WIGMORE HALL

Monday 16 November 2026
1.00pm

Notes of Old

Helen Charlston mezzo-soprano
Sholto Kynoch piano

Federico Mompou (1893-1987)	… pour évoquer l'image du passé from *Charmes* (1920-1)
Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)	Nèère from *Etudes latines* (1900)
Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)	Sì dolce è'l tormento SV332 (pub. 1624)
Reynaldo Hahn	Tyndaris from *Etudes latines*
Pauline Viardot (1821-1910)	Céra una volta from *Canti popolari toscani* (?1878)
Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979)	Chanson (Elle a vendu mon cœur) (1922)
Robert Schumann (1810-1856)	Stirb, Lieb' und Freud'! from *Kerner Lieder* Op. 35 (1840)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)	Widerstehe doch der Sünde from *Widerstehe doch der Sünde* BWV54 (1714)
Franz Schubert (1797-1828)	Wiedersehn D855 (1825)
Johann Sebastian Bach	*Sonatina* from *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit* BWV106 (1707-8) *arranged by György Kurtág*
Anna Semple (b.1997)	I am not yours (2020)
Franz Schubert	Die Mutter Erde D788 (1823)
Reynaldo Hahn	A Chloris (1916)
Pauline Viardot	Canción de la Infanta (pub. 1886)
Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)	Ballade de la reine morte d'aimer (c.1893)
Federico Mompou	… pour appeler la joie from *Charmes*
Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704)	Sans frayeur dans ce bois H467 (pub. 1680)

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Federico Mompou's *Charmes* is a set of six piano pieces, each in the form of a spell. '… pour évoquer l'image du passé' is a spell to evoke an image from the past – a perfect start for this 'Notes of Old' programme. Mompou was a Catalan composer who spent a lot of time in France, first as a student in 1911-4, and then for two decades from 1921, when these pieces were written, until the Nazi occupation. **Reynaldo Hahn**'s *Etudes latines* are settings of ten poems from Leconte de Lisle's *Poèmes antiques*. 'Néère' is an idealised but elusive beauty, who the poet claims Dionysus (Bacchus), son of Zeus and Semele, (the 'Theban Virgin') has 'commanded' him to love. This song is dedicated to Federico de Madrazo y Ochoa, a Spanish painter, who like Mompou, spent time in Paris, where, with Jean Cocteau, he wrote the storyline for Hahn's ballet *Le Dieu Bleu*.

We go back in time to some real 'Notes of Old' with **Monteverdi**'s *Si dolce è'l tormento*, published in 1624 for voice, accordion, cornet, horn, trombone and theorbo, before returning to **Hahn**'s *Etudes latines* with 'Tyndaris', an evocation of the peaceful countryside of Roman times. Tyndaris was an important Roman town on the northern coast of Sicily, named after the Spartan king who was the father of the Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux). 'Tyndaris' is dedicated to the Comtesse de Guerne, an amateur soprano whose salon in Paris was frequented by both Hahn and his then boyfriend Marcel Proust.

Pauline Viardot's 'Céra una volta' (Once upon a time) from her *Canti popolari toscani*, written in 1879, tells of a love affair that has ended. The text was adapted by Louis Pomey, a long-time collaborator and friend of Viardot, who provided texts, adaptations and translations for 64 of her songs. *Elle a vendu mon cœur* (which is subtitled 'populaire') is one of **Nadia Boulanger**'s final group of songs, written in 1922, when she devoted her life to teaching. This again tells of a former love – 'she has sold my heart for a song … and now my heart sings'. The poem was written in 1904 by Séverin Faust, writing as Camille Mauclair, who, at the time, was a left-wing figure in France, a supporter of Dreyfus and women's rights.

'Stirb, Lieb' und Freud'!' is from **Robert Schumann**'s *Kerner Lieder*, the first set of songs that he wrote after his marriage to Clara in 1840. Perhaps surprisingly in this context, he chose a text that speaks of the beloved one choosing the life of a nun, marrying God rather than the man who loves her. This is followed by the first aria from **JS Bach**'s cantata *Widerstehe doch der Sünde* (Stand firm against all sinning), written soon after he started working as Konzertmeister for the Duke of Weimar in 1714, where his duties included writing a church cantata every month.

Schubert's *Wiedersehn*, written in September 1825 while he was on holiday in Upper Austria, is a call for the joys of earthly, rather than heavenly, love, but we return to the joys of heavenly love with an arrangement of the opening chorus from another **Bach** cantata, *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit*. The manuscript of this is lost, so its date is uncertain, but it may have been written for a funeral while Bach, aged 22, was working as organist at the Divi-Blasii-Kirche (St Blaise's church) at Mühlhausen in 1707-8. If this is correct, this is one of the earliest extant Bach cantatas.

