

WIGMORE HALL

Sunday 5 March 2023
7.30pm

The Busoni Series is made possible with support from the Wigmore Hall Endowment Fund.

Kirill Gerstein piano
Leonidas Kavakos violin
Gordon Bintner bass-baritone

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)	Maigesang Op. 52 No. 4 (before 1796) Neue Liebe, neues Leben Op. 75 No. 2 (1809) Aus Goethes Faust Op. 75 No. 3 (1809) Wonne der Wehmut Op. 83 No. 1 (1810) Sehnsucht Op. 83 No. 2 (1810) Mit einem gemalten Band Op. 83 No. 3 (1810)
Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)	Klavierstück Op. 11 No. 2 (1909) <i>arranged by Ferruccio Busoni</i>
Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924)	Lied des Brander K299 (c.1919) Lied des Mephistopheles K278a (1919) Lied des Unmuts K281 (1919) Schlechter Trost K298a (1924) Zigeunerlied K295a (1923)
Wladimir Vogel (1896-1984)	3 Sprechlieder nach August Stramm (1922) <i>Untreu • Verzweifelt • Schwermut</i>
Kurt Weill (1900-1950)	From <i>The Threepenny Opera</i> (1928) Morgenchoral des Peachum Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens <i>Interval</i>
Ludwig van Beethoven	Violin Sonata No. 9 in A Op. 47 'Kreutzer' (1802-3) <i>I. Adagio sostenuto – Presto</i> <i>II. Andante con variazioni • III. Finale. Presto</i>
Ferruccio Busoni	Violin Sonata No. 2 in E minor Op. 36a (1898-1900) <i>I. Langsam • II. Presto • III. Andante, piuttosto grave</i>

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You can [...] speak of 'the divine Mozart.' But you cannot say 'the divine Beethoven.' That does not sound right. You must say 'the human Beethoven.'

–Busoni, *What did Beethoven Give Us?* (1922)

If many of his contemporaries admired the music of **Beethoven**, Busoni was conflicted about the composer. Although he revered Beethoven's late string quartets and late piano sonatas, he held the music of Bach, Mozart and Liszt in greater esteem. Moreover, if Beethoven's music served as an important compositional model for Busoni, he increasingly disliked its emotionalism as he matured. In a letter of 1920 to Huber, Busoni stated that he was 'turning progressively away from the former's [Beethoven's] sulky seriousness and perceiving more and more a greater seriousness of the latter [Mozart], which is actually superior, behind its serenity.' (Busoni, letter of unknown date to Huber in Beaumont, *Selected Letters*, 282). Busoni also rhetorically asked whether 'this [Beethoven's music] signifies a gain, an advance for music; whether it is the task of music to be human instead of remaining pure sound and beautiful form' (Busoni, *What did Beethoven Give Us?*). Busoni admired aspects of Beethoven's art, such as his ability to make virtuosity subservient to the musical idea and his transformation of piano technique. However, he sought to distance himself from the power and the emotionalism of Beethoven.

This programme brings Busoni's music into direct conversation with Beethoven's through the juxtaposition of collections of Lieder based on texts by Goethe. In addition, Busoni's Violin Sonata No. 2 in E Minor (1898–1900) is modeled, in part, on Beethoven's Sonata No. 9 in A Op. 47. As this recital programme reveals Busoni was deeply interested in Beethoven's approach to form and musical ideas. But he simultaneously sought after and taught a more abstract compositional approach that reflected the dehumanized and experimental modernist sound world of the early 20th Century.

Busoni's simultaneous indebtedness to Beethoven, and yet more austere approach to composition can be heard in his Violin Sonata No. 2. Composed in a transitional period in Busoni's career, when he was just beginning to think deeply about future modernistic musical possibilities, Busoni's sonata combines the contrapuntal language of Bach, the ethereal qualities of late Beethoven and the pianistic textures of Liszt. It is telling that the piece was originally titled 'Sonata quasi una fantasia' in emulation of Beethoven's sonatas. Its indebtedness to Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 30 in E Op. 109 extends beyond the key to contrasting slow and rhapsodic sections in the first movement and a closing set of variations in the third. The variations are Beethovenian, with hymn-like harmonisations, fugal writing, and a *tranquillo* coda. In addition, the middle scherzo movement is modelled after Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' sonata *Finale*, a rousing tarantella in 6/8 time.

