

About Lieder and Part Songs

A Lied (Lieder is the plural of Lied) is a form of vocal music that sets secular Romantic German poems to music ~ especially from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During that time period, many poems of such masters as Goethe were set by Lied composers. Franz Schubert composed more than 600 Lieder. Ludwig van Beethoven, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, and Hugo Wolf are among the finest 19th-century Lied composers. For this concert, The Choristers will present two Lieder by Brahms and one by Schumann.

Part Songs, like Lieder, are settings of secular poems – but they are in English and composed by British composers. Original compositions of Lieder declined in the 20th century. Not so in England with its Part Songs. The genre continued to grow and mature into greater complexity. The Choristers will present Part Songs from six different British composers whose work in this genre span over fifty years.

To add aural variety to the concert, the choir stretched the definition of Part Song and will be presenting American composer Eric Whitacre's *Five Hebrew Love Songs* (2002). The poems were written by Hila Plitmann ~ who later became Mr. Whitacre's wife. The movements are short "postcards" in the native tongue of Plitmann, who was born and raised in Jerusalem. Five different settings of this work have emerged using different forces in terms of accompaniment. The Choristers will perform the original setting for piano, violin and choir. In addition, Soprano Kara Mulder will present solo Part Songs by Debussy, Vaughan Williams and Barber.

The music will be presented in an approximate chronological order giving a wonderful 100-year journey through these beautiful genres of music. Enjoy!



There are some very quiet moments in the music tonight. Therefore, please mute or turn off any cell phones you may have. The recording of the concert or taking of any pictures is prohibited. Thank You.

Two Lieder from *Sieben Lieder Op. 62 (1874)*

Brahms

Brahms did not compose this collection as a set to be performed together. The individual numbers, however, do share a similarity in their texts which are all of legendary or folk origin, and in their settings which are purely “strophic” - meaning each verse of the poem is sung to the same music.

#2: “Von alten Liebesliedern” (From Old Love Songs) ~ This is a courting song full of humor, including a refrain imitating the "little horse's" trot.

1. Spazieren wollt' ich
reiten der Liebsten vor die Tür,
sie blickt nach mir von weitem
und sprach mit großer Freud':
“Seht dort mein's Herzens Zier,
wie trabt er her zu mir!”
Trab, Rößlein, für und für.

1. Before my fair one's window,
one morn I meant to ride,
she from afar espied me,
said to herself with pride:
“My true love, that is he,
he rideth forth to me!”
Trot, pony, bear him safe to me.

2. Den Zaum, den ließ ich schießen
und sprengte hin zu ihr,
ich tät sie freundlich grüßen
und sprach mit Worten süß:
“Mein Schatz, mein höchste Zier,
was macht ihr vor der Tür?”
Trab, Rößlein, her zu ihr.

2. I shot along the pathway,
and galopp'd to her side,
with pleasant words and greetings
in converse sweet we vied:
“My true love, say no more,
why stay ye at my door?”
Stand, pony, stand before her door.

3. Vom Rößlein mein ich sprange
und band es an die Tür,
tät freundlich sie umfängen,
die Zeit ward uns nicht lang,
im Garten gingen wir
mit liebender Begier.
Trab, Rößlein, leis' herfür.

3. I from my horse alighted,
and tied him to the gate,
full many a vow we plighted
as in the porch we sat,
the bending flowers heard
each happy blissful word.
Soft, pony, soft, thou hast not stirr'd.

4. Wir setzten uns danieder
wohl in das grüne Gras
und sangen her und wieder

4. Then hand in hand we wander'd
where meads were fresh and gay;
that ne'er we would be sunder'd

die alten Liebeslieder,
bis uns die Äuglein naß
von weg'n der Kläffer Haß.
Trab, Rößlein, trab fürbaß.

we vow'd that summer day;
and we sang the songs we lov'd,
to tears our hearts were mov'd.
Trot, pony, trot, goodbye, belov'd.

#3 "Waldesnacht, du wunderkühle" (Woodland night, wondrously cool) ~ is a tranquil, yet harmonically complex chorus. The texture seems homophonic (meaning the choir sings all the text at the same time like a hymn), but is actually rich in polyphony (meaning having two or more simultaneous lines of independent melody.)

Waldesnacht, du wunderkühle,
die ich tausend Male grüß',
nach dem lauten Weltgewühle,
o wie ist dein Rauschen süß!
Träumerisch die müden Glieder
berg' ich weich in's Moos,
und mir ist, als würd' ich wieder
all' der irren Qualen los.

Woodland night, wondrously cool,
that I a thousand times have greeted,
After the loud ferment of the world,
O, how sweet is your rustling!
Dreamily, my weary limbs
I shelter in the yielding moss,
And for me, it is as if I were again
Free of all senseless distress.

Fernes Flötenlied, vertöne,
das ein weites Sehnen rührt,
die Gedanken in die schöne,
ach, mißgönnte Ferne führt.
Laß die Waldesnacht mich wiegen,
stillen jede Pein,
und ein seliges Genügen
saug' ich mit den Düften ein.

The song of a distant flute, sounding,
Stirs a vast longing;
My thoughts wander into the beautiful,
Ah, tantalizing distance!
May this forested night cradle me,
Soothing every pain;
And blissful fulfillment
I inhale along with its fragrances.

