  
blühet noch gar  
Ein blaues, ein lächelndes  
Augenpaar.

Märzveilchen, wie jener noch  
keine gesehn.  
Der Reif wird, angehaucht,  
zergehn.

Eisblumen fangen zu  
schmelzen an,  
Und Gott sei gnädig dem  
jungen Mann.

### March violets

The sky arches clear and  
blue;  
the hoar-frost fashions  
flowers.

Shimmering blossom  
gleams on the window,  
a young man stands  
there, looking on.

And blossoming behind  
those flowers  
a pair of blue eyes  
smile.

March violets, sweeter  
than he'd ever seen.  
A single breath will melt  
the frost.

Jack Frost's flowers begin  
to thaw –  
may the Lord have mercy  
on that young man.

### Muttertraum

#### Op. 40 No. 2 (1840)

*Hans Christian Andersen*  
*trans. Adelbert von Chamisso*

Die Mutter betet herzlich und  
schaut  
Entzückt auf den  
schlummernden Kleinen.  
Er ruht in der Wiege so sanft  
und traut.  
Ein Engel muss er ihr  
scheinen.

Sie küsst ihn und herzt ihn;  
sie hält sich kaum.  
Vergessen der irdischen  
Schmerzen,  
Es schweift in der Zukunft ihr  
Hoffnungstraum;  
So träumen Mütter im  
Herzen.

### A mother's dream

A mother prays fervently  
and looks  
enraptured at her  
slumbering child;  
he sleeps in the cradle all  
soft and snug,  
to her he must seem like  
an angel.

She kisses and hugs him;  
can hardly hold back,  
and forgets her earthly  
sorrows;  
her hopes and dreams fly  
to the future –  
the way all mothers  
dream in their hearts.

Der Rab' indes mit der  
Sippschaft sein  
Kreischt draussen am  
Fenster die Weise:  
Dein Engel, dein Engel wird  
unser sein!  
Der Räuber dient uns zur  
Speise!

The raven meanwhile  
with its brood  
croaks this tune outside  
the window:  
your angel, your angel  
shall be our prey!  
The thief shall provide us  
with food!

### Der Soldat

#### Op. 40 No. 3 (1840)

*Hans Christian Andersen*  
*trans. Adelbert von Chamisso*

Es geht bei gedämpfter  
Trommel Klang.  
Wie weit noch die Stätte! der  
Weg wie lang!  
O wär er zur Ruh und alles  
vorbei!  
Ich glaub', es bricht mir das  
Herz entzwei.

Ich hab' in der Welt nur ihn  
geliebt,  
Nur ihn, dem jetzt man den  
Tod doch gibt.  
Bei klingendem Spiele wird  
paradiert;  
Dazu bin auch ich  
kommandiert.

Nun schaut er auf zum  
letztenmal  
In Gottes Sonne freudigen  
Strahl, -  
Nun binden sie ihm die  
Augen zu, -  
Dir schenke Gott die ewige  
Ruh'!

Es haben dann Neun wohl  
angelegt;  
Acht Kugeln haben  
vorbeigefegt.  
Sie zittern alle vor Jammer  
und Schmerz -  
Ich aber, ich traf ihn mitten in  
das Herz.

### The soldier

He walks to the sound of  
the muffled drum.  
How far the place! the  
way how long!  
Ah, were he at rest and all  
this done!  
My heart, I think, will  
break in two.

None but him in the world  
have I loved,  
him, who now they're  
putting to death.  
The firing squad parades  
with full band,  
I too am detailed for the  
task.

Now he looks up for one  
last time  
at the joyous rays of  
God's sun, -  
now they put his blindfold  
on, -  
may God grant you  
eternal peace!

The nine of us took good  
aim,  
eight bullets whistled  
wide of the mark;  
every man shook with  
pity and grief -  
but I, I shot him clean  
through the heart.

## Der Spielmann

Op. 40 No. 4 (1840)

Hans Christian Andersen

trans. Adelbert von

Chamisso

## The fiddler

Im Städtchen gibt es des  
Jubels viel,  
Da halten sie Hochzeit mit  
Tanz und mit Spiel,  
Dem Fröhlichen blinket der  
Wein so rot,  
Die Braut nur gleicht dem  
getünchten Tod.

Ja tot für den, den nicht sie  
vergisst,  
Der doch beim Fest nicht  
Bräutigam ist;  
Da steht er inmitten der  
Gäste im Krug,  
Und streicht die Geige  
lustig genug!

