

Devotions

Ema Nikolovska mezzo-soprano
Kunal Lahiry piano

Priault Rainier (1903-1986)

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Sergey Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Aaron Copland

Franz Schubert

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We cannot bid the fruits from *Cycle for Declamation* (1953)

There came a wind like a bugle from *12 poems of Emily Dickinson* (1949-50)

Herbst D945 (1828)

Lento ma non troppo from *5 Melodies Op. 35* (1920)

Dear March, Come In! from *12 poems of Emily Dickinson*

Auflösung D807 (1824)

The world feels dusty from *12 poems of Emily Dickinson*

Andante non troppo from *5 Melodies Op. 35* (1920)

Verklärung D59 (1813)

Why do they shut me out of heaven? from *12 poems of Emily Dickinson*

Der Unglückliche D713 (1821)

Nacht und Träume D827 (1823)

Interval

Aaron Copland

Emily Doolittle (b.1972)

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

George Crumb (1929-2022)

Héloïse Werner (b.1991)

Franz Schubert

Aaron Copland

Franz Schubert

Nahre Sol (b.1991)

Nature, the Gentlest Mother from *12 poems of Emily Dickinson*

Vocalise (for Bees) (2008)

Vocalise-étude (1935)

The Fly from *Sun and Shadow* (Spanish Songbook II) (2009)

Le cœur crucifié (2019)

Die Rose D745 (1822)

When they come back from *12 poems of Emily Dickinson*

Die Mutter Erde D788 (1823)

Apperceptive Algorithms (2022)

Time • digital prayers • journey to the center of the Internet • Gido



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Devotions presents a programme by Ema Nikolovska and Kunal Lahiry in which song itself is revealed as a mediator, moving between the macro to the microscopic: from evocations of the natural world, to the embodiment of the human voice in all its fragility. Taking historical and contemporary music and poetry as starting points, the programme presents a collage of styles – from Lieder to vocalise, and three contemporary works – which, in their juxtapositions, present the audience with questions about nature, transience, death and transfiguration.

Taken as a whole, what do these songs say about one another, and about our relationship to nature, seen as a force for both threat and inspiration, or consolation and escape? The audience is given space to discover their own perspective, for, while the shifts in style place great demands on the performers, the primary intention is not to demonstrate virtuosity, but rather to create a stream-of-consciousness experience in which listeners can forge their own connections, and perhaps also renew their relationships with existing repertoire.

Rainier's vocal solo *Cycle for Declamation* was composed in 1953 for Peter Pears, and sets three Meditations from John Donne's *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*. In Rainier's setting of 'Wee cannot bid the fruits', human virtues and vices are characterised by the seasons. As such, through Donne's Elizabethan poetry, the song signals the scope of the programme to follow in its traversal of the cycles of the natural world, and their influence on humanity.

Copland completed his *12 Poems of Emily Dickinson* in 1950, and the second song 'There came a wind like a bugle' continues the declamatory feel of the Rainier, while introducing nature as a potentially terrifying force; indifferent to human sentiments for the afterlife.

Schubert's 'Herbst' reflects the ceaseless toil of nature in melancholy and nostalgia, dwelling in the fading symbolism of autumn — wilting flora and ominous weather — in the poem by Ludwig Rellstab.

Vocalises recur in this programme to represent the changing of the seasons, while also moving our attention from the poetry of the songs to the physicality of singing itself, thereby showing us the aesthetic range of song as a genre, with its power to both conjure imaginary worlds and render vivid the corporeal presence of the voice.

Prokofiev originally wrote his *5 Melodies* in 1920 as vocalises (later arranged for violin), around the same time as his opera *The Love for Three Oranges*. It prepares the shift to a brighter tone in Copland's sixth Dickinson song 'Dear March, Come In!' Schubert's 'Auflösung' summons an even greater celestial energy in the poem by Mayrhofer, where the transcendent passions of the soul and the 'fires of rapture' overcome even the sun itself. By contrast, Copland returns to themes of finitude in his fourth song, where Dickinson's lines in 'The world feels dusty' invoke the Christian image of humanity being made of, and ultimately returning to, dust.