Anna Semple wrote *I am not yours* in 2020 on the subject of Mother Nature hitting back against human exploitation, and **Schubert**'s *Die Mutter Erde*, written in April 1823, tells of Mother Earth embracing us all after we die. Schubert had been diagnosed with syphilis, which was then incurable, the previous summer.

We return to **Reynaldo Hahn** with *A Chloris*, an evocation of courtly life in 17th-century France. The name Chloris comes from the Greek word for 'pale'. In one Greek myth, Chloris is a nymph who was abducted by Zephyrus, the God of the west wind, who transformed her into Flora, Goddess of youth. In another myth, Chloris is one of the Niobids, children of Amphion and his wife Niobe, who were killed by the twin Gods Apollo and Artemis after Niobe had bragged to Leto, the mother of Apollo and Artemis, that she (Niobe) had 14 children while Leto had only two. Chloris was the only Niobid to survive this massacre, and she turned permanently pale with the horror of what she had witnessed. So, the Chloris addressed in this song is either young (after the first myth) or very pale (after the second myth), reflecting the time when pale-skinned women were much prized. We return to **Pauline Viardot** with 'Canción de la Infanta', another evocation of the past – this is from her *Six Chansons du XVe siècle*. **Ravel**'s *Ballade de la reine morte d'aimer* is his first song, written when he was just 18. This too is an evocation of a distant age of chivalry, when queens died of love. This song remained unpublished until 1975, 38 years after Ravel's death.

We return to **Mompou**'s *Charmes* with a spell '… pour appeler la joie' to bring some much-needed joy after two songs of courtly gloom. The programme ends with **Charpentier**'s *Sans frayeur dans ce bois*, published in 1680. The name Thyrsis originated in Virgil's seventh *Eclogue*, in which he is a shepherd who loses a singing competition to Corydon. Thyrsis then appeared in a lot of Greek and later literature, as an idealised shepherd enjoying the rustic life. There can be no better way to evoke an idyllic time from a mythical past than with an idealised shepherd…

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Federico Mompou (1893-1987)

... pour évoquer l'image du passé from *Charmes* (1920-1)

Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)

Néère from *Etudes latines* (1900)

Leconte de Lisle

Neaera

Il me faut retourner aux anciennes amours:
L'Immortel qui naquit de la Vierge Thébaine,
Et les Jeunes Désirs et leur Mère inhumaine
Me commandent d'aimer toujours.

I must return to the loves of old:
the Immortal One, born of the Theban Virgin,
and youthful Desires and their cruel Mother
command me to love anew.

Blanche comme un beau marbre, avec ses roses joues,
Je brûle pour Néère aux yeux pleins de langueur;
Venus se précipite et consume mon cœur:
Tu ris, ô Néère, et te joues!

White as beautiful marble, with her pink cheeks,
it is Neaera I burn for with her languishing look;
Venus rushes up and consumes my heart:
you laugh, O Neaera, and frolic!

Pour appaiser les Dieux et pour finir mes maux,
D'un vin mûri deux ans versez vos coupes pleines;
Et sur l'autel rougi du sang pur des agneaux
Posez l'encens et les verveines.

To appease the gods and end my woes,
fill your goblets with two-year-old wine;
and on the altar, stained with lambs' pure blood,
set the incense and verbena.

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Sì dolce è'l tormento SV332 (pub. 1624)

Anonymous

So sweet is the pain

Sì dolce è'l tormento
Ch'in seno mi sta
Ch'io vivo contento
Per cruda beltà.
Nel ciel di bellezza
S'accreschi fierezza
Et manchi pietà,
Che sempre qual scoglio
All'onda d'orgoglio
Mia fede sarà.

So sweet is the pain
I feel in my heart
that I am happy to live for
one who is heartless but lovely.
In the heaven of beauty
let cruelty flourish
and mercy fail,
for my loyalty will,
like a rock, withstand
a torrent of pride.

La speme fallace
Rivolgam' il piè,
Diletto ne pace
Non scendano a me,
E l'empia ch'adoro
Mi nieghi ristoro
Di buona mercè:
Tra doglia infinita
Tra speme tradita
Vivrà la mia fè.

Let illusory hope
turn its back on me,
let me be filled with
neither joy nor peace.
And let the pitiless object of my love
refuse me the solace
of gentle mercy:
amid endless sorrow,
amid hope betrayed,
my fidelity will live on.