Er streicht die Geige, sein  
Haar ergraut,  
Es schwingen die Saiten  
gellend und laut,  
Er drückt sie ans Herz und  
achtet es nicht,  
Ob auch sie in tausend  
Stücken zerbricht.

Es ist gar grausig, wenn einer  
so stirbt,  
Wenn jung sein Herz um  
Freude noch wirbt;  
Ich mag und will nicht länger  
es sehn!  
Das möchte den Kopf mir  
schwindelnd verdrehn. –

Wer heisst euch mit Fingern  
zeigen auf mich?  
O Gott! bewahr' uns gnädiglich,  
Dass Keinen der Wahnsinn  
übermannt;  
Bin selber ein armer  
Musikant.

In the little town there's  
much rejoicing,  
they're holding a wedding  
with music and dance,  
the happy man quaffs the  
glinting red wine,  
but the bride's as pale as  
death.

She's dead for the one  
she cannot forget,  
who's at the feast but not  
as the groom;  
he stands among the  
guests at the inn,  
and plays his fiddle gaily  
enough!

He plays his fiddle, his  
hair turns grey,  
the strings resound shrill  
and loud,  
he presses the fiddle  
close to his heart,  
though it breaks into a  
thousand pieces.

It's hideous for a man to  
die this way,  
when his heart's still young  
and striving for joy;  
I cannot and will not  
watch any more!  
My head might reel in a  
fatal whirl. –

Who said to point a finger  
at me?  
O God! have mercy,  
let none of us go  
mad;  
I too am just a poor  
musician.

## Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

2 Songs with viola Op. 91 (1863-84)

### Gestillte Sehnsucht

Friedrich Rückert

In goldnen Abendschein  
getauchet,  
Wie feierlich die Wälder  
stehn!  
In leise Stimmen der Vöglein  
hauchet  
Des Abendwindes leises  
Wehn.  
Was lispeln die Winde, die  
Vögelein?  
Sie lispeln die Welt in  
Schlummer ein.

Ihr Wünsche, die ihr stets  
euch reget  
Im Herzen sonder Rast und  
Ruh!  
Du Sehnen, das die Brust  
beweget,  
Wann ruhest du, wann  
schlummerst du?  
Beim Lispeln der Winde, der  
Vögelein,  
Ihr sehnenenden Wünsche,  
wann schlaft ihr ein?

Ach, wenn nicht mehr in  
goldne Fernen  
Mein Geist auf  
Traumgefieder eilt,  
Nicht mehr an ewig fernen  
Sternen  
Mit sehndem Blick mein  
Auge weilt;  
Dann lispeln die Winde, die  
Vögelein,  
Mit meinem Sehnen mein  
Leben ein.

### Assuaged longing

Bathed in golden evening  
light,  
how solemnly the forests  
stand!  
The evening winds  
mingle softly  
with the soft voices of the  
birds.  
What do the winds, the  
birds whisper?  
They whisper the world to  
sleep.

But you, my desires, ever  
stirring  
in my heart without  
respite!  
You, my longing, that  
agitates my breast –  
when will you rest, when  
will you sleep?  
The winds and the birds  
whisper,  
but when will you, yearning  
desires, slumber?

Ah! when my spirit no  
longer hastens  
on wings of dreams into  
golden distances,  
when my eyes no longer  
dwell yearningly  
on eternally remote  
stars;  
then shall the winds, the  
birds whisper  
my life – and my longing  
– to sleep.

## Geistliches Wiegenlied Sacred lullaby

*Emanuel Geibel, after Lope de Vega*

Die ihr schwebet  
Um diese Palmen  
In Nacht und Wind,  
Ihr heil'gen Engel,  
Stillet die Wipfel!  
Es schlummert mein Kind.

You who hover  
about these palms  
in night and wind,  
you holy angels,  
silence the tree-tops!  
My child is sleeping.

Ihr Palmen von Bethlehem  
Im Windesbrausen,  
Wie mögt ihr heute  
So zornig sausen!  
O rauscht nicht also!  
Schweiget, neiget  
Euch leis' und lind;  
Stillet die Wipfel!  
Es schlummert mein Kind.

You palms of Bethlehem  
in the raging wind,  
why do you bluster  
so angrily today!  
Oh roar not so!  
Be still, lean  
calmy and gently over us;  
silence the tree-tops!  
My child is sleeping.

