

# WIGMORE HALL 125

Friday 9 January 2026  
7.30pm

## An English Song Winterreise

Roderick Williams baritone  
Christopher Glynn piano

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)	The vagabond from <i>Songs of Travel</i> (1901-4)
Roger Quilter (1877-1953)	Blow, blow, thou winter wind Op. 6 No. 3 (1905)
Madeleine Dring (1923-1977)	Weep You No More, Sad Fountains
Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)	At Middle-Field Gate in February from <i>I said to love</i> Op. 19b (1928-56)
Ralph Vaughan Williams	Linden Lea (1901)
Frank Bridge (1879-1941)	Tears, idle tears (1905)
Hubert Parry (1848-1918)	Nightfall in winter (1907)
Ivor Gurney (1890-1937)	On the downs (1916)
Gerald Finzi	In the Mind's Eye from <i>Before and After Summer</i> Op. 16 (c.1932-49)
Ivor Gurney	Lights Out (1918-25)
Ina Boyle (1889-1967)	A Song of Enchantment (1922)
Ivor Gurney	The folly of being comforted (1917)

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Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)	Midnight on the Great Western from <i>Winter Words</i> Op. 52 (1953)
Roderick Williams (b.1965)	The Angel (1980)
Judith Weir (b.1954)	Written on Terrestrial Things from <i>The Voice of Desire</i> (2003)
Gerald Finzi	The too short time from <i>Before and After Summer</i> Op. 16
Michael Tippett (1905-1998)	Come unto these yellow sands from <i>Songs for Ariel</i> (1962)
Elizabeth Maconchy (1907-1994)	The Wind and the Rain from <i>4 Shakespeare Songs</i> (1956-65)
Doreen Carwithen (1922-2003)	Echo (1944)
Ralph Vaughan Williams	Whither must I wander? from <i>Songs of Travel</i>
Gerald Finzi	In a churchyard from <i>Earth and Air and Rain</i> Op. 15 (1928-35)
Humphrey Procter-Gregg (1895-1980)	The Stormy Evening (pub. 1932)
Gerald Finzi	Waiting both from <i>Earth and Air and Rain</i> Op. 15
Errollyn Wallen (b.1958)	Peace on Earth (2006)

### **An English Song Exploration of Schubert's *Winterreise***

For many years of my recital career, I managed to dodge what many would describe as the greatest, most iconic art song cycle of them all; Schubert's *Winterreise*. Perhaps I was intimidated by its reputation, its status as the pinnacle of song-writing achievement. While the greatest Lieder recitalists of the past and present seemed happy to add to the mountain of recordings, I focused on other repertoire, especially English song.

Eventually I was challenged to rectify this omission and I set about the task of learning and absorbing the cycle into my repertoire; I gave myself a full year to achieve this. One way I thought to explore the piece at the beginning of my journey was to equate each of the originals with an English song I already knew. It would be an exercise in association, and the connection could be on any level – it could be through mood, through key or tempo relationship, a simple reference in the text, a turn of phrase. I wanted to build myself a parallel song recital that would help me to embed the original as I began my preparations.

Now that I have performed *Winterreise* many times (both in its original German and also in Jeremy Sams's extraordinary English singing translation) I feel much more at ease with the cycle and its reputation. It gives me great pleasure to return to this English song programme and re-examine it in hindsight, swapping in songs that I now feel might be more appropriate, and some English repertoire I have encountered since.

Here is the result: some connections are easy to spot: when I sing the opening song, *Gute Nacht*, it is transposed into C minor, the same key as Vaughan Williams's 'The Vagabond', and they both share the same sense of trudging in the piano part. Similarly RVW's *Linden Lea* has an obvious reference to *Der Lindenbaum*, even if the moods of the songs are quite different. Other cross-references might be more subtle. Of course different companion songs will occur to different people; building one's own playlist of 24 songs could become the new parlour game. Here I present my current list.