Although Beethoven and Busoni were better known for works in other genres, both also composed numerous Lieder throughout their lives. If Busoni's songs based on texts by Goethe were not directly patterned on

Beethoven's, the juxtapositions of songs by both composers on this programme invite comparisons. Beethoven's display varied treatment of form, a wide tonal and emotional range, and descriptive tone painting reflective of new love or nature. By contrast, Busoni's exhibit a dehumanized, brittle, and dry vocal approach over sparse and abstract piano writing. Beethoven's 'Sehnsucht' reflects the outdoors as the piano interludes mimic the bird song mentioned in the text. 'Wonne der Wehmut', long considered one of Beethoven's most profound Lieder, contains descending scales that symbolise floods of tears in the accompaniment. 'Aus Goethes Faust', a popular piece that describes the takeover of a royal court by a flea, contains fleeting and light figurations that represent the jumping fleas. Busoni's Goethe song settings, by contrast, composed at the end of his life (1918–1924), are in an unprecedented abstract modernist song style. 'Lied des Mephistopheles', for instance, features motoric ostinati, spare textures, and a strophic construction. Intensification happens when dotted rhythms move to triplets. The vocal lines are declamatory, the form uncomplicated, and the piano writing economic. 'Zigeunerlied' is similarly menacing with motoric rotations on a single note as the text describes seven werewolves appearing through the mist. Busoni's sparse, austere, satirical, detached, abstract, economic and driving style was novel at the time.

If Beethoven's music informed Busoni's compositional approach, Busoni similarly influenced the compositions of contemporaries and subsequent generations. Throughout most of his lifetime, Busoni was more famous than **Schoenberg**, who approached him for mentoring and compositional advice in the early 1900s. A tangible product of these interactions was Busoni's reworking of Schoenberg's *3 Klavierstücke* Op. 11, which Busoni sought to make more pianistic. If Schoenberg (understandably) bristled at Busoni's suggestion that both of their versions of the piano pieces should be published side-by-side, Busoni's arrangement offers an interesting mirror into the composer's pianistic writing.

In addition, Busoni was an important composition mentor for **Weill** and **Vogel** during his Berlin composition masterclass from 1921–4. While studying with Busoni in Berlin, both Weill and Vogel tried out new ways of writing for the voice. Busoni communicated his approach to text setting when the entire composition class was asked to set *Die Bekehrte* by Goethe. Busoni's influence led both to adopt sectional forms, textural and timbral layering, genre mixture, and an unsentimental treatment of the voice. Vogel's 'speech-songs' (1922) based on poetry by Stramm on such emotional topics as unfaithfulness, desperation and melancholy reflect a conflation of influences: the expressionism of Skryabin, Schoenberg's experimentalism, and Busoni's abstractness and economy. Weill's songs from *The Threepenny Opera* (1928), by contrast, offer unsentimental and ironic commentary on social ills, thereby reflecting Busoni's teachings about a new classicism.

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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Maigesang Op. 52 No. 4 (before 1796) Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

May song

Wie herrlich leuchtet
Mir die Natur!
Wie glänzt die Sonne!
Wie lacht die Flur!

How gloriously
nature gleams for me!
How the sun sparkles!
How the field laughs!

Es dringen Blüten
Aus jedem Zweig
Und tausend Stimmen
Aus dem Gesträuch

Blossoms burst
from every bough
and a thousand voices
from every bush

Und Freud und Wonne
Aus jeder Brust.
O Erd, o Sonne!
O Glück, o Lust!

And delight and rapture
from every breast.
O earth, O sun!
O joy, O bliss!