(Per foco e per gelo
Riposo non ho
Nel porto del Cielo
Riposo haverò...
Se colpo mortale
Con rigido strale
Il cor m'impiagò
Cangiando mia sorte
Col dardo di morte
Il cor sanerò...)

(From fire and ice
I will find no repose;
only at the gate of Heaven
shall I find repose...
should the deadly strike
of an arrow
injure my heart,
my heart shall heal
by changing my lot
with that arrow of death...)

Se fiamma d'amore
Già mai non sentì
Quel rigido core
Ch'il cor mi rapì,
Se nega pietate
La cruda beltate
Che l'alma invaghì:
Ben fia che dolente
Pentita e languente
Sospirami un dì.

If the flame of love
has never warmed
the unfeeling heart
that has stolen mine from me,
if the cruel beauty
who has bewitched my soul
denies me any pity,
then let her one day,
repentant and languishing,
suffer and yearn for me.

Reynaldo Hahn

Tyndaris from *Etudes latines*

Leconte de Lisle

Tyndaris

O blanche Tyndaris, les Dieux me sont amis:
Ils aiment les Muses Latines;
Et l'aneth, et le myrte et le thym des collines
Croissent aux prés qu'ils m'ont soumis.

O white Tyndaris, the Gods are friends to me:
they love the Latin Muses;
and dill and myrtle and thyme from the hills
thrive in the meadows they gave me.

Viens! mes ramiers chéris, aux voluptés plaintives,
Ici se plaisent à gémir;
Et sous l'épais feuillage il est doux de dormir
Au bruit des sources fugitives.

Come! My beloved ring-doves, delighting in grief,
here are pleased to moan;
and beneath dense leaves it is sweet to sleep
to the sound of running springs.

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

Pauline Viardot (1821-1910)

Céra una volta from *Canti popolari toscani* (?1878)

Traditional

Once upon a time

C'era una volta che con voi parlava,
Ora non son più degna di vedervi;
Allor, se per la via, v'incontrava,
Bassava gl'occhi, e il cor si rallegrava.
Adesso che son priva dell'amore,
Abbasso gli occhi, e convien ch'io mora,
Adesso che son priva del mio bene,
Abbasso gl'occhi, e morir mi conviene!

Once upon a time I would speak with you,
but now I'm no longer worthy to see you;
in those days, if I met you in the street,
I would lower my gaze, and my heart would leap with joy.
Now that love's no longer mine,
I lower my gaze, and wish I could die,
now that my sweetheart's no longer mine,
I lower my gaze, and wish I could die!

Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979)

Chanson (Elle a vendu mon cœur) (1922)

Séverin Faust

Song 'She has sold my heart'

Elle a vendu mon cœur
Pour une chanson:
Vends mon cœur à la place,
Ô colporteur,
À la place de la chanson.

She has sold my heart
for a song:
sell my heart instead,
O peddler,
instead of the song.

Tes chansons étaient blanches,
La mienne est couleur de sang;
Elle a vendu mon cœur,
Ô colporteur,
Elle a vendu mon cœur
En s'amusant.
Et maintenant chante mon cœur
Sur les places,
Aux carrefours,
Tu feras pleurer, colporteur,
En racontant mon grand amour,

Your songs were white,
mine is the colour of blood;
she has sold my heart,
O peddler,
she has sold my heart
for fun.
And now my heart sings
on the squares,
at the crossroads;
you will make people weep, o peddler,
as you recount my great love,

Pendant qu'elle fera rire
Les gens à sa noce venus
En chantant la chanson pour rire,
Pour qui elle a mon cœur vendu.

While she will make people laugh
who come to her wedding,
by singing a song of laughter,
for which she has sold my heart.

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Stirb, Lieb und Freud'! from *Kerner Lieder* Op. 35 (1840)

Justinus Kerner

Die, love and joy!

Zu Augsburg steht ein hohes Haus,
Nah' bei dem alten Dom,
Da tritt am hellen Morgen aus
Ein Mägdelein gar fromm;
Gesang erschallt,
Zum Dome wallt
Die liebe Gestalt.

In Augsburg stands a lofty house
nearby the old cathedral,
from where, one bright morning,
a devout young girl steps out;
hymns resound,
the lovely figure
walks to the cathedral.

Dort vor Marias heilig Bild
Sie betend niederkniet,
Der Himmel hat ihr Herz erfüllt,
Und alle Weltlust flieht:
„O Jungfrau rein!
Lass mich allein
Dein eigen sein!"

There before the Virgin Mary
she kneels down in prayer,
heaven has pervaded her heart
and all worldly pleasures flee:
'O Virgin pure!
Let me be
yours alone!'