In den heimlich engen Kreisen
wird dir wohl, du wildes Herz,
und ein Friede schwebt mit leisen
Flügel schlägen niederwärts.
Singet, holde Vögellieder,
mich in Schlummer sacht!
Irre Qualen, löst euch wieder,
wildes Herz, nun gute Nacht.

Within this secluded, intimate sphere,
are boons for you, my frenzied heart,
And serenity floats, on the delicate
flutter of wings, downward.
Sing me, lovely bird songs,
gently to my rest!
Senseless anxieties, once more be gone,
Wild heart, now good night!

#5: "Es ist verraten" from *Spanisches Liederspiel Op. 74 (1887)*

Schumann

Michelle Enos, Pianist

Poems compiled by Emanuel Geibel

The ten texts for Op. 74 are adaptations of anonymous Spanish poems. These Lieder are full of melodic invention and Spanish elements, such the bolero rhythm in the Lied we present tonight. The lyrics of "Es ist verraten" (It is revealed) are of an observer who has discovered (revealed) that someone is in love.

Daß ihr steht in Liebesglut,
Schlaue, läßt sich leicht gewahren,
denn die Wangen offenbaren,
was geheim im Herzen ruht.

That you are in love's fervor,
O sly ones, is easy to perceive,
for your cheeks reveal
what secrets rest in your heart.

Stets an Seufzern sich zu weiden,
stets zu weinen statt zu singen,
wach die Nächte hinzubringen
und den süßen Schlaf zu meiden;

Always glorying in your own sighs,
always weeping instead of singing,
staying awake nights,
and avoiding sweet sleep,

das sind Zeichen jener Glut,
die dein Antlitz läßt gewahren,
und die Wangen offenbaren,
was geheim im Herzen ruht.

these are signs of that fervor
that your face makes plain,
and your cheeks confess
what secrets rest in your heart.

Daß ihr steht in Liebesglut,
Schlaue, läßt sich leicht gewahren,
denn die Wangen offenbaren,
was geheim im Herzen ruht.

That you are in love's fervor,
O sly ones, leaves itself easily noticed,
for your cheeks reveal
what secrets rest in your heart.

Liebe, Geld und Kummer halt' ich
für am schwersten zu verhehlen,
denn auch bei den strengsten Seelen
drängen sie sich vor gewaltig.

I hold love, money and worry
as the hardest to conceal,
for even in the sternest souls,
they push themselves out powerfully.

Jener unruhvolle Mut
läßt zu deutlich sie gewahren,
und die Wangen offenbaren,
was geheim im Herzen ruht.

That wholly restless mood
leaves itself revealed too clearly,
and your cheeks confess
what secrets rest in your heart.

#4 “Apparition” from *Quatre chansons de jeunesse* (1884)

Debussy

Kara Mulder, Soprano

Poetry by Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898)

The poem “Apparition” (1863) was written by Symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé in 1862 at the request of a friend who was “madly in love” with an Englishwoman. He experienced many losses early in his life and his works are known for their air of sadness caused by reminiscing over the past. Mallarmé’s works are considered difficult to interpret and obscure given his subtle and complex use of language to evoke essences. Scholars claim he wanted to “create the notion of floweriness rather than to describe an actual flower” and believed “there are two worlds, the one we live in and the ideal. To be content with the former and its illusions of happiness is an act of cowardice.” Mallarmé was one of the major French poets of the late 19th century leading a circle of writers, artists and musicians called Les Mardistes in recognition of their weekly Tuesday evening salons. Debussy was a member of this group and was inspired to set several of Mallarmé’s poems to music including their most widely known collaboration *L’Après-midi d’un Faune*.

La lune s'attristait.
Des séraphins en pleurs,
Rêvant, l'archet aux doigts,
Dans le calme des fleurs
Vaporeuses, tiraient de mourantes violes
De blancs sanglots
glissant sur l'azur des corolles.
—C'était le jour béni de ton premier baiser.
Ma songerie, aimant à me martyriser,
S'enivrait savamment du parfum de tristesse
Que même sans regret
et sans déboire laisse
La cueillaison d'un Rêve au cœur
qui l'a cueilli.
J'errais donc,
'œil rivé sur le pavé vieilli
Quand avec du soleil aux cheveux,
dans la rue et dans le soir,
tu m'es en riant apparue
Et j'ai cru voir la fée
au chapeau de clarté
Qui jadis sur mes beaux sommeils
d'enfant gâté
Passait, laissant toujours
de ses mains mal fermées
Neiger de blancs bouquets d'étoiles parfumées.

The moon was saddened.
Seraphims in tears,
Dreaming, bows at their fingers,
In the calm of filmy flowers
Threw dying violas
of white sobs
sliding over the blue of corollas.
— It was the blessed day of your first kiss;
My reverie, loving to torture me,
Wisely imbibed its perfume of sadness
That even without regret
and without setback leaves
The whisper of a dream within the heart
that gathered it.
I wandered then,
my eye riveted on the aged cobblestones.
When, with light in your hair,
In the street and in the evening,
you appeared to me smiling
And I thought I had seen the fairy
with a hat of light
Who passed in my sweet dreams
as a spoiled child,
Always dropping from
her carelessly closed hand
A snow of white bouquets of perfumed stars.

