

WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 4 January 2023
7.30pm

When Worlds Collide: Visions of Love

Gweneth Ann Rand soprano • Allyson Devenish piano
Elizabeth Kenny lute, theorbo • Alice Zawadzki vocals, violin

Anon

From *Balcarres Lute Book*
The Yellow Haired Laddie • *I love my love, in secret* •
Joy to the Person of my love • *Monk's March*

Camden Reeves (b.1974)

Songs of Enchantment (2020)
Desire of Vastness • *Harmony*

Alice Zawadzki

Improvisation

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

From *Goethe Lieder* (1888-90)
Mignon I • Mignon II • Mignon III •
Mignon 'Kennst du das Land?'

Nicola Matteis

Aria Amorosa (improvisation)

Trad/Ladino

Los Bilbilicos *arranged by Gweneth Ann Rand, Allyson Devenish,
Elizabeth Kenny & Alice Zawadzki*

Interval

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Chants de terre et de ciel (1938)
Bail avec Mi • *Antienne du silence* •
Danse du bébé-pilule • *Arc-en-ciel d'innocence* •
Minuit pile et face • *Résurrection*

Dominique Le Gendre (b.1960)

From *Songs of the Islands* (2016)
Hear Me • I Shall Return
4 Arms 2 Necks (2000)

Jake Heggie (b.1961)

Animal Passion from *Natural Selection* (1997)

Georgia Stitt (b.1972)

Almost Everything I Need from *Alphabet City Cycle* (2008)

The Beatles

In My Life (1965) *arranged by Gweneth Ann Rand, Allyson Devenish,
Elizabeth Kenny & Alice Zawadzki*

J Fred Coots (1897-1985)

For all we know (pub. 1934) *arranged by Gweneth Ann Rand, Allyson
Devenish, Elizabeth Kenny & Alice Zawadzki*

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When Worlds Collide: Visions of Love

'I don't like the idea that classical music should be over here and jazz should be someplace else. It's all wonderful, and we should be open to enjoying it all.' (Jessye Norman in interview, 2013)

Taking her great predecessor's words very much to heart, soprano Gweneth Ann Rand has drawn together for this concert three of her most admired colleagues, each associated with quite different styles of music: Allyson Devenish, a pianist distinguished in art song repertoire of the past 250 years; Elizabeth Kenny, a renowned lutenist associated with music of the Renaissance and Baroque from previous centuries; and Alice Zawadzki, the Anglo-Polish violinist, singer and songwriter who has previously collaborated with Rand as well as several leading British jazz musicians and ensembles such as the Manchester Collective. Hence the title 'When Worlds Collide'. As Rand explains: 'I want us to be able to create a story, to show different facets of what everybody does, and to be able to play together, which isn't something that normally happens with these four musicians.'

And 'Visions of Love'? Orson Welles, in his final film *Someone to Love*, elaborated on a well-worn adage: 'We're born alone, we live alone, we die alone. Only through our love and friendship can we create the illusion for the moment that we're not alone.' One may question Welles's assumption that 'love and friendship' – or implicitly any meaningful contact – are invariably an 'illusion': consider that intangible yet very real collaborative experience known to musicians performing as an ensemble – that sense of contributing to and creating something greater than the sum of the individuals involved. But Welles's point – that love is one of the most vital bridges made between sentient beings and the world around them – surely stands. Yet even love is not a single experience: as Rand says of tonight's programme, 'there's pain, there's love of the universe, love of the family.'

To start, ancient tunes and dances taken from the late-17th Century *Balcarres Lute Book* anthology are followed by a new pair of songs, *Songs of Enchantment*, composed in 2020 by **Camden Reeves**. Setting two complementary poems by Clark Ashton Smith (1893-1961), these were premièred and recorded by tonight's performers, Reeves having first contacted Rand and Devenish during the recent period of lockdown. As Rand recalls, 'we absolutely fell in love with these amazing songs'. The first, 'Desire of Vastness', conveys – the composer explains – the experience of staring 'into the darkness of the infinite voice with wonder, longing and terror'. The second, 'Harmony', presents the quite different reaction to staring into the void, finding peace and tranquillity.

After an improvisation by **Alice Zawadzki** follow the songs of Goethe's hapless heroine, Mignon, forever in search of an elusive love, empathetically set to music by the great late-19th Century Austrian song composer, **Hugo Wolf**. Then another improvisation, this time on a hauntingly melancholic melody by the

London-based late-17th Century Italian violinist **Nicola Matteis**. Rounding off the first half of the concert, all four musicians perform the traditional Sephardic (Ladino) love song 'Los Bibilicos' ('The Nightingales').