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## Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

### The vagabond from *Songs of Travel* (1901-4)

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

Give to me the life I love,  
Let the lave go by me,  
Give the jolly heaven above,  
And the byway nigh me.  
Bed in the bush with stars to see,  
Bread I dip in the river -  
There's the life for a man like me,  
There's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o'er me;  
Give the face of earth around,  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me;  
All I seek, the heaven above,  
And the road below me.

Or let autumn fall on me  
Where afield I linger,  
Silencing the bird on tree,  
Biting the blue finger.  
White as meal the frosty field—  
Warm the fireside haven—  
Not to autumn will I yield,  
Not to winter even!

Let the blow fall soon or late...

## Roger Quilter (1877-1953)

### Blow, blow, thou winter wind Op. 6 No. 3 (1905)

*William Shakespeare*

Blow, blow thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude;  
Thy tooth is not so keen  
Although thou art not seen,  
Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho!  
Unto the green holly:  
Most friendship is feigning,  
Most loving mere folly:  
Then, heigh ho! the holly!  
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze thou bitter sky,  
Thou dost not bite so nigh  
As benefits forgot:  
Though thou the waters warp,  
Thy sting is not so sharp  
As friend remember'd not.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho!  
Unto the green holly:  
Most friendship is feigning,  
Most loving mere folly  
Then, heigh ho! the holly!  
This life is most jolly.

## Madeleine Dring (1923-1977)

### Weep You No More, Sad Fountains

*Anonymous*

Weep you no more, sad fountains;  
What need you flow so fast?  
Look how the snowy mountains  
Heaven's sun doth gently waste!  
But my Sun's heavenly eyes  
View not your weeping,  
That now lies sleeping,  
Softly now, softly lies  
Sleeping.

Sleep is a reconciling,  
A rest that peace begets;  
Doth not the sun rise smiling  
When fair at even he sets?  
Rest you, then, rest, sad eyes!  
Melt not in weeping,  
While she lies sleeping,  
Softly now, softly lies  
Sleeping.

## Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

### At Middle-Field Gate in February from *I said to love* Op. 19b (1928-56)

*Thomas Hardy*

The bars are thick with drops that show  
As they gather themselves from the fog  
Like silver buttons ranged in a row,  
And as evenly spaced as if measured, although  
They fall at the feeblest jog.

They load the leafless hedge hard by,  
And the blades of last year's grass,  
While the fallow ploughland turned up nigh  
In raw rolls clammy and clogging lie—  
Too clogging for feet to pass.

How dry it was on a far-back day  
When straws hung the hedge and around,  
When amid the sheaves in amorous play  
In curtained bonnets and light array  
Bloomed a bevy now underground!

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

## Ralph Vaughan Williams

### Linden Lea (1901)

*William Barnes*

Within the woodlands, flow'ry gladed,  
By the oak trees' mossy moot,  
The shining grass blades, timber-shaded,  
Now do quiver underfoot;  
And birds do whistle overhead,  
And water's bubbling in its bed;  
And there, for me, the apple tree  
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

When leaves, that lately were a-springing,  
Now do fade within the copse,  
And painted birds do hush their singing,  
Up upon the timber tops;  
And brown-leaved fruit's a-turning red,  
In cloudless sunshine overhead,  
With fruit for me, the apple tree  
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

Let other folk make money faster  
In the air of dark-room'd towns;  
I don't dread a peevish master,  
Though no man may heed my frowns.  
I be free to go abroad,  
Or take again my homeward road  
To where, for me, the apple tree  
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

## Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

### Tears, idle tears (1905)

*Alfred Tennyson*

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
Sad as the last which reddens over one  
That sinks with all we love below the verge;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remembered kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

## Hubert Parry (1848-1918)

### Nightfall in winter (1907)

*Langdon Elwyn Mitchell*

Cold is the air,  
The woods are bare  
And brown; the herd  
Stand in the yard.  
The frost doth fall;  
And round the hill  
The hares move slow;  
The homeward crow,  
Alone and high,  
Crosses the sky  
All silently.  
The quick streams freeze;  
The moving trees  
Are still; for now  
No breeze will blow:  
The wind has gone  
With the day, down,  
And clouds are come  
Bearing the gloom.  
The yellow grass  
In the clear glass  
Of the bright pool  
Grows soft and dull.  
The water's eye  
That held the sky  
Now glazes quite;  
And now the light  
On the cold hill  
Fadeth, until  
The giant mass  
Doth seem to pass  
From near to far;  
The clouds obscure  
The sky with gloom:  
The night is come,  
The night is come.