#2 “Since Thou, O Fondest” from *Six Modern Lyrics* (1897)

Parry

Poetry by Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry took the degree of Mus.B. at Oxford at the early age of eighteen, earned a B.A. in 1870 and a Doctor of Music at Cambridge in 1883. Influenced as a composer principally by Bach and Brahms, Parry literally pulled British music out of its doldrums that had existed since the passing of Handel and Purcell. (Remember ... the German/Austrian Haydn and Mendelssohn were the most popular composers in England in the early to mid 1800's and received most of the bigger commissions.) Parry's works greatly influenced future English composers such as Stanford and Vaughan Williams. He often collaborated with poet Robert Bridges to compose part songs and helped establish art music at the center of English cultural life.

Bridges was Britain's poet laureate from 1913 to 1930. A doctor by training, he achieved literary fame only late in life. His poems reflect a deep Christian faith, and he is the author of many well known hymns. Among those to set his poems to music were not just Parry but also Gustav Holst and later Gerald Finzi.

Since thou, O fondest and truest,
hast loved me best and longest,
And now with trust the strongest
the joy of my heart renewest;
Since thou art deared and dearer
while other hearts grow colder,
And ever, as love is older,
more lovingly drawest nearer.

Since now I see in the measure
of all my giving and taking,
Thou wert my hand in the making,
the sense and the soul of my pleasure;
The good I have repaid thee,
in heav'n I pray be recorded,
And all thy love rewarded,
by God, thy master that made thee.

#2 “O Love, They Wrong Thee Much” from *Eight Four-Part Songs* (1898)

Parry

Lyrics from an unknown poet—found in an Elizabethan Song Book

With this work, we begin to see the genre to mature. There is much more polyphony and harmonic diversity which foretell future compositions. In particular, listen to the way in which Parry gently ends the piece. Just gorgeous.

O Love, O Love, they wrong thee much
That say thy sweet is bitter, bitter.
When thy rich fruit is such,
As nothing can be sweeter,
Sweeter, Fair house of joy and bliss;
Where truest pleasure is, I do adore,
I do adore, I do adore thee, I do adore thee;

I know thee what thou art,
I serve thee with my heart,
And fall before thee, and fall before thee
and fall before thee; I know thee,
I serve thee, and fall before thee.
I know thee, I serve thee, and fall before thee,
and fall before thee.

#2 "Corydon, arise!" from *Six Elizabethan Pastorals: Set 1 Op.49 (1892)*

Stanford

Lyrics from an unknown 17th century poet

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) was an Irish composer, music teacher, and conductor. Born to a well-off and musical family, his prodigious musical talent shone early. At the age of seven, Stanford gave a piano recital for an invited audience, playing works by Beethoven, Handel, Mendelssohn, Mozart and Bach. Stanford was educated at the University of Cambridge before studying music in Leipzig and Berlin. As a teacher, Stanford was skeptical about modernism and based his instruction chiefly on classical principles as exemplified in the music of Brahms. Among his pupils were rising composers whose fame went on to surpass his own, such as Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Stanford composed about 200 works, including seven symphonies, about 40 choral works, nine operas, 11 concertos and 28 chamber works, as well as songs, piano pieces, incidental music, and organ works. Tonight, the choir will perform three of his part songs.

1. Corydon, arise, my Corydon!

Titan shineth clear.

Who is it that calleth Corydon?

Who is it that I hear?

Phyllida, thy true love, calleth thee,

Arise then, arise then,

Arise and keep thy flock with me!

Phyllida, my true love, is it she?

I come then, I come then,

I come and keep my flock with thee.

3. When my Corydon sits on a hill

Making melody

When my lovely one goes to her wheel,

Singing cheerily

Sure methinks my true love doth excel

For sweetness, for sweetness,

Our Pan, that old Arcadian knight.

And methinks my true love bears the bell

For clearness, for clearness,

Beyond the nymphs that be so bright.

2. Here are cherries ripe for my Corydon

Eat them for my sake.

Here's my oaten pipe, my lovely one,

Sport for thee to make.

Here are threads, my true love, fine as silk,

To knit thee, to knit thee,

A pair of stockings white as milk.

Here are reeds, my true love, fine and neat,

To make thee, to make thee,

A bonnet to withstand the heat.

4. Yonder comes my mother, Corydon!

Whither shall I fly?

Under yonder beech, my lovely one,

While she passeth by.

Say to her thy true love was not here;

Remember, remember,

To-morrow is another day.

Doubt me not, my true love, do not fear;

Farewell then, farewell then!

Heaven keep our loves away!

#3 “Heraclitus” from *Four Part Songs Op 110 (1908)*

Stanford

Poetry by William Cory (1823-1892) based upon an epitaph by Callimachus

Heraclitus was a poet of the third century B.C. who lived in Caria, a region in Asia Minor looking across the Aegean Sea to Greece. He was the friend of another poet, Callimachus of Cyrene who was the librarian at the famous library of Alexandria. When Heraclitus died, probably around 260 B.C., Callimachus wrote an elegant short epitaph for him. His poetry is vibrant with life as it creates the image of the two friends talking till the sun goes down (“*I wept as I remember'd how often you and I had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.*”) and then offers the reassurance to Heraclitus that his verses (charmingly called “nightingales,” an ancient symbol of poet and song) shall live on. Stanford set to music a poetic adaptation of that epitaph by William Cory (1823-1892) a poet and educator at Eton Preparatory School.