Familial love is celebrated in **Messiaen's** joyous song cycle *Chants de terre et de ciel* (1938), written after the birth of his first son while also expressing the composer's love for his wife. From our own time, **Dominique Le Gendre's** collection *Songs of the Islands* – two of these being performed in tonight's concert – celebrate the composer's homeland in Trinidad and Tobago. 'Hear Me' sets words imploringly addressed either to an individual, or to a community, or even the universe, which present – the composer says – 'a universal and all-encompassing idea of love'. 'I Shall Return' sets words by the Jamaican-American poet Claude McKay (1890-1948), a key figure in the Harlem Renaissance, in which he expresses love for a country he will almost certainly never see again. From much earlier in Le Gendre's career is the song '4 arms 2 necks', setting a text known from a 16th-century madrigal by the English composer Thomas Weelkes – though what appealed to Le Gendre was the modernity or perhaps rather the timelessness of the words: her setting is therefore a communion with sentiments expressed centuries earlier. While that poem depicts the physical twining of two lovers, 'Animal Passion' by the contemporary American composer **Jake Heggie** conveys the raw desire for such a union.

The absence of love, eloquently expressed earlier in Wolf's Mignon songs, is revisited by **Georgia Stitt** in 'Almost Everything I Need'. Rand discovered this song by chance while seeking YouTube videos of a singer she admires, Tituss Burgess: 'He's a music theatre god, as far as I'm concerned – absolutely amazing range, amazing versatility.' As Rand recalls, Stitt's song features in a filmed workshop held by Burgess: 'it's about the aftermath of a relationship – a universal theme, but looking at it in a slightly different way.' Rand also notes that 'it has a small violin solo in it as well, so it could incorporate more of us again!'

Finally, all four musicians join forces for two well-loved popular songs. First, **The Beatles's** 'In My Life', part of its attraction being the quasi-Baroque instrumental break created by the record producer George Martin. There's a Baroque touch, too, in tonight's closer 'For all we know', the classic 1934 song by **John Frederick ('J Fred') Coots**, in an arrangement inspired by the great jazz singer Nina Simone's version from the late 1950s (the words 'For all we know...tomorrow may never, never come' appearing particularly poignant during the Cold War). In conscious emulation of a Bach chorale prelude, Simone floated the song melody above an engagingly intricate counterpoint between piano (originally played by Simone herself) and guitar: a rare but perfect case of music crossing genres without compromising its integrity.

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Anon

From *Balcarres Lute Book*

The Yellow Haired Laddie

I love my love, in secret

Joy to the Person of my love

Monk's March

Camden Reeves (b.1974)

Songs of Enchantment (2020)

Clark Ashton Smith

Desire of Vastness

Supreme with night, what high mysteriarch—
The undreamt-of god beyond the trinal noon
Of elder suns empyreal—past the moon
Circling some wild world outmost in the dark—
Lays on me this unfathomed wish to hark
What central sea with plume-plucked midnight strewn,
Plangent to what enormous plenilune
That lifts in silence, hinderless and stark?

The brazen empire of the bournless waste,
The unstayed dominions of the brazen sky—
These I desire, and all things wide and deep;
And, lifted past the level years, would taste
The cup of an Olympian ecstasy,
Titanic dream, and Cyclopean sleep.

Harmony

Black pines above an opal tarn
And the grey cliff above the pines
And the clouds above the cliff,
Rose-hued with a hidden sunset...

O longed-for place beyond the world!
Let love attain thy tranquil harmony,
Let love be high and everlasting
And perfect as thou art.

Alice Zawadzki

Improvisation

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

From *Goethe Lieder* (1888-90)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Mignon I

Heiss mich nicht reden, heiss
mich schweigen,
Denn mein Geheimnis ist mir
Pflicht;
Ich möchte dir mein ganzes
Innre zeigen,
Allein das Schicksal will es
nicht.

Zur rechten Zeit vertreibt der
Sonne Lauf
Die finstre Nacht, und sie
muss sich erhellen;
Der harte Fels schliesst
seinen Busen auf,
Missgönnt der Erde nicht die
tiefverborgnen Quellen.