## Ivor Gurney (1890-1937)

### On the downs (1916)

*John Masefield*

Up on the downs the red-eyed kestrels hover,  
Eyeing the grass,  
The field-mouse flits like a shadow into cover  
As their shadows pass.

Men are burning the gorse on the down's shoulder;  
A drift of smoke  
Glitters with fire and hangs, and the skies smoulder,  
And the lungs choke.

Once the tribe did thus on the downs, on these downs  
burning  
Men in the frame,  
Crying to the gods of the downs till their brains were  
turning  
And the gods came.

And today on the downs, in the wind, the hawks, the  
grasses,  
In blood and air,  
Something passes me and cries as it passes,  
On the chalk downland bare.

## Gerald Finzi

### In the Mind's Eye from *Before and After Summer Op. 16* (c.1932-49)

*Thomas Hardy*

That was once her casement,  
And the taper nigh,  
Shining from within there,  
Beckoned, 'Here am I!'

Now, as then, I see her  
Moving at the pane;  
Ah; 'tis but her phantom  
Borne within my brain!—

Foremost in my vision  
Everywhere goes she;  
Change dissolves the landscapes,  
She abides with me.

Shape so sweet and shy, Dear,  
Who can say thee nay?  
Never once do I, Dear,  
Wish thy ghost away.

## Ivor Gurney

### Lights out (1918-25)

*Edward Thomas*

I have come to the borders of sleep,  
The unfathomable deep  
Forest where all must lose  
Their way, however straight  
Or winding, soon or late;  
They can not choose.

Here love ends –  
Despair, ambition ends;  
All pleasure and all trouble,  
Although most sweet or bitter,  
Here ends, in sleep that is sweeter  
Than tasks most noble.

There is not any book  
Or face of dearest look  
That I would not turn from now  
To go into the unknown  
I must enter, and leave, alone,  
I know not how.

## Ina Boyle (1889-1967)

### A Song of Enchantment (1922)

*Walter De la Mare*

A Song of Enchantment I sang me there,  
In a green-green wood, by waters fair,  
Just as the words came up to me  
I sang it under the wild wood tree.

Widdershins turned I, singing it low,  
Watching the wild birds come and go;  
No cloud in the deep dark blue to be seen  
Under the thick-thatched branches green.

Twilight came; silence came;  
The planet of Evening's silver flame;  
By darkening paths I wandered through  
Thickets trembling with drops of dew.

But the music is lost and the words are gone  
Of the song I sang as I sat alone,  
Ages and ages have fallen on me -  
On the wood and the pool and the elder tree.

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

## Ivor Gurney

### The folly of being comforted (1917)

WB Yeats

One that is ever kind said yesterday:  
'Your well-beloved's hair has threads of grey,  
And little shadows come about her eyes;  
Time can but make it easier to be wise,  
Though now it's hard, till trouble is at an end;  
And so be patient, be wise and patient, friend.'

But, heart, there is no comfort, not a grain;  
Time can but make her beauty over again,  
Because of that great nobleness of hers;  
The fire that stirs about her, when she stirs,  
Burns but more clearly. O she had not these ways,  
When all the wild summer was in her gaze.

O heart! O heart! If she'd but turn her head,  
You'd know the folly of being comforted.

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## Interval

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## Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

### Midnight on the Great Western from *Winter Words* Op. 52 (1953)

Thomas Hardy

In the third-class seat sat the journeying boy,  
And the roof-lamp's oily flame  
Played down on his listless form and face,  
Bewrapt past knowing to what he was going,  
Or whence he came.