One of the criticisms that was often lodged against Stanford’s compositions in his day was that they lacked “passion.” After you have heard *Heraclitus*, no doubt you will ask yourself what the heck were the critics talking about!

They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed.
I wept as I remember'd how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.

#4 "Shall We Go Dance?" from *Six Elizabethan Pastorals Set 3 Op. 67 (1898)* **Stanford**

Poetry by Nicholas Breton

Nicholas Breton (1545-1626) was born into a wealthy London family. His father died when he was 14. His mother remarried, this time to a poet, and it is perhaps here that Breton took his inspiration to become a poet himself. He often wrote light and witty songs and poems, many of which had joyful, sunny, pastoral themes. For *Shall We Go Dance?*, Stanford selected Breton's poem which he entitled *Country Song*.

1. Shall we go dance the hay, the hay?
Never pipe could ever play
better shepherd's roundelay,
Fa la la la la la la!

2. Shall we go sing the song, the song?
Never love did ever wrong,
fair maids, hold hands all along,
Fa la la la la la la!

3. Shall we go learn to woo, to woo,
Never thought came better too,
better deed could ever do.
Fa la la la la la la!

4. Shall we go learn to kiss, to kiss?
Never heart could ever miss
comfort where true meaning is.
Fa la la la la la la!

5. Thus at base they run,
when the sport was scarce begun;
but I wak'd, and all was done,
Fa la la la la la la!

Three Elizabethan Part Songs (1913)

Vaughan Williams

Kelly Wyszomierski, Associate Director

Poetry by George Herbert (No. 1) and William Shakespeare (Nos. 2 and 3)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) was a prolific English composer whose works include operas, ballets, chamber music, secular and religious vocal pieces and orchestral compositions including nine symphonies. Strongly influenced by Tudor music and English folk-song, his output marked a decisive break in British music from its German-dominated style of the 19th century.

Vaughan Williams made a curious choice as he prepared to compose the music for *Three Elizabethan Part Songs*. Often, a composer will choose related texts for a complete set of part songs; perhaps all the texts are by the same poet, or they share a common theme. However, Vaughan Williams chose three independent and unrelated texts, by two different poets, for this brief but stunning set of choral music.

There is a possible explanation for Vaughan Williams' decision. The individual part songs in this set were actually composed between 1891 and 1896, but they weren't compiled until they were published as a set in 1913. Perhaps the three pieces were never intended to be a unified set of music. We may never know for sure!

#1 Sweet Day

This song sets the first, third, and fourth verses of George Herbert's poem "Virtue." This piece is set very simply, with all of the voices moving together through the text in an almost hymn-like way. Vaughan Williams uses the same music for verses one and three but changes the music for verse four to highlight this essential line of text: "Only the sweet and virtuous soul, like seasoned timber, never gives."

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky:
The dew shall weep thy fall to night;
For thou must die.

Sweet spring! full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie;
My music shows ye have your closes.
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

#2 The Willow Song

Text for this part song is taken from famous playwright William Shakespeare's "Othello." Here, the voices still primarily move homophonically (with similar rhythms and the same text simultaneously), but the vocal lines are more florid. These more freely flowing lines could represent the arms of the tree swaying in the breeze or the "salt tears" falling from the eyes of the poor soul sitting under the tree.

The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow;
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow:
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans;
Sing willow, willow, willow;
Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones;
Sing willow, willow, willow;
Sing all a green willow must be my garland.



#3 O Mistress Mine

This song provides excellent contrast to the solemnity of the first two part songs in the set. This final excerpt of text comes from Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" and is downright flirtatious compared its predecessors. Vaughan Williams sets quickly moving vocal lines to remind us that indeed "In delay there lies no plenty: [...] Youth's a stuff will not endure."

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O stay and hear, your true love's coming
That can sing both high and low.

Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
Ev'ry wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:

In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty;
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

Four Songs from *Songs of Travel* (1901-1904)

Vaughan Williams

Poetry by Robert Louis Stevenson

Songs of Travel is a song cycle of nine songs originally written for baritone voice and piano with poems drawn from the Robert Louis Stevenson collection "Songs of Travel and Other Verses" (published 1896). The song cycle offers a quintessentially British take on the "wayfarer cycle" with Stevenson's and Vaughan Williams' traveler being a world-weary yet resolute individual. Ever the pragmatist, Vaughan Williams authorized all of the songs to be transposed upwards to create a version for tenor/soprano voice. That is the version that will be presented tonight. Kara Mulder will perform four of the nine songs and those four have been arranged to promote musical flow.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) was a Scottish novelist, poet, essayist, and travel writer. His most famous works are "Treasure Island", "Kidnapped", "Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" and "A Child's Garden of Verses." A literary celebrity during his lifetime, Stevenson now ranks among the 26 most translated authors in the world.

Amazingly given his profession, Stevenson was a late reader, first learning at age seven or eight. But even before this, he dictated stories to his mother and nurse. He compulsively wrote stories throughout his childhood. His father was proud of this interest and paid for the printing of Stevenson's first publication at sixteen.

It is not surprising that Stevenson wrote many travel books including the verse poetry "Songs of Travel and Other Verses." Despite his constant ill-health, he spent his entire life travelling at a dizzying pace visiting various parts of Europe, the United States and even throughout the South Pacific. While in Hawaii, Stevenson became a good friend of King Kalākaua. Eventually, he finally settled down in Samoa where he stayed until his death at the youthful age of 44.