Der Himmelsknabe  
Duldet Beschwerde,  
Ach, wie so müd' er ward  
Vom Leid der  
Erde.  
Ach nun im Schlaf ihm  
Leise gesänftigt  
Die Qual zerrinnt,  
Stillet die Wipfel!  
Es schlummert mein Kind.

The heavenly babe  
suffers distress,  
ah, how weary he has grown  
with the sorrows of this  
world.  
Ah, now that in sleep  
his pains  
are gently eased,  
silence the tree-tops!  
My child is sleeping.

Grimmige Kälte  
Sauset hernieder,  
Womit nur deck' ich  
Des Kindleins Glieder!  
O all ihr Engel,  
Die ihr geflügelt  
Wandelt im Wind,  
Stillet die Wipfel!  
Es schlummert mein Kind.

Fierce cold  
blows down on us,  
with what shall I cover  
my little child's limbs?  
O all you angels  
who wing your way  
on the winds,  
silence the tree-tops!  
My child is sleeping.

## 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 Gescheh,  
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.
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Wenn dein Mütterlein Tritt zur Tür herein Mit der Kerze Schimmer, Ist es mir, als immer Kämost 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!
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## 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.
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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.
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## 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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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## Interval

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## Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

### 3 songs for voice, viola and piano (1906-7)

#### Far, far from each other

*Matthew Arnold*

Far, far from each other  
Our spirits have flown.  
And what heart knows another?  
Ah! who knows his own?

Blow, ye winds! lift me with you  
I come to the wild.  
Fold closely, O Nature!  
Thine arms round thy child.

Ah, calm me! restore me  
And dry up my tears  
On thy high mountain platforms,  
Where Morn first appears.

#### Where is it that our soul doth go?

*Kate Freiligrath Kroeker, after Heinrich Heine*

One thing I'd know:  
When we have perished,  
Where is it that our soul doth go?  
Where, where is the fire, that is extinguished?  
Where is the wind?  
Where is the wind but now did blow?  
Where is it? Where is it?  
Where is it that our soul doth go?  
When we have perished.

#### Music, when soft voices die

*Percy Bysshe Shelley*

Music, when soft voices die,  
Vibrates in the memory;  
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,  
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,  
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;  
And so my thoughts, when thou art gone,  
Love itself shall slumber on.

## Ivor Gurney (1890-1937)

### Thou didst delight mine eyes (pub. 1952)

*Robert Bridges*

Thou didst delight my eyes:  
Yet who am I? nor first  
Nor last nor best, that durst  
Once dream of thee for prize;  
Nor this the only time  
Thou shalt set love to rhyme.

Thou didst delight my ear:  
Ah! little praise; thy voice  
Makes other hearts rejoice,  
Makes all ears glad that hear;  
And short my joy: but yet,  
O song, do not forget.

For what wert thou to me?  
How shall I say? The moon,  
That poured her midnight noon  
Upon his wrecking sea; -  
A sail, that for a day  
Has cheered the castaway.

## Ernest John Moeran (1894-1950)

### Twilight (1920)

*John Masefield*

Twilight it is, and the far woods are dim, and the rooks cry  
and call.  
Down in the valley the lamps, and the mist, and a star over  
all,  
There by the rick, where they thresh, is the drone at an  
end,  
Twilight it is, and I travel the road with my friend.

I think of the friends who are dead, who were dear long ago  
in the past,  
Beautiful friends who are dead, though I know that death  
cannot last;  
Friends with the beautiful eyes that the dust has defiled.  
Beautiful souls who were gentle when I was a child.

**Edmund Rubbra** (1901-1986)

## 2 Sonnets by William Alabaster Op. 87 (1955)

*William Alabaster*

### Upon the Crucifix

Now I have found thee I will evermore  
Embrace this standard where thou sits above,  
Feede greedie eyes, and from hence never rove;  
Suck hungrie Soule of this eternall store;  
Issue my hart from thie two-leaved dore,  
And lett my lippes from kissinge not remove.  
O thatt I weare transformed into love,  
And as a plant might springe upon this flower,  
Like wand'ring Ivy or sweete honiesuckle:  
How would I with my twine about it buckle,  
And kisse his feete with my ambitious boughes,  
And clyme along uppon his sacred brest,  
And make a garland for his wounded browes:  
Lord soe I am, if heare my thoughts may reast.