In the band of his hat the journeying boy  
Had a ticket stuck; and a string  
Around his neck bore the key of his box,  
That twinkled gleams of the lamp's sad beams  
Like a living thing.

What past can be yours, O journeying boy  
Towards a world unknown,  
Who calmly, as if incurious quite  
On all at stake, can undertake  
This plunge alone?

Knows your soul a sphere, O journeying boy,  
Our rude realms far above,  
Whence with spacious vision you mark and mete  
This region of sin that you find you in,  
But are not of?

## Roderick Williams (b.1965)

### The Angel (1980)

William Blake

I dreamt a dream! What can it mean?  
And that I was a maiden Queen  
Guarded by an Angel mild:  
Witless woe was ne'er beguiled!

And I wept both night and day,  
And he wiped my tears away;  
And I wept both day and night,  
And hid from him my heart's delight.

So he took his wings, and fled;  
Then the morn blushed rosy red.  
I dried my tears, and armed my fears  
With ten thousand shields and spears.

Soon my Angel came again;  
I was armed, he came in vain;  
For the time of youth was fled,  
And grey hairs were on my head.

## Judith Weir (b.1954)

### Written on Terrestrial Things from *The Voice of Desire* (2003)

Thomas Hardy

I leant upon a coppice gate  
When Frost was spectre-gray,  
And Winter's dregs made desolate  
The weakening eye of day.  
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
Like strings of broken lyres,  
And all mankind that haunted nigh  
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be  
The Century's corpse outleant,  
His crypt the cloudy canopy,  
The wind his death-lament.  
The wind his death-lament.  
Was shrunken hard and dry,  
And every spirit upon earth  
And every spirit upon earth

At once a voice arose among  
The bleak twigs overhead,  
In a full-hearted evensong  
Of joy illimited;  
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,  
In blast-beruffled plume,  
Had chosen thus to fling his soul  
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings  
Of such ecstatic sound  
Was written on terrestrial things  
Afar or nigh around,  
That I could think there trembled through  
His happy goodnight air  
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew  
And I was unaware.

## Gerald Finzi

### The too short time from *Before and After Summer* Op. 16

*Thomas Hardy*

Nine leaves a minute  
Swim down shakily;  
Each one fain would spin it  
Straight to earth; but, see,  
How the sharp airs win it  
Slantwise away!—Here it say,  
‘Now we have finished our summer show  
Of what we knew the way to do:  
Alas, not much! But, as things go,  
As fair as any. And night-time calls,  
And the curtain falls!’

Sunlight goes on shining  
As if no frost were here,  
Blackbirds seem designing  
Where to build next year;  
Yet is warmth declining:  
And still the day seems to say,  
‘Saw you how Dame Summer drest?  
Of all God taught her she bethought her!  
Alas, not much! And yet the best  
She could, within the too short time  
Granted her prime.’

## Michael Tippett (1905-1998)

### Come unto these yellow sands from *Songs for Ariel* (1962)

*William Shakespeare*

Come unto these yellow sands,  
And then take hands:  
Courtsied when you have and kiss’d  
The wild waves whist,  
Foot it featly here and there;  
And, sweet sprites, the burthen bear.  
Hark, hark!  
The watch-dogs bark!  
Hark, hark! I hear  
The strain of strutting chanticleer  
Cry, Cock-a-diddle-dow.

## Elizabeth Maconchy (1907-1994)

### The Wind and the Rain from *4 Shakespeare Songs* (1956-65)

*William Shakespeare*

When that I was and a little tiny boy,  
With hey, ho, hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
A foolish thing was but a toy,  
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came to man’s estate,  
With hey, ho, hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
‘Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate,  
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I come, alas! to wive,  
With hey, ho, hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
By swaggering could I never thrive,  
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came unto my beds,  
With hey, ho, hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
With toss-pots still had drunken heads,  
For the rain it raineth every day.