Via another impassioned Prokofiev vocalise, the tension between unending nature and the mortality of human life comes into focus in Schubert's 'Verklärung'. The

rhetorical feel that Schubert sets up is echoed in Copland's setting of Dickinson's *Why do they shut me out of Heaven?*. In the poem, Dickinson seems to reject the idea of heaven in favour of the natural world, despite its capriciousness.

Rejection, loss and resignation also form the basis of Schubert's 'Der Unglückliche', which proceeds through five dramatically contrasting sections related to each of the five strophes. Schubert's 'Nacht und Träume' conflates two Collin poems, whom the song memorialises in its slow and hushed contemplation of night and dreams. Musing on similar themes of tenderness while beckoning a new dawn to follow the nocturne, Copland's first Dickinson song 'Nature, the Gentlest Mother' calls to mind birdsong and bells, symbolising the regularity, permanence and all-embracing maternal force of nature. **Emily Doolittle's** 'Vocalise (for Bees)' similarly evokes fauna while drawing our attention to the micro-mechanics of the voice. By contrast, **Messiaen's** 'Vocalise-étude' from 1935 highlights the voice as an indelibly melodic presence, as it weaves between the rich and crystalline modal harmonies of the piano.

Crumb's 'The Fly' offers yet another insect evocation in setting Lorca's poem (*Mosca*) as if from the perspective of the fly, repeatedly buzzing against a window pane, while **Héloïse Werner's** 'Le cœur crucifié' sees the singer pick up a wood block to surgically and mechanically mark time as they speak of dissecting the organ only to find sorrow at its centre.

Schubert's 'Die Rose' draws our attention to themes of transience through the classic metaphor of the rose, lamenting its short yet sweet life. Whereas Schubert's song seems content in savouring the rose's brief bloom, in Copland's eighth Dickinson song 'When they come back', the voice of the poet appears worried that the joy of spring will not return at all. Thus, where other songs in Copland's cycle and the whole programme speak to time in the external world, this song prompts contemplation of personal death. In 'Die Mutter Erde', Schubert strikes a more reassuring and mellow tone while still reflecting this theme of the inevitable, as the song gently rocks 'in the lap of mother earth'.

In the concluding work, **Nahre Sol's** *Apperceptive Algorithms* presents four movements that survey temporality from a contemporary digital perspective. In the opening piece, Mario Romano's poem 'Time' juxtaposes classic literary references against Internet-age symbols of an ungraspable sublime, while in the second piece, Daniel Gerzenberg's poem reveals smartphones as our new god, and hearer of our prayers. Ling Ling's 'journey to the center of the Internet' launches a comic book scene wherein a character becomes seemingly lost among cyberspace encounters and feelings of fragmentation; a pixelation of the self. The fourth piece 'Gido' sees the singer pick up a woodblock once again in the programme's final wordless vocalise.

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Priault Rainier (1903-1986)

We cannot bid the fruits from *Cycle for Declamation* (1953)

John Donne

We cannot bid the fruits come in May, nor the leaves to stick in December. There are of them that will give, that will do justice, that will pardon, but they have their own seasons for all these, and he that knows not them, shall starve before that gift come. Reward is the season of one man, and importunity of another; fear is the season of one man, and favour of another; friendship is the season of one man, and natural affection of another; and he that knows not their seasons, nor cannot stay them, must lose the fruits.

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

There came a wind like a bugle from 12 *poems of Emily Dickinson* (1949-50)

There came a wind like a bugle;
It quivered through the grass ...

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Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Herbst D945 (1828) *Ludwig Rellstab*

Es rauschen die Winde
So herbstlich und kalt;
Verödet die Fluren,
Entblättert der Wald.
Ihr blumigen
Auen!
Du sonniges Grün!
So welken die Blüten
Des Lebens dahin.

Es ziehen die Wolken
So finster und grau;
Verschwunden die Sterne
Am himmlischen Blau!
Ach, wie die Gestirne
Am Himmel entfliehn,
So sinket die Hoffnung
Des Lebens dahin!

Ihr Tage des Lenzes
Mit Rosen geschmückt,

Autumn

The winds are blowing
so autumnal and cold;
the fields are barren,
leafless the woods
You blossoming
meadows!
You sunlit green!
Thus do life's blossoms
wither away.