O Lieb, o Liebe!
So golden schön,
Wie Morgenwolken
Auf jenem Höhn!

O love, O love!
So golden fair
as morning clouds
on yonder hills!

Du segnest herrlich
Das frische Feld,
Im Blütendampfe
Die volle Welt.

You bless with glory
the fresh field,
in a mist of blossom
the teeming world.

O Mädchen, Mädchen,
Wie lieb ich dich!
Wie blickt dein Auge!
Wie liebst du mich!

O maiden, maiden,
how I love you!
How you look at me!
How you love me!

So liebt die Lerche
Gesang und Luft,
Und Morgenblumen
Den Himmelsduft,

The skylark loves
song and air,
and morning flowers
the hazy sky,

Wie ich dich liebe
Mit warmem Blut,
Die du mir Jugend
Und Freud und Mut

As I with warm blood
love you,
who give me youth
and joy and heart

Zu neuen Liedern
Und Tänzchen gibst.
Sei ewig glücklich,
Wie du mich liebst!

For new songs
and new dances.
Be happy always
as in your love for me!

Neue Liebe, neues Leben Op. 75 No. 2 (1809) Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

New love, new life

Herz, mein Herz, was soll das
geben?

Heart, my heart, what can
this mean?

Was bedrängt dich so sehr?
So?

What is it that besets you
so?

Welch ein fremdes, neues
Leben!

What a strange and new
existence!

Ich erkenne dich nicht mehr.

I do not know you any more.

Weg ist alles, was du liebtest,

Fled is all you used to love,

Weg, warum du dich
betrübtest,

fled is all that used to
grieve you,

Weg dein Fleiss und deine
Ruh –

fled your work and peace
of mind –

Ach, wie kamst du nur
dazu!

ah, how can this have
come about!

Fesselt dich die Jugendblüte,
ensnare you,

Does the bloom of youth
ensnare you,

Diese liebliche Gestalt,
Dieser Blick voll Treu and
Güte

this dear figure full of charm,
these eyes so kind and
faithful

Mit unendlicher Gewalt?
with inexorable power?

with inexorable power?

Will ich rasch mich ihr
entziehen,

When I try to hasten from
her,

Mich ermannen, ihr
entfliehen,

control myself, escape
her,

Führet mich im Augenblick,

in a moment I am led,

Ach, mein Weg zu ihr zurück.

ah, back to her again.

Und an diesem
Zauberfädchen,

And by this magic little
thread

Das sich nicht zerreißen lässt,
Hält das liebe, lose Mädchen

that cannot be severed,
the sweet and playful girl

Mich so wider Willen
fest;

holds me fast against my
will;

Muss in ihrem Zauberkreise
Leben nun auf ihre
Weise.

in her enchanted realm
I must now live as she
dictates.

Die Veränderung, ach, wie
gross!

Ah, what a monstrous
change!

Liebe! Liebe! lass mich los!

Love! Love! Let me free!

**Aus Goethes Faust
Op. 75 No. 3 (1809)**

*Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe*

Es war einmal ein König,
Der hatt' einen grossen Floh,
Den liebt' er gar nicht wenig,
Als wie seinen eig'nen Sohn.
Da rief er seinen Schneider,
Der Schneider kam heran:
„Da, miss dem Junker Kleider
Und miss ihm Hosen
an!“

In Sammet und in Seide
War er nun angetan,
Hatte Bänder auf dem Kleide,
Hatt' auch ein Kreuz daran,
Und war sogleich
Minister,
Und hatt einen grossen
Stern.
Da wurden seine
Geschwister
Bei Hof auch grosse
Herrn.

Und Herrn und Frau'n am
Hofe,
Die waren sehr
geplagt,
Die Königin und die Zofe
Gestochen und genagt,
Und durften sie nicht knicken,
Und weg sie jucken
nicht. –
Wir knicken und
ersticken
Doch gleich, wenn einer sticht.