A great while ago the world begun,  
With hey, ho, hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
But that’s all one, our play is done,  
And we’ll strive to please you every day.

## Doreen Carwithen (1922-2003)

### Echo (1944)

*Walter De la Mare*

Seven sweet notes  
In the moonlight pale  
Warbled a leaf-hidden  
Nightingale:  
And Echo hiding  
By an old green wall  
Under the willows  
Sighed back them all.

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

## Ralph Vaughan Williams

### Whither must I wander? from *Songs of Travel*

Robert Louis Stevenson

Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?  
Hunger my driver, I go where I must.  
Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather:  
Thick drives the rain and my roof is in the dust.

Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree,  
The true word of welcome was spoken in the door -  
Dear days of old with the faces in the firelight,  
Kind folks of old, you come again no more.

Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,  
Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.  
Fire and the windows bright glittered on the moorland;  
Song, tuneful song, built a palace in the wild.

Now when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,  
Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is cold.  
Lone let it stand, now the friends are all departed,  
The kind hearts, the true hearts, that loved the place of  
old.

Spring shall come, come again, calling up the moorfowl,  
Spring shall bring the sun and rain, bring the bees and  
flowers;  
Red shall the heather bloom over hill and valley,  
Soft flow the stream through the even-flowing hours.

Fair the day shine as it shone on my childhood -  
Fair shine the day on the house with open door;  
Birds come and cry there and twitter in the chimney -  
But I go for ever and come again no more.

## Gerald Finzi

### In a churchyard from *Earth and Air and Rain* Op. 15 (1928-35)

Thomas Hardy

'It is sad that so many of worth,  
Still in the flesh,' sighed the yew,  
'Misjudge their lot whom kindly earth  
Secludes from view.  
'They ride their diurnal round  
Each day-span's sum of hours  
In peerless ease, without jolt or bound  
Or ache like ours.

'If the living could but hear  
What is heard by my roots as they creep  
Round the restful flock, and the things said there,  
No one would weep.'

"Now set among the wise,"  
They say: "Enlarged in scope,  
That no God trumpet us to rise  
We truly hope."

I listened to his strange tale  
In the mood that stillness brings,  
And I grew to accept as the day wore pale  
That view of things.

## Humphrey Procter-Gregg (1895-1980)

### The Stormy Evening (pub. 1932)

Robert Louis Stevenson

The stormy evening closes now in vain,  
Loud wails the wind and beats the driving rain,  
While here in sheltered house  
With firey-painted walls,  
I hear the wind abroad,  
I hark the calling squalls -  
'Blow, blow,' I cry, 'you burst your cheeks in vain!  
Blow, blow,' I cry, 'my love is home again!'

Yon ship you chase perchance but yesternight  
Bore still the precious freight of my delight,  
That here in sheltered house  
With firey-painted walls,  
Now hears the wind abroad,  
Now harks the calling squalls.  
'Blow, blow,' I cry, 'in vain you rouse the sea,  
My rescued sailor shares the fire with me!'

## Gerald Finzi

### Waiting both from *Earth and Air and Rain* Op. 15

Thomas Hardy

A star looks down at me,  
And says: 'Here I and you  
Stand, each in our degree:  
What do you mean to do,—  
Mean to do?'

I say: 'For all I know,  
Wait, and let Time go by,  
Till my change come.'—'Just so,'  
The star says: 'So mean I:—  
So mean I.'



## Errollyn Wallen (b.1958)

### Peace on Earth (2006)

*Errollyn Wallen*

And snow falls down on me.  
Peace on earth.  
The night is dark and soft.  
Peace on earth.  
The lights that sparkle in the square,  
The smoke that lingers in the air.  
Peace on earth.

And grace falls down on me.  
Peace on earth.  
The dark will turn aside.  
Peace on earth.  
The fires that burn in every hearth  
Do sing our praise of Christmas past.  
Peace on earth.

Hear them singing.

Peace on earth.

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