#8. Bright is the Ring of Words (1905)

In this song, consolation is offered that while all wanderers (and artists) must eventually die, the beauty of their work shall remain as a testament of their lives ~ a sentiment expressed earlier in Stanford's *Heraclitus*.

Bright is the ring of words
When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs
When the singer sings them,
Still they are carolled and said—
On wings they are carried—
After the singer is dead
And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies
In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
The swains together.
And when the west is red
With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings
And the maid remembers.

#6 The Infinite Shining Heavens (1907)

Pianissimo, wide-spaced arpeggiated piano chords (flowing as if from a harp), combined with an expansive melodic line, evoke the vast brilliance of the night sky in this song in which the traveler, gazing above, finds peace.

The infinite shining heavens
Rose and I saw in the night
Uncountable angel stars
Showering sorrow and light.

I saw them distant as heaven,
Dumb and shining and dead,
And the idle stars of the night
Were dearer to me than bread.

Night after night in my sorrow
The stars stood over the sea,
Till lo! I looked in the dusk
And a star had come down to me.



#3 The Roadside Fire (1905)

Over a joyous accompaniment, "The Roadside Fire" radiates the delight of new-found love that bubbles over ecstatically in the final verse.

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night,
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests, and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom;
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

#7 Whither Must I Wander? (1912)

"Whither Must I Wander?" recalls happy images of childhood and the security of home and family which are now long gone, and even though spring will always renew, the past is never to return.

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 the 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.

#3 “Quick! We Have But A Second” from *Six Irish Airs* (1922)

Stanford

Poetry by Thomas Moore (1779-1852)

This wonderful little ditty is Stanford’s arrangement of an poem by Thomas Moore, Irish poet and friend of Byron and Shelley. Moore’s popular “Irish Melodies” appeared in ten parts between 1807 and 1835. *Quick! We Have But A Second* is found in vol. 9. The carpe diem text of this poem encourages us to live life (drink) to the fullest before we must go away.

Quick! We have but a second,
 Fill round the cup while you may
 For time, the churl, hath beckoned
 And we must away, away!

Grasp the pleasure that’s flying
 For oh, not Orpheus’ strain
 Could keep sweet hours from dying
 Or charm them to life again. / Then quick ...

See the glass, how it flushes
 Like some young hebe’s¹ lip
 And half meets thine, and blushes
 That thou shouldst delay to sip.

Shame, oh, shame unto thee
 If e’er thou seest that day
 When a cup or a lip shall woo thee
 And turn untouched away. / Then quick ...

15-Minute Intermission

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¹ The Greek goddess of youth and a cupbearer to the gods .

Two Songs from *Seven Poems of Robert Bridges Op. 17 (1934)*

Finzi

Poetry by Robert Bridges

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956) is best known as a choral composer, but also wrote in other genres. Finzi was born into a fairly prosperous family in London, the son of parents of Jewish descent. Finzi became one of the most characteristically "English" composers of his generation. Despite being an agnostic of Jewish descent, several of his choral works incorporate Christian texts. It was during his early life that Finzi first became aware of the transience of life—one of the major themes of his music. In the space of a few years his father and three brothers died. As an adult, Finzi never felt at home in the city and, having married the artist Joyce Black, he settled with her in Aldbourne, Wiltshire, where he devoted himself to composing and apple-growing, saving a number of rare English apple varieties from extinction. He also amassed a large library of some 3,000 volumes of English poetry, philosophy and literature, now in the library of the University of Reading, and a collection of 18th-century English music (some 700 volumes including books, manuscripts and printed scores), now at the University of St Andrews. His compositions are lyrical, subtly understated, often elegiac in tone, mingling human pain and natural beauty. Finzi's music enjoyed a great resurgence from the late 20th century onwards.

#4 Clear and Gentle Stream

Finzi's intense love for the English countryside and his acceptance, which he shares with Bridges, of life's impermanence.

1. Clear and gentle stream!
Known and loved so long,
That hast heard the song
And the idle dream
Of my boyish day;
While I once again
Down thy margin stray,
In the selfsame strain
Still my voice is spent,
With my old lament
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream!

2. Where my old seat was
Here again I sit,
Where the long boughs knit
Over stream and grass
A translucent eaves:
Where back eddies play
Shipwreck with the leaves,
And the proud swans stray,
Sailing one by one
Out of stream and sun,
And the fish lie cool
In their chosen pool.

3. Many an afternoon
Of the summer day
Dreaming here I lay;
And I know how soon,
Idly at its hour,
First the deep bell hums
From the minster tower,
And then evening comes,
Creeping up the glade,
With her lengthening shade,
And the tardy boon
Of her brightening moon.

4. Clear and gentle stream!
Ere again I go
Where thou dost not flow,
Well does it beseem
Thee to hear again
Once my youthful song,
That familiar strain
Silent now so long:
Be as I content
With my old lament
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream.

#3 My Spirit Sang All Day

Finzi captures the happiness expressed by the poet through the use of rapid tempi and varied dynamics, with an emphasis on the word “joy” throughout the composition. As Finzi’s wife was named Joyce, the composition must have had special meaning for both of them.

My spirit sang all day
O my joy.
Nothing my tongue could say,
Only My joy!
My heart an echo caught
O my joy
And spake,
Tell me thy thought,
Hide not thy joy.
My eyes gan peer around,
O my joy
What beauty hast thou found?
Shew us thy joy.