**Wonne der Wehmut
Op. 83 No. 1 (1810)**

*Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe*

Trocknet nicht, trocknet
nicht,
Tränen der ewigen Liebe!
Ach, nur dem
halbgetrockneten Auge
Wie öde, wie tot die Welt ihm
erscheint!
Trocknet nicht, trocknet
nicht,
Tränen unglücklicher Liebe!

**From Goethe's
Faust**

There was once a king
who had a large flea,
whom he loved not a little,
just like his own son.
He summoned his tailor,
the tailor appeared:
'Here – make robes for
this knight
and make him breeches
too!'

In silk and satin
the flea was now attired,
with ribbons on his coat,
and a medal too,
and became a minister
straightaway
and wore an enormous
star.
His brother and his
sisters
became grand at court as
well.

And courtly lords and
ladies
were most grievously
plagued,
queen and maid-in-waiting
were bitten and were stung,
yet they were not allowed
to squash or scratch
them away. –
We bow and scrape and
suffocate,
as soon as any bite.

Delight in sadness

Grow not dry, grow not
dry,
tears of lasting love!
Ah, to the merely half-dry
eye
how bleak, how dead the
world appears!
Grow not dry, grow not
dry,
tears of unhappy love!

**Sehnsucht Op. 83
No. 2 (1810)**

*Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe*

Was zieht mir das Herz so?
Was zieht mich hinaus?
Und windet und schraubt
mich
Aus Zimmer und Haus?
Wie dort sich die Wolken
Am Felsen verziehn!
Da möchte ich hinüber,
Da möchte ich wohl hin!

Nun wiegt sich der Raben
Geselliger Flug;
Ich mische mich drunter
Und folge dem Zug.
Und Berg und Gemäuer
Umfittichen wir;
Sie weilet da drunten,
Ich spähe nach ihr.

Da kommt sie und wandelt!
Ich eile sobald,
Ein singender Vogel,
Im buschigen Wald.
Sie weilet und horchet
Und lächelt mit sich:
„Er singet so lieblich
Und singt es an mich.“

Die scheidende Sonne
Vergüldet die Höhn;
Die sinnende Schöne,
Die lässt es geschehn.
Sie wandelt am Bache
Die Wiesen entlang,
Und finster und finstrier
Umschlingt sich der Gang.

Auf einmal erschein' ich,
Ein blinkender Stern.
„Was glänzet da droben,
So nah und so fern?“
Und hast du mit Staunen
Das Leuchten
erblickt,
Ich lieg dir zu Füßen,
Da bin ich beglückt!

Longing

What pulls at my heart so?
What draws me outside,
and wrenches and wrests
me
from room and house?
How the clouds disperse
about those cliffs!
That's where I'd like to be,
that's where I'd like to go!

The gregarious ravens
wing through the air;
I mingle with them
and follow their flight.
We flutter around
mountains and ruins;
her home's in the valley,
I look out for her.

Suddenly I see her walking!
I hasten at once,
singing like a bird,
to the bushy woods.
She lingers and listens
and smiles to herself:
'He sings so sweetly,
and he sings for me.'

The setting sun
turns the mountains gold;
my sweetheart muses
and gives it no thought.
She walks by the stream
across the meadows,
the winding path
grows dark and darker.

All at once I appear,
a glittering star.
'What's shining up there,
so near and so far?'
And when, astonished,
you've caught sight of the
gleam –
I'll be lying at your feet,
filled with delight!

**Mit einem gemalten
Band Op. 83 No. 3 (1810)**

*Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe*

Kleine Blumen, kleine Blätter
Streuen mir mit leichter Hand
Gute junge Frühlingsgötter
Tändelnd auf ein luftig Band.

Zephyr, nimm's auf deine
Flügel,

Schling's um meiner
Liebsten Kleid;

Und so tritt sie vor den
Spiegel

All in ihrer Munterkeit.

Sieht mit Rosen sich
umgeben,

Selbst wie eine Rose
jung.