Ein jeder sucht im Arm des
Freundes Ruh,
Dort kann die Brust in Klagen
sich ergiessen;
Allein ein Schwur drückt mir
die Lippen zu,
Und nur ein Gott vermag sie
aufzuschliessen.

Mignon II

Nur wer die Sehnsucht
kennt
Weiss, was ich leide!
Allein und abgetrennt
Von aller Freude,
Seh' ich an's Firmament
Nach jener Seite.
Ach! der mich liebt und
kennt
Ist in der Weite.
Es schwindelt mir, es brennt
Mein Eingeweide.
Nur wer die Sehnsucht
kennt
Weiss, was ich leide!

Mignon I

Bid me not speak, bid me
be silent,
for I am bound to secrecy;
I should love to bare my
soul to you,
but Fate has willed it
otherwise.

At the appointed time the
sun dispels
the dark, and night must
turn to day;
the hard rock opens up
its bosom,
without begrudging earth its
deeply hidden springs.

All humans seek peace in
the arms of a friend,
there the heart can pour
forth its lament;
but my lips, alas, are
sealed by a vow
and only a god can open
them.

Mignon II

Only those who know
longing
know what I suffer!
Alone and cut off
from every joy,
I search the sky
in that direction.
Ah! he who loves and
knows me
is far away.
My head reels,
my womb's ablaze.
Only those who know
longing
know what I suffer!

Mignon III

So lasst mich scheinen, bis
ich werde;
Zieht mir das weisse Kleid
nicht aus!
Ich eile von der schönen
Erde
Hinab in jenes feste
Haus.

Dort ruh ich eine kleine Stille,
Dann öffnet sich der frische
Blick,
Ich lasse dann die reine
Hülle,
Den Gürtel und den Kranz
zurück.

Und jene himmlischen
Gestalten,
Sie fragen nicht nach Mann
und Weib,
Und keine Kleider, keine
Falten
Umgeben den verklärten
Leib.

Zwar lebt ich ohne Sorg und
Mühe,
Doch fühlt ich tiefen
Schmerz genug.
Vor Kummer altert ich zu
frühe;
Macht mich auf ewig wieder
jung!

Mignon 'Kennst du das Land?'

Kennst du das Land, wo die
Zitronen blühen,
Im dunkeln Laub die
Goldorangen glühen,
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen
Himmel weht,
Die Myrte still und hoch der
Lorbeer steht,
Kennst du es wohl?
Dahin! Dahin
Möcht ich mit dir, o mein
Geliebter, ziehn.

Kennst du das Haus? Auf
Säulen ruht sein Dach,
Es glänzt der Saal, es
schimmert das Gemach,
Und Marmorbilder stehn und
seh'n mich an:
Was hat man dir, du armes
Kind, getan?

Mignon III

Let me seem an angel till I
become one,
do not take off my white
dress!
I hasten from the
beautiful earth
down to that impregnable
house.

There in brief repose I'll rest,
then new vistas shall I
see;
my pure raiment then I'll
leave,
with girdle and rosary,
behind.

And the heavenly beings
there,
do not ask who is man or
woman,
and no garments, no
folds
drape the transfigured
body.

Though I lived without
trouble and toil,
I have felt deep pain
enough;
I grew old with grief
before my time –
O make me forever young
again!

Mignon

Do you know the land
where lemons blossom,
where oranges grow golden
among dark leaves,
a gentle wind drifts
across blue skies,
the myrtle stands silent,
the laurel tall,
do you know it?
It is there, it is there
I long to go with you, my
love.

Do you know the house?
Columns support its roof,
its hall gleams, its
apartments shimmer,
and marble statues stand
and stare at me:
what have they done to
you, poor child?

Kennst du es wohl?

Dahin! Dahin
Möcht ich mit dir, o mein
Beschützer, ziehn.

Kennst du den Berg und
seinen Wolkensteg?
Das Maultier sucht im Nebel
seinen Weg;
In Höhlen wohnt der Drachen
alte Brut;
Es stürzt der Fels und über
ihn die Flut,
Kennst du ihn wohl?
Dahin! Dahin
Geht unser Weg! o Vater,
lass uns ziehn!

Do you know it?

It is there, it is there
I long to go with you, my
protector.

Do you know the mountain
and its cloud-girt path?
The mule seeks its way
through the mist,
in caverns dwell the
dragons' ancient brood;
the cliff falls sheer, the
torrent over it,
Do you know it?
It is there, it is there
Our pathway lies! O
father, let us go!