My jealous ears grew whist;
O my joy
Music from heaven is't,
Sent for our joy?
She also came and heard;
O my joy,
What, said she, is this word?
What is thy joy?
And I replied,
O see, O my joy,
'Tis thee, I cried, 'tis thee:
Thou art my joy!



#4 “The Evening Primrose” from *Five Flower Songs* Op. 47 (1950)

Britten

Poetry by John Clare (1793-1864)

Englishman Benjamin Britten was born in 1913 and passed away in 1976. He is, without a doubt, one of the greatest 20 century composers, and he is responsible for composing some of the most difficult and complex music of that century. His output includes *Rejoice in the Lamb*, *A Ceremony of Carols*, and *Hymn to Saint Cecelia*. His *War Requiem* is perhaps his most famous large work, and rightly so. This masterpiece was inspired by the horrors and tragedies of the World Wars, and it combines English poetry with the traditional Requiem text. However, we turn today to some of Britten’s simpler music. Britten composed his *Five Flower Songs* in 1950 in celebration of the 25th wedding anniversary of botanists Dorothy and Leonard Elmhurst. This short set (11 minutes total) uses texts of several different poets.

John Clare was an English poet, the son of a farm laborer, who came to be known for his celebratory representations of the English countryside and his lamentation of its disruption. Clare became an agricultural laborer while still a child but still managed to overcome the rigid British caste system and succeed despite virtually no formal education. Clare had bought a copy of Thomson's *The Seasons* and began to write poems and sonnets. In an attempt to hold off his parents' eviction from their home, Clare offered his poems to a local bookseller who forwarded them to the publishing firm of Taylor & Hessey. Clare's *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* was published in 1820. This book was highly praised, and in the next year his *Village Minstrel and other Poems* was published. There was no limit to the applause bestowed upon Clare, unanimous in their (somewhat condescending) admiration of a poetical genius coming before them in the humble garb of a farm laborer. But, when the novelty had worn off, this immensely gifted writer experienced isolation and hardship, and finally became insane, spending most of his life in an institution. His poetry underwent a major re-evaluation in the late 20th century, and he is now considered to be among the most important 19th-century poets.

“The Evening Primrose” is a stunning, simple-sounding piece. Notice the subtle text painting Britten employs on the last line; at the word “gone” the choir sings a chord with no color note. This helps to underscore the sense of melancholy when the evening primrose dies.

When once the sun sinks in the west,
And dewdrops pearl the evening's breast;
Almost as pale as moonbeams are,
Or its companionable star,
The evening primrose opes anew
Its delicate blossoms to the dew;
And, hermit-like, shunning the light,
Wastes its fair bloom upon the night,

Who, blindfold to its fond caresses,
Knows not the beauty it possesses;
Thus it blooms on while night is by;
When day looks out with open eye,
Bashed at the gaze it cannot shun,
It faints and withers and is gone.

#4 "Nocturne" from *Four Songs* Op. 13 (1937-1940)

Barber

Poetry by Frederic Prokosch (1906-1989)

Samuel Barber was born March 9, 1910 in West Chester, Pennsylvania, into a comfortable, distinguished Irish-American family. His father was a doctor, and his mother was a pianist. His aunt, Louise Homer, was a leading contralto at the Metropolitan Opera. Louise influenced Barber's interest in voice and through her Barber had access to many great singers and songs. Barber wrote his first piece at age 7 and attempted his first opera at age 10. At the age of 14 he entered the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, where he studied voice, piano, and composition. Barber was the recipient of numerous awards and prizes including the American Prix de Rome, two Pulitzers, and election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His intense *Adagio for Strings* has become one of his most recognizable and beloved compositions.

The texts Barber chose for *Four Songs* are not unified by their subject matters or by musical elements, such as melodies or motives. Each song was composed independently of one another, and the four were grouped together and published in 1940.

Frederic Prokosch (1906-1989) was an American writer, known for his novels, poetry, memoirs and criticism. He was born in Madison, Wisconsin and was educated at Haverford College, Yale and King's College, Cambridge, England. He served as an instructor in English at Yale from 1932 to 1934. During World War II, he was cultural attaché of the American Legation in Stockholm. After the war, while Prokosch was a visiting lecturer at the University of Rome, he spent most of his time traveling from place to place, working in various places for relatively short periods of time.

"Nocturne," is based on Prokosch's love poem of the same title contained in a larger work: *The Carnival*. The speaker is a person talking to his or her lover at night. Barber subtitled this work "Homage to John Field" in memory of the Irish composer (1782-1837). Field is credited with establishing the modern Nocturne form—a short keyboard work with an improvisatory feeling that sets a particular mood. Except for a more intense central passage, the overall mood of "Nocturne" is dreamy and meditative.

Close my darling both your eyes,
Let your arms lie still at last.
Calm the lake of falsehood lies
And the wind of lust has passed,
Waves across these hopeless sands
Fill my heart and end my day,
Underneath your moving hands
All my aching flows away.

Even the human pyramids
Blaze with such a longing now:
Close, my love, your trembling lids,
Let the midnight heal your brow,
Northward flames Orion's horn,
Westward th' Egyptian light.
None to watch us, none to warn
But the blind eternal night.