The clouds drift by
so sombre and grey;
the stars have faded
from the heavenly blue!
Ah, as the stars
flee from the sky,
thus does life's hope
fade away!

You days of spring
adorned with roses,

Wo ich die
Geliebte
Ans Herze gedrückt!
Kalt über den Hügel
Rauscht, Winde, dahin!
So sterben die Rosen
Der Liebe dahin.

when I pressed my
beloved
against my heart!
Howl on, chill winds,
across the hills!
Thus do love's roses
die away.

Sergey Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Lento ma non troppo from 5 *Melodies* Op. 35 (1920)

Aaron Copland

Dear March, Come In! from 12 *poems of Emily Dickinson*

Dear March, come in!
How glad I am! ...

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Franz Schubert

Auflösung D807 (1824) *Johann Mayrhofer*

Verbirg dich, Sonne,
Denn die Gluten der Wonne
Versengen mein Gebein;
Verstummet Töne,
Frühlings Schöne
Flüchte dich, und lass mich
allein!

Quillen doch aus allen Falten
Meiner Seele liebliche
Gewalten;
Die mich umschlingen,
Himmlisch singen –
Geh' unter Welt, und
störe
Nimmer die süssen
ätherischen Chöre!

Dissolution

Conceal yourself, sun,
for the fires of rapture
scorch my whole being;
fall silent, sounds,
spring beauty
flee, and leave me to
myself!

For sweet powers well up
from every recess of my
soul,
and envelop me
with celestial song –
dissolve, world, and never
more
disturb the sweet
ethereal choirs!

Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

Aaron Copland

The world feels dusty from *12 poems of Emily Dickinson*

The world feels dusty
When we stop to die; ...

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Sergey Prokofiev

Andante non troppo from *5 Melodies Op. 35* (1920)

Franz Schubert

Verklärung D59 (1813)

*Johann Gottfried Herder,
after Alexander Pope*

Lebensfunke, vom Himmel
entglüht,
Der sich loszuwinden
müht!
Zitternd, kühn, vor Sehnen
leidend,
Gern und doch mit
Schmerzen scheidend –
End', o end' den Kampf,
Natur!
Sanft ins
Leben
Aufwärts schweben
Sanft hinschwinden lass
mich nur.

Horch! mir lispeln Geister
zu:
„Schwester-Seele, komm zur
Ruh!“
Zieh'et was mich sanft von
innen?
Was ist es, was mir meine
Sinnen
Mir den Hauch zu rauben
droht?
Seele, sprich, ist das der
Tod?

Die Welt entweicht, sie ist
nicht mehr.
Engel-Einklang um
mich her!
Ich schweb' im Morgenrot! –
Leiht, o leiht mir eure
Schwingen:

Transfiguration

Heaven-kindled spark of
life,
that toils to wrench itself
away,
trembling, brave,
enduring longing,
gladly, yet in agony,
departing!
End, oh end the battle,
nature!
Only let me into life gently
upwards float
and gently
vanish!

Hark, spirits whisper to
me:
'Sister-soul, come to rest.'
Does something draw me
gently hence?
What is it that threatens
to deprive me
of my sense and of my
breath?
Speak, soul, is it
Death?

The world vanishes, it is
no more.
All around me angel
harmony!
In the dawn of day I float!
Lend, oh lend me your
wings,

Ihr Bruder, Geister, helft mir
singen:

„O Grab, wo ist dein
Sieg?

Wo ist dein Pfeil, o
Tod?“

brothers, spirits, help me
sing:

'O grave, where is your
victory?

Where, O Death, your
arrow?'

Aaron Copland

Why do they shut me out of heaven? from *12 poems of Emily Dickinson*

Why do they shut me out of heaven?
Did I sing too loud? ...

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Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Der Unglückliche D713

(1821)

Karoline Pichler

Die Nacht bricht an, mit
leisen Lüften sinket
Sie auf die müden
Sterblichen herab;
Der sanfte Schlaf, des Todes
Bruder, winket,
Und legt sie freundlich in ihr
täglich Grab.