Einen Blick, geliebtes
Leben!

Und ich bin belohnt
genug.

Fühle, was dies Herz
empfindet,

Reiche frei mir deine Hand,
Und das Band, das uns

verbindet,

Sei kein schwaches
Rosenband!

**To accompany a
painted ribbon**

Little flowers, little leaves
are delicately strewn
by kindly young spring gods
playfully on an airy ribbon.

Take it, West Wind, on
your wings,

wind it round my loved
one's dress;

then she'll step before the
mirror

in all her lively charm.

Will see herself girdled by
roses,

she herself as young as a
rose.

Give me a single glance,
my love,

and I'll be rewarded well
enough!

Feel what this heart is
feeling,

freely give your hand to me,
and may the bond that

binds us both

be no frail ribbon of roses!

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

**Klavierstück Op. 11 No. 2 (1909)
arranged by Ferruccio Busoni**

Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924)

Lied des Brander K299 Brander's song

(c.1919)

*Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe*

Es war eine Ratt im
Kellernest,

Lebte nur von Fett und
Butter,

Hatte sich ein Ränzlein
angemäst't,

Als wie der Doktor Luther.

Die Köchin hatt' ihr Gift
gestellt,

Da ward's so eng ihr in der
Welt,

Als hätt' sie Lieb im
Leibe.

Sie fuhr herum, sie fuhr
heraus,

Und soff aus allen
Pfüetzen,

Zernagt', zerkratzt' das
ganze Haus,

Wollte nichts ihr Wüten
nützen;

Sie tät gar manchen
Ängstesprung,

Bald hatte das arme Tier
genug,

Als hätt' es Lieb im
Leibe.

Sie kam für Angst am hellen
Tag

Der Küche zugelaufen,
Fiel an den Herd und zuckt'

und lag,

Und tät erbärmlich
schnaufen.

Da lachte die Vergift'rin
noch:

„Ha, sie pfeift auf dem
letzten Loch,

Als hätt' sie Lieb im
Leibe“.

Once in a cellar there
lived a rat,

ate nothing but fat and
butter,

until its paunch became
as fat

as that of Doctor Luther.

The cook she laid some
poison down,

then the world closed in
about it,

as though it had love
inside it.

It scurried here, it
scurried there,

and drank from every
puddle,

it scratched and gnawed
throughout the house,

though its fury was in
vain;

it leapt great leaps in
mortal fear,

the poor beast soon had
had enough,

as though it had love
inside it.

In broad daylight, out of
fear,

it ran towards the kitchen,
fell down by the range,

quivered and lay
and struggled for breath

most wretchedly.

The cook, who'd poisoned it,
now laughed:

'Ha! it's on its last
legs,

as though it had love
inside it.'

Lied des
Mephistopheles K278a

(1919)
Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe

Es war einmal ein König,
Der hatt' einen grossen Floh,
Den liebt' er gar nicht wenig,
Als wie seinen eig'nen Sohn.
Da rief er seinen Schneider,
Der Schneider kam heran:
„Da, miss dem Junker Kleider

Und miss ihm Hosen
an!“

In Sammet und in Seide
War er nun angetan,
Hatte Bänder auf dem Kleide,
Hatt' auch ein Kreuz daran,
Und war sogleich
Minister,
Und hatt einen grossen
Stern.

Da wurden seine
Geschwister
Bei Hof auch grosse
Herrn.

Und Herrn und Frau'n am
Hofe,
Die waren sehr
geplagt,
Die Königin und die Zofe
Gestochen und genagt,
Und durften sie nicht knicken,
Und weg sie jucken
nicht. –
Wir knicken und
ersticken
Doch gleich, wenn einer sticht.

Mephistopheles'
song

There was once a king
who had a large flea,
whom he loved not a little,
just like his own son.
He summoned his tailor,
the tailor appeared:
'Here – make robes for
this knight
and make him breeches
too!'