#8 "The Monk and his Cat" from *Hermit Songs*, Op. 29 (1953)

Barber

Poetry by anonymous Irish monks from the 8th to the 13th century

The music from Samuel Barber's *Hermit Songs* is more popular, not among choral musicians, but in the vast repertoire of solo singers. This cycle of 10 songs was composed in 1953 and was originally written for solo voice and piano accompaniment. The poetry for the cycle came from anonymous Irish monks of the 8th to 13th centuries and has been translated into modern English by a variety of 20th-century poets. Of his *Hermit Songs*, Barber wrote, "[These songs] are small poems, thoughts or observations, some very short, and speak in straightforward, witty, and often surprisingly modern terms of the simple life they led - close to nature, their animals and to God."

"The Monk and his Cat" was translated by W.H. Auden and is one of the more well-known choral adaptations of the original song cycle. This obscure and brief text compares the monk's work as a scribe to his cat's work as a hunter. The text itself was scribbled in the margins of the monk's work, likely inspired by a fleeting moment and forgotten just as quickly.

The phrase "alone together" is strangely contradictory, and yet quite understandable to any cat owner. Being alone does not mean one must be lonely, and though a cat and a person may never truly connect, they can co-exist in great happiness. This monk was happy to watch the cat go about his business and he notes the similarities between the two of them. They both rejoice in their small daily victories and they both find happiness in their simple lives. Just like that, alone together, in happiness.

Barber proves himself quite the artist as he captures various feline moods throughout the piece. In his setting, you can hear the cat strolling aimlessly around the room, stepping gingerly across the keys of a piano. You can also hear the hunter pouncing on his unsuspecting prey. In the middle of the work, you can enjoy a reflective moment with the monk author as he wrote, "Pleased with his own art, neither hinders the other; Thus we live ever without tedium and envy."

Pangur, white Pangur,
How happy we are
Alone together, Scholar and cat.
Each has his own work to do daily;
For you it is hunting, for me, study.
Your shining eye watches the wall;
My feeble eye is fixed on a book.
You rejoice when your claws entrap a mouse;
I rejoice when my mind fathoms a problem.
Pleased with his own art
Neither hinders the other;
Thus we live ever
Without tedium and envy.
Pangur, white Pangur,
How happy we are,
Alone together, Scholar and cat.



Five Hebrew Love Songs

Eric Whitacre

Emily Nicholl, Violin ~ Jackie Dunleavy, Soprano

Poetry by Hila Plitmann

Eric Whitacre is one of the most popular composers/musicians of our time. His concert music has been performed throughout the world by millions of amateur and professional musicians alike, while his ground-breaking Virtual Choirs have united singers from over 110 different countries. A graduate of the prestigious Juilliard School of Music, Whitacre was recently appointed Artist in Residence with the Los Angeles Master Chorale having completed a five-year term as Composer in Residence at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University, UK.

There is no music less typical of Whitacre than his stunningly minimalistic *Five Hebrew Love Songs*. Much of Whitacre's choral output is very lush with dense harmonies and challenging divisions of each voice part to create a rich texture. While the *Five Hebrew Love Songs* certainly has brief allusions to this style of writing, they also contain wonderful angular and chant-like melodies. About his *Five Hebrew Love Songs*, Whitacre writes:

In the spring of 1996, my great friend and brilliant violinist Friedemann Eichhorn invited me and my girlfriend-at-the-time Hila Plitmann (a soprano) to give a concert with him in his home city of Speyer, Germany. We had all met that year as students at the Juilliard School, and were inseparable. Because we were appearing as a band of traveling musicians, "Friedy" asked me to write a set of troubadour songs for piano, violin, and soprano. I asked Hila (who was born and raised in Jerusalem) to write me a few "postcards" in her native tongue, and a few days later she presented me with these exquisite and delicate Hebrew poems. I set them while we vacationed in a small skiing village in the Swiss Alps, and we performed them for the first time a week later in Speyer.

Each short movement captures the essence of the few words in each poem. The leaping lines of "Temuná" represent the movement between light and dark, and the division of the men's and women's voices in "Kalá Kallá" describe the shimmering light surrounding the bride in the poem. In "Larov", the soprano voice begins alone but is joined in close harmony by the other voice parts to represent the physical closeness described at the end of the poem. At the beginning of "Éyze shéleg!" you can hear the gentle falling of the snow, and later, distant church bells. "Rakút" begins with a percussive pattern repeated over and over in the lower voices; it symbolizes the emotional hardness of the girl referenced in the poem. [Later in the piece, we hear that richness that is characteristic of Whitacre's writing as the narrator takes "her into himself, and set her down in the softest, softest place.]

These songs are profoundly personal for me, born entirely out of my new love for this soprano, poet, and now my beautiful wife, Hila Plitmann.

#1 Temuná

Temuná belibí charutá;
 Nodédet beyn ór uveyn ófel:
 Min dmamá shekazó et guféch kach otá,
 Usaréch al paná'ich kach nófel.

#2 Kalá kallá

Kalá kallá
 Kulá shelí.
 U'vekalút
 Tishák hí lí!

#3 Laróv

"Laróv," amár gag la'shama'im,
 "Hamerchák shebeynéynu hu ad;
 Ach lifnéy zman alu lechán shna'im,
 Uveynéynu nishár sentiméter echád."

#4 Éyze shéleg!