Alsbald der Glocken dumpfer Klang
Die Betenden erweckt,
Das Mägdlein wallt die Hall' entlang,
Es weiss nicht, was es trägt;
Am Haupte, ganz
Von Himmelsglanz,
Einen Lilienkranz.

As soon as the sound of muffled bells
summons the worshippers,
the young girl walks down the nave,
not knowing what she wears;
upon her head
a heavenly bright
lily crown.

Mit Staunen schauen all die Leut'
Dies Kränzlein licht im Haar,
Das Mägdlein aber wallt nicht weit,
Tritt vor den Hochaltar:
„Zur Nonne weiht
Mich arme Maid!
Stirb, Lieb' und Freud'!"

All the people gaze in wonder
at her halo of bright flowers,
the young girl though only moves
as far as the high altar:
'Take me, poor maid,
to be a nun!
Die, love and joy!

Gott gib, dass dieses Mägdlein
Ihr Kränzlein friedlich trag'!
Es ist die Herzallerliebste mein,
Bleibt's bis zum jüngsten Tag.
Sie weiss es nicht. –
Mein Herz zerbricht –
Stirb, Lieb' und Licht!

God grant that this young girl
might wear her crown in peace!
She is my own true love
and shall be till Judgment Day.
She does not know. –
My heart is breaking –
Die, love and light!

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Widerstehe doch der Sünde from *Widerstehe doch der Sünde* BWV54 (1714)

Georg Christian Lehms (1714)

Aria
Widerstehe doch der Sünde,
Sonst ergreifet dich ihr Gift.

Stand firm against all sinning

Aria
Stand firm against all sinning,
Or its poison will possess you.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Wiedersehn D855 (1825)

August Wilhelm Schlegel

Der Frühlingssonne holdes Lächeln
Ist meiner Hoffnung Morgenrot;
Mir flüstert in des Westes Fächeln
Der Freude leises Aufgebot.
Ich komm', und über Tal und Hügel,
O süsse Wonnegeberin,
Schweb, auf des Liedes raschem Flügel,
Der Gruss der Liebe zu dir hin.

Der Gruss der Liebe von dem Treuen,
Der ohne Gegenliebe schwur,
Dir ewig Huldigung zu weihen
Wie der allwaltenden Natur;
Der stets, wie nach dem Angelsterne
Der Schiffer, einsam blickt und lauscht,
Ob nicht zu ihm in Nacht und Ferne
Des Sternes Klang hernieder rauscht.

Reunion

The sweet smile of the spring sun
is the dawn of my hope;
in the stirring of the west wind
I hear joy's softly whispered call.
I am coming! And over hill and dale,
sweet bestower of delight,
love sails to greet you
on swift wings of song.

It is love's greeting from one who is devoted,
who, without ritual, swore
to pay eternal homage to you
and to all-powerful nature;
who forever watches and listens alone,
like the sailor for the pole star,
for the sound of that star to come down to him
through the remote expanses of the night.

Johann Sebastian Bach

Sonatina from *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit* BWV106 (1707-8)

arranged by György Kurtág

Anna Semple (b.1997)

I am not yours (2020)

Susannah Pearse

Your mistake was to think I was here for you.
You minimised me,
Quantified the force of every storm,
As if I were yours to hold back,
To measure and contain
But you could not stop me however much you tried.

I have tried many times to enlighten you.
But you fetishised me.
Salivated over every curve, every crevice,
As if I were yours to plunder,
To master and survey.
You could not see me except through your own eyes.

You do not control me.
But you have aged me too soon.
I am
Magnificent weather
Winters that destroy
Summers that burn
All when I choose
When I choose.
Not bidden by you.

I can be gentle.
I can still placate.
But for how long, but for how long?

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

Franz Schubert

Die Mutter Erde D788 (1823)

Friedrich Leopold, Graf zu Stolberg-Stolberg

Des Lebens Tag ist schwer und schwühl,	Life's day is heavy and sultry,
Des Todes Atem leicht und kühl,	the breath of death is light and cool;
Er wehet freundlich uns hinab	fondly it wafts us down,
Wie welkes Laub ins stille Grab.	like withered leaves, into the silent grave.
Es scheint der Mond, es fällt der Tau	The moon shines, the dew falls
Auf's Grab wie auf die Blumenau;	on the grave as on the flowery meadow;
Auch fällt der Freunde Trän hinein	the tears of friends also fall,
Erhellt von sanfter Hoffnung Schein.	lit by the gleam of gentle hope.
Uns sammelt alle, klein und gross,	Mother Earth gathers us all, great and small,
Die Mutter Erd' in ihren Schoss;	in her lap;
O sähn wir ihr ins Angesicht,	if we would only look upon her face
Wir scheuten ihren Busen nicht!	we should not fear her bosom.