In silk and satin
the flea was now attired,
with ribbons on his coat,
and a medal too,
and became a minister
straightaway
and wore an enormous
star.
His brother and his
sisters
became grand at court as
well.

And courtly lords and
ladies
were most grievously
plagued,
queen and maid-in-waiting
were bitten and were stung,
yet they were not allowed
to squash or scratch
them away. –
We bow and scrape and
suffocate,
as soon as any bite.

Lied des Unmuts K281
(1919)

Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe

Keinen Reimer wird man
finden,
Der sich nicht den besten
hielte,
Keinen Fiedler, der nicht
lieber
Eigne Melodien spielte.

Und ich konnte sie nicht
tadeln;
Wenn wir andern Ehre geben,
Müssen wir uns selbst
entadeln;
Lebt man denn, wenn andre
leben?

Und so fand ich's denn auch
juste
In gewissen Antichambnern,
Wo man nicht zu sondern
wusste
Mäusedreck von
Koriandern.

Das Gewesne wollte
hassen
Solche rüstige neue Besen,
Diese dann nicht gelten
lassen,
Was sonst Besen war
gewesen.

Und wo sich die Völker
trennen
Gegenseitig im Verachten,
Keins von beiden wird je
bekennen,
Dass sie nach demselben
trachten.

Und das grobe
Selbstempfinden
Haben Leute hart
gescholten,
Die am wenigsten
verwinden,
Wenn die andern was
gegolten.

Song of ill humour

You'll never find a
rhymester
who doesn't think he's
best,
nor fiddler who'd not
rather
play melodies of his own.

And neither could I blame
them;
in honouring others,
we deprive ourselves of
honour;
for are we alive when
others live?

And that's what I've
recently found
in certain ante-chambers,
where no one could
distinguish
mouse droppings from
coriander.

The has-beens were wont
to hate
such vigorous new brooms,
who in turn would not
recognise
those who formerly were
brooms.

And where two nations
separate
in mutually held contempt,
neither will ever
admit
they're striving for the
same goal.

And this vulgar self-
esteem
has been condemned
outright by those
who are slowest to
recover
when others have made
their mark.

Schlechter Trost

K298a (1924)

Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe

Mitternachts weint und
schluchzt ich,
Weil ich dein entbehrte.
Da kamen
Nachtgespenster,
Und ich schämte mich.
„Nachtgespenster“, sagt ich,
„Schluchzend und
weinend
Findet ihr mich, dem ihr
sonst
Schlafendem vorüberzogt.
Grosse Güter vermiss
ich.
Denkt nicht schlimmer von mir,
Den ihr sonst weise nanntet,
Grosses Übel betrifft ihn!“ –
Und die Nachtgespenster
Mit langen Gesichtern
Zogen vorbei,
Ob ich weise oder törrig,
Völlig unbekümmert.

Small comfort

At midnight I wept and
sobbed,
because I was missing you.
Then nocturnal ghosts
appeared,
and I felt ashamed.
'Nocturnal ghosts,' I said,
'You find me sobbing and
weeping,
whom you have always
passed by
and left sleeping.
I pine for great things
dear to me.
Do not think less of me,
whom you once called wise,
great ill afflicts him!' –
And the nocturnal ghosts
with long faces
flitted by,
whether I was wise or foolish
concerned them not at all.

Zigeunerlied K295a

(1923)

Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe

Im Nebelgeriesel, im tiefen
Schnee,
Im wilden Wald, in der
Winternacht,
Ich hörte der Wölfe
Hungergeheul,
Ich hörte der Eulen
Geschrei.
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

Romani song

In drizzle and mist, in
deep snow,
in the wild forest, in the
winter night,
I heard the ravening howl
of the wolves,
I heard the screeching of
the owl:
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

Ich schoss einmal eine Katz
am Zaun,
Der Anne, der Hex, ihre
schwarze liebe Katz.
Da kamen des Nachts sieben
Werwölf zu mir,
Waren sieben sieben Weiber
vom Dorf.
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