Nicola Matteis

Aria Amorosa (improvisation)

Trad/Ladino

Los Bilbilicos

arranged by Gweneth Ann
Rand, Allyson Devenish,
Elizabeth Kenny & Alice
Zawadzki
Traditional

Los bilbilicos cantan
Con sospiros de amor
Mi neshama mi ventura
Estan en tu poder
La rosa en florese
En el mes de mai
Mi neshama s'escurese,
Sufriendo del amor
Mas presto ven palomba
Mas presto ven con mi
Mas presto ven querida,
Corre y salvame

The nightingales

The nightingales sing
with sighs of love
my soul and my fate
are in your power
the rose blooms
in the month of May
my soul darkens,
suffering from love's pain
come quick, dove
come quick with me
come quick, beloved
run and save me

Interval

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Chants de terre et de ciel (1938) Songs of Earth and Heaven

Olivier Messiaen

Due to copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce the original texts for this cycle.

Bail avec Mi A lease with Mi

Ton œil de terre, ...

Your eye of earth, my eye
of earth, our hands of
earth,

to weave the atmosphere, the mountain of the
atmosphere.

Star of silence for my heart of earth, for my lips of earth,
little ball of sun complementary to my earth.

The lease, sweet companion of my bitter shoulder.

Antienne du silence Anthem of silence

Ange silencieux, ...

Silent angel, inscribe
some silence in my
hands, alleluia.

That I might breathe the silence of heaven, alleluia.

Danse du bébé-pilule Dance of my little one

Pilule, viens, dansons. ...

Come little man, let's dance,
Malonlanlaine, ma.
Strings of the sun,
Malonlanlaine, ma.

It's the alphabet of laughter on your mother's fingers.

Her perpetual Yes was a peaceful lake

Malonlanlaine, ma, ma.

Sweetness of stairs, surprise behind doors.

All the light birds fluttered from your hands.

Light birds, pebbles, refrains, light cream.

Shaped like blue fish, like blue moons,

haloes of earth and water,

a single lung in a single reed.

Io, io malonlanlaine, ma, malonlanlaine etc. . .

A disarmed eye, an angel on your head, your little nose
lifted up

towards the low blue which is swallowed up, edging with
golden cries

the glass horizons, you held out your heart so pure.

To sing, to sing, to sing, ah! to sing,

gleaners of stars, tresses of life,

could you have sung more deliciously?

The wind over your ears, malonlanlaine, ma,

is playing leap-frog, malonlanlaine, ma.

And the green presence and your mummy's eye.

Shedding the hour of its petals around my smile.

Malonlanlaine, ma.

Around my smile,

Malonlanlaine, ma, ma, ma, ma, io!

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Io, io!

Arc-en-ciel d'innocence

Pilule, tu t'étires ...

You are tired; look at your hand.

Unbreakable toy, the springs are still working;
but you can't discard this one
like some pretty rag-doll.

Dream of the folds in the hour;

weave, weave vocalises around silence:

the sun will write to you on the shoulder of morning
to cast birds into your toothless mouth.

Smile, smile, what you are singing, sing, sing,
has taught you to smile.

Could you dream what you don't see?

Come, let me catapult you into day

like an aviator-dragonfly!

There you are, higher than me:

how lovely to dominate all these giants!

Tie to your little wrists rainbows of innocence
that have fallen from your eyes,

make them quiver in the crannies of time.

Very distant, very near;

let's play the game a hundred times over!

Where is he? So high he cannot be seen?

Jump, my cup-and-ball little man!

You jump around like the clapper of a paschal bell.

Hello, little man.

Texts continue overleaf

Minuit pile et face

Ville, œil puant, ...

rusty nails driven into the corners of oblivion.

Lamb, Lord!

They dance, my sins dance!

Carnival of disillusion of death's cobblestones.

The streets a great rotting corpse, beneath the lantern's
harsh light.

Crossroad of fear!

Blanket of madness and pride!

Laughter, grow more shrill! laughter, swallow yourself!

These torches are mountains of night.

Tightly pulled knots of anguish.

Unheard-of beast that eats,

that slobbers in my breast.

Head, head, such sweat!

And I'll be left alone to enveloping death?

Father of lights, Christ, Vine of love,

Spirit, Comforter,

Comforter of the seven gifts!

Bell, my bones vibrate, a sudden cypher,

ruins of error and circles on the left,

nine, ten, eleven, twelve.