Éyze shéleg!
 Kmo chalamót ktaníim
 Noflíim mehashamá'im;

#5 Rakút

Hu hayá malé rakút
 Hi haytá kashá
 Vechól káma shenistá lehishaér kach
 Pashút, uvlí sibá tová,
 Lakach otá el toch atzmó,
 Veheníach
 Bamakóm hachí, hachí rach.

A picture

A picture is engraved in my heart;
 Moving between light and darkness:
 A sort of silence envelopes your body,
 And your hair falls upon your face just so.

Light bride

Light bride
 She is all mine,
 And lightly
 She will kiss me!

Mostly

"Mostly," said the roof to the sky,
 "the distance between you and I is endlessness;
 but a while ago two came up here,
 and only one centimeter was left between us."

What snow!

What snow!
 Like little dreams
 Falling from the sky.

Tenderness

He was full of tenderness;
 She was very hard.
 And as much as she tried to stay thus,
 He took her into himself
 And set her down
 in the softest, softest place.

#3. "Sure On This Shining Night" from *Four Songs Op. 13* (1938)

Barber

Poetry by James Agee (1909-1955)

"Sure On This Shining Night" is far and away the most popular movement of *Four Songs*. The lyrics are by Barber's contemporary, James Agee ~ a section of a poem entitled "Descriptions of Elysium" from *Permit Me Voyage* (1934). Though they both lived in New York, they did not meet until 1947. They became close friends and Barber eventually set more of Agee's poetry in *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* for soprano and orchestra. Agee's autobiographical novel, *A Death in the Family* (1957), won the author a posthumous Pulitzer Prize. Long after his death, Agee's novels and screenplays, including *The African Queen* and *The Night of the Hunter*, endure as famous works of literature.

Sure on this shining night
Of starmade shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.
The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.
Sure on this shining night I weep for wonder wand'ring far
alone
Of shadows on the stars.

In youth is pleasure (1915)

Howells

Poetry by Robert Wever (Mid 16th c.)

By the end of his life, Englishman Herbert Howells (1892-1983) would be best known for his extensive contribution to Anglican church music. Howells showed a keen interest in composition early in his life and, at the age of eighteen, became a pupil of Herbert Brewer, Organist of Gloucester Cathedral. In 1912 he was awarded a scholarship to the Royal College of Music and studied under Stanford, Walter Parratt, Charles Wood and Parry. In 1915, Howells was diagnosed with Graves' disease and given six months to live. Since doctors believed that it was worth taking a chance on a previously untested treatment, he became the first person in the country to receive radium treatment. Given his longevity ... it obviously worked.

An immense blow which deeply affected Howells was the death of his son, Michael, in 1935. Both Howells himself and his music were never the same after this period of his life. Though not an orthodox Christian, he became increasingly identified with the composition of religious music, most notably the *Hymnus Paradisi* for chorus and orchestra which was dedicated to his son's memory. Not released for performance until 1950, it incorporates passages from an earlier unaccompanied *Requiem*, begun before Michael's death. This private account of grief remained in his desk drawer for forty years before he submitted it for publication in 1981. Howells died in London and his ashes were interred in Westminster Abbey.

Robert Wever was an English poet and dramatist of the sixteenth century about whom, unfortunately, little biographical information has survived.

Howells' journey with sacred music had just begun when he wrote *In youth is pleasure*. It was 1915, and Howells, merely 23 years, was in the middle of his studies at the Royal College of Music. As a student studying composition, Howells was likely exposed to many eras and genres of music, and he was eagerly working for anyone with interest in his promising skill.

It was Sir Frederick Bridge, along with members of the Madrigal Society, who commissioned Howells; it seems only logical that the resulting work would be a 20th-century interpretation of their namesake genre. *In youth is pleasure* exemplifies many of these defining characteristics of the madrigal genre; it is a cappella, the voices imitate one another, and even the mood of the text is reminiscent of the most famous Renaissance madrigals. In fact, the text comes directly from the heyday of the madrigal as it was written by Robert Wever circa 1550. The poem extols the delights of young love.

In a harbour grene aslepe whereas I lay,
The byrdes sang swete in the middes of the day,
I dreamed fast of mirth and play:
 In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.

Me thought I walked still to and fro,
And from her company I could not go--
But when I waked it was not so:
 In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.

Therefore my hart is surely pyght²
Of her alone to have a sight
Which is my joy and hartes delight:
 In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.

² Old/Middle English for “fixed.”



We would be remiss if we did not note the passing on August 7, 2016 of Maestro Robert Page, renowned choral conductor, musician and educator. After Page received a degree in music from Abilene University, and a number of short stints in high school and college positions, Page arrived in Philadelphia in 1955 where his career blossomed as a professor at Temple University, a close collaborator with Eugene Ormandy and as Director of

The Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia. He left the area in 1975 moving first to Pittsburgh and then Cleveland— becoming an icon in each city’s choral and arts scene.

When he was in Philadelphia, he influenced many choral singers including this Artistic Director and several members of The Choristers. He had an encyclopedic knowledge of choral music and, in particular, of the particular works he was conducting. Always demanding yet loving, he used colorful language to get what he wanted out of musicians. In one rehearsal, he told the chorus, “I want sexier, sensuous and like a gypsy, like you’re playing for money.” Page first and foremost loved music, love singing and loved singers. Death has taken him ... but his music and influence lives on.