Jetzt wachet auf der
lichtberaubten Erde
Vielleicht nur noch
die Arglist und der
Schmerz,
Und jetzt, da ich durch nichts
gestört werde,
Lass deine Wunden bluten,
armes Herz.

Versenke dich in deines
Kummers Tiefen,
Und wenn vielleicht in der
zerrissnen Brust
Halb verjährte Leiden
schliefen,
So wecke sie mit grausam
süßser Lust.

Berechne die verlorenen
Seligkeiten,
Zähl' alle, alle Blumen in dem
Paradies,
Woraus in deiner Jugend
goldnen Zeiten

The unhappy one

Night falls, descending
with light breezes
upon weary
mortals;
gentle sleep, death's
brother, beckons,
and lays them fondly in
their daily graves.

Now only malice
and pain
perchance watch over
the earth, robbed of
light;
and now, since nothing
may disturb me,
let your wounds bleed,
poor heart.

Plunge to the depths of
your grief,
and if perchance half-
forgotten sorrows
have slept in your
anguished heart,
awaken them with cruelly
sweet delight.

Consider your lost
happiness,
count all the flowers in
paradise,
from which, in the golden
days of your youth,

Die harte Hand des Schicksals dich verstieß.	the harsh hand of fate banished you.
Du hast geliebt, du hast das Glück empfunden, Dem jede Seligkeit der Erde weicht.	You have loved, you have experienced a happiness which eclipses all earthly bliss.
Du hast ein Herz, das dich verstand, gefunden, Der kühnsten Hoffnung schönes Ziel erreicht.	You have found a heart that understands you, your wildest hopes have attained their fair goal.

Da stürzte dich ein grausam Machtwort nieder, Aus deinen Himmeln nieder, und dein stilles Glück, Dein allzuschönes Traumbild kehrte wieder Zur besser'n Welt, aus der es kam, zurück.	Then the cruel decree of authority dashed you down from your heaven, and your tranquil happiness, your all-too-lovely dream vision, returned to the better world from which it came.
--	---

Zerrissen sind nun alle süssen Bande, Mir schlägt kein Herz mehr auf der weiten Welt.	Now all the sweet bonds are torn asunder; no heart now beats for me in the whole world.
--	--

Nacht und Träume
D827 (1823)
Matthäus von Collin

Night and dreams

Heil'ge Nacht, du sinkest nieder; Nieder wallen auch die Träume, Wie dein Mondlicht durch die Räume, Durch der Menschen stille Brust.	Holy night, you float down; dreams too drift down, like your moonlight through space, through the silent hearts of men.
--	--

Die belauschen sie mit Lust, Rufen, wenn der Tag erwacht: Kehre wieder, heil'ge Nacht! Holde Träume, kehret wieder!	They listen to them with delight, cry out when day awakes: come back, holy night! Sweet dreams, come back again!
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Interval

Aaron Copland

**Nature, the Gentlest Mother from 12
poems of Emily Dickinson**

Nature, the gentlest mother
Impatient of no child ...

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text of this song

Emily Doolittle (b.1972)

Vocalise (for Bees) (2008)

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Vocalise-étude (1935)

George Crumb (1929-2022)

**The Fly from Sun and Shadow (Spanish
Songbook II) (2009)**
after Federico García Lorca

(Buzzing outside the window.)
I think of people knocking.
And raise the glass.

(Buzzing inside the window.)
I think of people in chains.
And let it escape!

(Desperate it knocks again
on the iridescent panel!)

Margarita, Margarita, Margarita,
your tender little heart
scratches the polished glass of my soul.

*Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have
ended.*

Héloïse Werner (b.1991)

Le cœur crucifié (2019) The crucified heart

Philothée Gaymard

Il a pris le cœur et l'a
déposé
Comme on immobilise un
papillon,
Avec précaution,
Pour ne pas s'en mettre sur
les doigts.
Il a découpé les peaux,
toutes fines,
Et il les a épinglées,
Et le cœur ressemble à un
petit animal à dix, douze,
quinze membres,
Ecartelé.

He has taken the heart
and set it down
as you'd immobilise a
butterfly,
with care,
so as not to get any on his
hands.
He has cut up the skin,
very thin,
and he has pinned it up,
and the heart looks like a
little animal with ten,
twelve, fifteen limbs,
stretched on the rack.