Ah! To fall asleep a little one!

Beneath the too broad air, in a blue bed,

my hand beneath my ear,

with a tiny night-shirt on.

Résurrection

Alleluia, alleluia.

Il est le premier, ...

He is the first-born of the dead.

Seven stars of love for the pierced one,

put on your garment of light.

'I have risen again, I have risen again;

I sing: for Thee, my Father, for Thee, my God, alleluia.

. I pass from death to life.'

An angel.

He has alighted on the stone.

Perfume, gate, pearl, unleavened bread of Truth.

Alleluia, alleluia.

We have touched Him, we have seen Him.

With our hands we have touched Him.

A single stream of life in His side,

put on your garment of light.

'I have risen again, I have risen again.

I ascend: to Thee, my Father, to Thee, my God, alleluia.

I pass from death to light.'

Bread.

He breaks it and scales fall from their eyes.

Perfume, gate, pearl, wash yourselves in Truth.

Midnight heads or tails

City, stinking eye, oblique
midnights,

Resurrection (for Easter Day)

Alleluia, alleluia.

He is the first, the Lord
Jesus.

Dominique Le Gendre (b.1960)

From *Songs of the Islands* (2016)

Anonymous

Hear Me

Cristina Dopwell

Hear me,

I speak though I use no words.

I sing to your heart in silence and mist.

Every movement of the wind through the leaves screams
to you

Hear me.

Every bright morning and each clouded day

I call your name.

Whisp'ring with the stillness of a pond.

See my lips in the caress of warm raindrops

Feel my heart beat in the wings of the birds

Hear me.

I call to you from distant dreams

Past happy moments.

The sunset unnoticed

The butterfly at your window

The infant's laugh

All call for you as I wait for you to

Hear me.

I Shall Return

Claude McKay

I shall return again, I shall return

To laugh and love and watch with wonder eyes

At golden noon the forest fires burn,

Wafting their blue-black smoke to sapphire skies.

I shall return to loiter by the streams

That bathe the brown blades of the bending grasses,

And realise once more my thousand dreams

Of water surging down the mountain passes.

I shall return to hear the fiddle and fife

Of village dances, dear delicious tunes

That stir the hidden depths of native life,

Stray melodies of dim remembered runes.

I shall return, I shall return again

To ease my mind of long long years of pain.

4 Arms 2 Necks (2000)

Anonymous

Four arms, two necks, one wreathing
Two pairs of lips, one breathing
Two hearts that multiply
Sighs, sighs interchangeably

The thought of this confounds me,
And as I speak it wounds me
It cannot be expressed,
God, help me whilst I rest

Bad stomachs have their loathing
And oh, this all is nothing
This no with griefs doth prove,
Report often turns to love.

Jake Heggie (b.1961)

Animal Passion from *Natural Selection*

(1997)

Gini Savage

Fierce as a bobcat's spring
With start-up speeds of sixty miles per hour
I want a lover to sweep me off my feet
And slide me into the gutter
Without the niceties of small-talk roses or champagne.
I mean business.
I want whiskey
I want to be swallowed whole,
I want tiles to spring off the walls
When we enter hotel rooms or afternoon apartments
I won't pussy-foot around responsibility
'Shoulds' and 'oughts' are out for good.
And I don't want to be a fat domestic cat
I want to be frantic,
Yowls and growls to sound like the lion house
At feeding time
I don't give a damn who hears,
I don't give a damn!
No discreet eavesdroppers' coughs can stop us
In our frenzy.
Let the voyeurs voient
And let the great cats come.

Georgia Stitt (b.1972)

Almost Everything I Need from *Alphabet City Cycle* (2008)

Marcy Heisler

Who needs a lot of space?
Who needs a lot of light? ...

Due to copyright reasons, we are unable to print the full text for this song.

The Beatles

In My Life (1965)

arranged by Gweneth Ann Rand, Allyson Devenish,
Elizabeth Kenny & Alice Zawadzki
John Lennon & Paul McCartney

There are places I'll remember
All my life though some have changed ...

Due to copyright reasons, we are unable to print the full text for this song.

J Fred Coots (1897-1985)

For all we know (pub. 1934)

arranged by Gweneth Ann Rand, Allyson Devenish,
Elizabeth Kenny & Alice Zawadzki
Sam M Lewis

For all we know
We may never meet again ...

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Texts kindly provided by the artists.

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