I once shot a cat beside
the fence,
Annie the witch's, her
dear black cat.
And at night seven
werewolves came to me,
seven seven women from
the village.
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

Ich kannte sie all, ich kannte
sie wohl,
Die Anne, die Ursel, die Käth,

I knew them all, I knew
them well,
Annie, Ursula, Cath,

Die Liese, die Barbe, die Ev,
die Beth,
Sie heulten im Kreise mich
an.
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

Lizzie, Babs, Eve and
Beth;
they stood in a circle
howling at me.
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

Da nannt ich sie alle bei
Namen laut:
Was willst du, Anne? was
willst du, Beth?
Da rüttelten sie sich, da
schüttelten sie sich,
Und liefen und heulten
davon.
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

And I called them all by
their names out loud:
'What is it, Annie? what is
it, Beth?'
Then they quivered, and
then they shook,
and howling, they ran
away.
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

Wladimir Vogel (1896-1984)

3 Sprechlieder nach August Stramm (1922)

August Stramm

Untreu

Dein Lächeln weint in meiner
Brust
Die glutverbissnen Lippen
eisen
Im Atem wittert
Laubwelk!
Dein Blick
versargt
Und
Hastet polternd Wrote
drauf.
Vergessen
Bröckeln nach die Händel!
Frei
Buhlt dein Kleidsaum
Schlenkrig
Drüber rüber!

Infidelity

Your smile weeps in my
breast
Your lips glowing with grim
ardour turn as cold as iron
Dying foliage hangs on
your breath!
Your gaze gives up the
ghost
And
Blurts out thundering
words.
Forgotten
Your hands then crumble!
Openly
The hem of your dress flirts
Swinging
This way and that!

Verzweifelt

Droben schmettert ein
greller Stein
Nacht grant Glas
Die Zeiten stehn
Ich
Steine.
Weit
Glast
Du!

Despair

A glaring stone blears up
there
Night grains glass
Times freeze
I
Stones.
Distant
You
Peal!

Schwermut

Schreiten Streben
Leben sehnt
Schauern Stehen
Blicke suchen
Sterben wächst
Das Kommen
Schreit!
Tief
Stummen
Wir.

Melancholy

Striding striving
Life yearns
Shivering standing
Looks seek
Dying increases
The coming
Screams!
Deep
Mute
We.

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

From *The Threepenny Opera* (1928)

Bertolt Brecht

Due to copyright, we are unable to reproduce the original text of the two songs below.

Morgenchoral des Peachum

Wake up, you rotten Christian!
Get up and start your sinful life,
show what a crook you are,
then the Lord will provide for you.

Sell your brother, you knave!
Barter your wife, you wretch!
The Lord, is he only air to you?
He'll show you at the Last Judgement.

Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens

Man lives by his head,
but his head isn't enough;
check your own head -
at most a louse could live on it.
For man is not clever enough
for this life.
He never catches on to
all the lies and deceit.

Yes, make yourself a plan,
be a big shot!
And then make a second plan -
they both come to nothing.
For man is not bad enough
for this life:
still, his lofty striving
is a charming trait.

Peachum's morning chorale

Song of the inadequacy of human endeavour

Sure, run after luck -
but don't run too much!
Since everyone runs after luck,
luck runs behind us.
For man is not unassuming enough
for this life
and so all his striving
is just self-deception.

Man is not at all good,
so knock him on his hat;
once you've knocked him on his hat,
maybe then he'll be good.
For man is not good enough
for this life -
so keep on knocking him
gently on his hat.

Interval

Ludwig van Beethoven

Violin Sonata No. 9 in A Op. 47 'Kreutzer' (1802-3)

I. Adagio sostenuto - Presto
II. Andante con variazioni
III. Finale. Presto

Ferruccio Busoni

Violin Sonata No. 2 in E minor Op. 36a (1898-1900)

I. Langsam
II. Presto
III. Andante, piuttosto grave

Translations of Beethoven and Busoni 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. Vogel by Roland Smithers.