Reynaldo Hahn

A Chloris (1916)

Théophile de Viau

S'il est vrai, Chloris, que tu m'aimes,	If it be true, Chloris, that you love me,
Mais j'entends, que tu m'aimes bien,	(and I'm told you love me dearly),
Je ne crois pas que les rois mêmes	I do not believe that even kings
Aient un bonheur pareil au mien.	can match the happiness I know.
Que la mort serait importune	Even death would be powerless
A venir changer ma fortune	to alter my fortune
Pour la félicité des cieux!	with the promise of heavenly bliss!
Tout ce qu'on dit de l'ambroisie	All that they say of ambrosia
Ne touche point ma fantaisie	does not stir my imagination
Au prix des grâces de tes yeux.	like the favour of your eyes!

Pauline Viardot

Canción de la Infanta (pub. 1886)

Anonymous

Hablando estaba la reina	The queen was speaking
En su palacio real	in her Royal Palace.
Con la infanta de Castilla,	With the Infanta of Castile,
Princesa de Portugal.	the Princess of Portugal.
Ay! que malas penas!	Oh! What terrible pain!
Ay! que fuerte mal!	Oh! What awful woe!
Allí vino un caballero	There came a knight
Con grandes lloros llorar:	with great tears in his eyes:
– Nuevas te traigo, señora,	'News I bring you, my lady,
Dolorosas de contar. –	so painful to tell'
Ay! que malas penas!	Oh! What terrible pain!
Ay! que fuerte mal!	Oh! What awful woe!
– Ay, no son de reyno estraño,	'Oh, it is not from a far off kingdom,
De aquí son, de Portugal.	it's from here, from Portugal.
Vuestro príncipe, señora,	Your prince, my lady,
Vuestro príncipe real. –	your royal prince.'
Ay! que malas penas!	Oh! What terrible pain!
Ay! que fuerte mal!	Oh! What awful woe!
– Es caído de un caballo,	'He has fallen from a horse,
El alma quiere a Dios dar.	he wants to give his soul to God.
Si le queredes ver vivo,	If you want to see him alive,
No queredes detardar. –	you must not delay.'
Ay! que malas penas!	Oh! What terrible pain!
Ay! que fuerte mal!	Oh! What awful woe!
Allí está el Rey su padre,	There is the King, his father,
Que quiere desesperar.	who is in despair.
Lloran todas las mujeres	All the women are crying,
Casadas y por casar.	both the married and the unmarried.
Ay! que malas penas!	Oh! What terrible pain!
Ay! que fuerte mal!	Oh! What awful woe!

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Ballade de la reine morte d'aimer (c.1893)

Ballad of the Queen who died of love

En Bohême était une Reine,
Douce sœur du Roi de Thulé,
Belle entre toutes les Reines,
Reine par sa toute Beauté.

In Bohemia there lived a Queen,
the King of Thule's gentle sister,
there was never a Queen more beautiful,
she reigned through beauty alone.

Le grand Trouvère de Bohême
Un soir triste d'automne roux
Lui murmura le vieux: 'Je t'aime'!
Âmes folles et cœurs si fous! ...

The great Troubadour of Bohemia,
one sad russet autumn evening,
murmured: 'I love you', that old refrain!
Crazed souls and such crazed hearts!...

Et la Très Belle toute blanche
Le doux Poète tant aima
Que sur l'heure son âme blanche
Vers les étoiles s'exhala ...

And the white-skinned beauty
was so loved by the gentle poet,
that of a sudden her white soul
gave up the ghost and fled to the stars...

Les grosses cloches de Bohême
Et les clochettes de Thulé
Chantèrent l'Hosanna suprême
De la Reine morte d'aimer.

The great bells of Bohemia
and the little bells of Thule
sang the last Hosanna
of the Queen who died of love.

Federico Mompou

... pour appeler la joie from *Charmes*

Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704)

Sans frayeur dans ce bois H467 (pub. 1680)

Anonymous

Without fright, I have come

Sans frayeur dans ce bois,
Seule je suis venue,
J'y vois Tircis sans être émue.

Without fright, I have come
by myself into this wood
where I see Tircis without feeling moved.

Ah! N'ai-je rien à ménager?
Qu'un jeune cœur insensible est à plaindre!
Je ne cherche point le danger,
Mais du moins, je voudrais le craindre.

Oh! Have I nothing be cautious of?
How a young, unfeeling heart is to be pitied!
I am not looking for danger,
but at least I would like to fear it.

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