### On the Reed of our Lord's Passion

Long tyme hath Christ (long tyme I must confesse)  
Held me a hollowe Reede within his hande,  
That merited in Hell to make a brande  
Had not his grace supplied mine emptines.  
Oft time with langour and new-fangleness  
Had I bene borne awaye like sifted sande,  
When Sinn and Sathan gott the upper hande,  
But that his stedfast mercie did mee blesse.  
Still let mee growe upon that livinge lande,  
Within that wounde which iron did impresse,  
And made a springe of bloud flowe from thie hand:  
Then will I gather sapp, and rise, and stand  
That all that see this wonder maye expresse  
Upon this grounde how well growes barrennes.

**Richard Rodney Bennett** (1936-2012)

## A History of the Thé Dansant (1994)

*MR Peacocke*

### Foxtrot

The briefest card my dear we are leaving.  
Imagine the long curve of the Blue Train like the line of a  
mouth closed and smiling and Charles in the opposite  
window seat head thrown back the smoke from his  
cigarette coiling and coiling.  
There is a fellow in the carriage with artificial legs and a  
scar on his face unspeakable.  
My hem is in handkerchief points, my head is a gleaming  
oval on the fluid stem of my spine.  
I shall turn my shoulders, the silhouette narrow and  
disengaged.

Imagine the endless fluted bias of the waves.  
I shall show my creamy back.  
Write to the Hôtel Blanc.  
I am learning a modern geometry of desire.

### Slow Foxtrot

Lacquer bows to bleu marine, fingered waved, who must  
respond as though she were not gratified.  
Begin the formal promenade.  
The sea is wrinkled like a skin and laps the darkly pitted  
sand.  
A liner moving Tunis bound sets the powdered stars aside,  
jewelling the bay alone, and creeping on and creeping  
on, elegant à la mode, fades away from sight of land.  
And don't you love the negro band? Don't you adore the  
saxophone?  
Your nails are painted deep as blood.  
Softly flexing insteps glide.  
Attentive to the live-long end beneath the scalpel of the  
moon.

### Tango

Let us invent marble and five o'clock.  
I'll take white, you take black.  
How engagingly we rhyme across the chequered level in  
the perfume of tea and petits fours.  
I shall sample the tiniest slice of the Grand Succès on the  
lemon terrace, the newly apparent moon a delicacy cat-  
ice thin, fresh as mimosa.

Your legs are dangerously long under the palm trees at  
Menton, my thighs all silk and hesitation drawing the  
tango down the polished length of the floor.  
And the cellos have such slim waists and violins are girls  
with flattened breasts.  
Let us invent the chaise-longue, bamboo, Lapsang  
Souchong, linen and panama.

You may cough and thump your stick, but I have been up  
in the attic and I have a bundle of postcards here to  
prove that once we were seen to be in love on the Riviera  
in nineteen twenty-four.



**Errollyn Wallen** (b.1958)

**Night Thoughts** (2023)

**Sleep**

*William Shakespeare*

Innocent sleep. Sleep that soothes away all our worries.  
Sleep that puts each day to rest. Sleep that relieves the  
Weary labourer and heals hurt minds.

**Bright Lights**

*Errollyn Wallen*

The lights shine down on me  
All the people in the front row,  
All the people at the back go wild.

The lights shine down on me  
All the people in the front row,  
All the people at the back go wild,

For me.

I wanted to be a ballerina  
Like all the frilly girls in the picture book:  
Flying out of the toil of these streets.

But I do better when I'm singing  
I'm just a shy girl in New York.  
Only when I'm singing do I  
Chase the blues away.

My name is Ella  
Here for a day  
I meant to dance for you  
But ended up singing

No more dancing;  
My dreams have danced away

*Baba boo ay*

*Oh baby  
In the groove.*

*How high is the moon?*

**There's a certain Slant of light**

*Emily Dickinson*

There's a certain Slant of light,  
Winter Afternoons –  
That oppresses, like the Heft  
Of Cathedral Tunes –

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us –  
We can find no scar,  
But internal difference –  
Where the Meanings, are –

None may teach it – Any –  
'Tis the seal Despair –  
An imperial affliction  
Sent us of the Air –

When it comes, the Landscape listens –  
Shadows – hold their breath –  
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance  
On the look of Death –

**Night Thoughts**

*Errollyn Wallen*

A swirl of black and white  
A single stroke distils a life of colour

Let me breathe again your colour

Universe of black and white  
A single line, a single life

Paint in this heart tonight.

*Moeran text by John Masefield, printed with kind permission of the Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Estate of John Masefield. Bennett by M.R. Peacocke (b.1930) – from Selves (1995).*

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