Maintenant il fouille.
Il entre dans les plis et les
recoins,
Les fossés, les sillons, les
sommets,
Tout ce que dans un cœur
on peut posséder.
Et au centre du cœur il ne
trouve rien
Que la vie calcifiée qui sent le
chagrin
Que des chairs grises
que patiemment il
recoud.

Now he digs.
He gets inside the folds
and the recesses,
the cavities, the furrows,
the nodes,
everything which you
might find in a heart.
And at the centre of the
heart he finds nothing
but life, petrified, which
smells of grief
like the grey flesh that he
patiently stitches
back up.

Franz Schubert

Die Rose D745 (1822) The rose

Friedrich Schlegel

Es lockte schöne
Wärme,
Mich an das Licht zu wagen,
Da brannten wilde
Gluten;
Das muss ich ewig
klagen.
Ich konnte lange
blühen
In milden, heitern Tagen;
Nun muss ich frühe welken,
Dem Leben schon
entsagen.

Lovely warmth tempted
me
to venture into the light.
There fires burned
furiously;
I must for ever bemoan
that.
I could have bloomed for
long
in mild, bright days.
Now I must wither early,
renounce life
prematurely.

Es kam die Morgenröte,
Da liess ich alles Zagen
Und öffnete die Knospe,
Wo alle Reize
lagen.

The red dawn came,
I abandoned all timidity
and opened the bud
in which lay all my
charms.

Ich konnte freundlich
duften
Und meine Krone tragen,
Da ward zu heiss die
Sonne,
Die muss ich drum
verklagen.

I could have spread sweet
fragrance
and worn my crown ...
then the sun grew too
hot –
of this I must
accuse it.

Was soll der milde
Abend?
Muss ich nun traurig fragen.
Er kann mich nicht mehr
retten,
Die Schmerzen nicht
verjagen.
Die Röte ist
verblichen,
Bald wird mich Kälte nagen.
Mein kurzes junges
Leben
Wollt' ich noch sterbend
sagen.

Of what avail is the mild
evening?
I must now ask sadly.
It can no longer
save me,
or banish my
sorrows.
My red colouring is
faded,
soon cold will gnaw me.
As I die I wished to tell
once more
of my brief
young life.

Aaron Copland

When they come back from 12 poems of Emily Dickinson

When they come back,
If blossoms do – ...

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text of this song

Franz Schubert

Die Mutter Erde D788 Mother Earth (1823)

*Friedrich Leopold, Graf zu
Stolberg-Stolberg*

Des Lebens Tag ist schwer
und schwül,
Des Todes Atem
leicht und kühl,
Er wehet freundlich uns
hinab
Wie welches Laub ins
stille Grab.

Life's day is heavy and
sultry,
the breath of death is
light and cool;
fondly it wafts us
down,
like withered leaves, into
the silent grave.

Es scheint der Mond, es fällt
der Tau
Auf's Grab wie auf
die Blumenau;
Auch fällt der Freunde Trän
hinein
Erhell't von sanfter Hoffnung
Schein.

The moon shines, the
dew falls
on the grave as on the
flowery meadow;
the tears of friends also
fall,
lit by the gleam of gentle
hope.

Uns sammelt alle, klein und gross, Die Mutter Erd' in ihren Schoss; O sähn wir ihr ins Angesicht, Wir scheuten ihren Busen nicht!	Mother Earth gathers us all, great and small, in her lap; if we would only look upon her face we should not fear her bosom.
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Nahre Sol (b.1991)

Apperceptive Algorithms (2022)

Time

Mario Romano

Birth I know

Purist

Romance ...

Time

digital prayers

Daniel Gerzenberg

help me ... help me!!!
help me smartphone in
this world
help me world with these
smartphones
with smartphones -
smartphones

hilf mir gott in dieser gottlosen welt ...	help me god in this godless world ...
hilf mir gott in dieser welt	help me god in this world

journey to the center of the Internet

Ling Ling

and my miraculous journey

I hope you enjoy it ...

this is the story of my life

Gido

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