

Lylah Field, Soprano

Bonnie Bird, piano

Friday, March 5th, 2021, 7:00pm

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)¹ is one of the most well-known composers of the classical era and his vocal works remain a favourite in operatic repertoire. Mozart premiered his one of many opera buffa's *Le nozze di Figaro* in 1786.² This opera is known as one of three "da Ponte" operas based on librettos written by Lorenzo da Ponte (1749-1838.) *Le nozze di Figaro* tells the story of the wedding day of Figaro and Susanna. While preparing for their wedding, the couple finds out that the Count has plans to sabotage their wedding so he may have Susanna to himself. With the help of the Countess and the Count's page, Cherubino, the two devise a plan to thwart the Count's plans. The aria "Un moto di gioia" was not originally intended to be included in this scene but rather the more commonly performed "Venite inginocchiatevi," as the role was written specifically for the voice of Nancy Storace, the singer playing the original Susanna. In a 1789 revival, Adriana Ferrarese del Bene was slated to perform the role of Susanna and demanded that Mozart write a new aria for her vocal talents, the result being "Un moto di gioia." At this point in the story, Susanna and the Countess are dressing up Cherubino as a girl in order to send him to the Count to create confusion. Then jump to Act Four as the plan to reveal the Count's infidelity is in play. Susanna and the Countess are the only two who know the full plan, and a misunderstanding leads Figaro to assume the worst. Susanna decides to have some fun at her jealous fiancé's expense, singing "Giunse alfin il momento. . . Deh vieni, non tardar" to an imaginary lover, knowing very well that Figaro will overhear her.

"Un moto di gioia"

Un moto di gioia
Mi sento nel petto,
Che annunzia diletto
In mezzo il timor!

Speriam che in contento
Finisca l'affanno
Non sempre è tiranno

"An emotion of joy"

An emotion of joy
I feel in my heart
that says happiness is coming
in spite of my fears.

Let us hope that the worry
will end in contentment.
Fate and love are

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<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Wolfgang-Amadeus-Mozart#:~:text=Wolfgang%20Amadeus%20Mozart%20C%20in%20full,the%20greatest%20composers%20in%20the>

² <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Marriage-of-Figaro-opera-by-Mozart>

Il fato ed amor.

not always tyrants.

Translation by John Glenn Paton³

“Deh vieni, non tardar”

“Come, do not delay”

Giunse alfin il momento
che godrò senz'affanno
in braccio all'idol mio. Timide cure,
uscite dal mio petto,
a turbar non venite il mio diletto!
Oh, come par che all'amoroso foco
l'amenità del loco,
la terra e il ciel risponda,
come la notte i furti miei seconda!

The moment finally arrives
When I'll enjoy [experience joy] without haste
In the arms of my beloved...
Fearful anxieties get out of my heart!
Do not come to disturb my delight.
Oh, how it seems that to amorous fires
The comfort of the place,
Earth and heaven respond,
As the night responds to my ruses.

Deh, vieni, non tardar, oh gioia bella,
vieni ove amore per goder t'appella,
finché non splende in ciel notturna face,
finché l'aria è ancor bruna e il mondo tace.
Qui mormora il ruscel, qui scherza l'aura,
che col dolce sussurro il cor ristaura,
qui ridono i fioretti e l'erba è fresca,
ai piaceri d'amor qui tutto adescà.
Vieni, ben mio, tra queste piante ascose,
ti vo' la fronte incoronar di rose.

Oh come, don't be late, my beautiful joy
Come where love calls you to enjoyment
Until night's torches no longer shine in the sky
As long as the air is still dark
And the world quiet.
Here the river murmurs and the light plays
That restores the heart with sweet ripples
Here, little flowers laugh and the grass is fresh
Here, everything entices one to love's pleasures
Come, my dear, among these hidden plants.
Come, come!
I want to crown you with roses.

Translation by Naomi Gurt Lind⁴

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)⁵ was a French composer whose music was highly influential in the 20th century. He developed a highly unique system of harmony and musical structure that expressed many of the ideals to which the Impressionist and Symbolist painters and writers of his time aspired. *Ariettes oubliées* (Forgotten Little Songs)⁶ is no exception to this, as he took the poetry of Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) and created a song cycle to match the stylistic subtleties of his poems. Debussy's music is as fluid, sensuous, and hypnotizing as Verlaine's poetry; perfectly

³ https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=4158

⁴ <https://aerden.livejournal.com/511747.html>

⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Claude-Debussy>

⁶ <https://interlude.hk/composers-poets-debussy-ii/>

capturing the imagery of nature, the weeping of doves, and a whirling merry-go-round to name a few of the many pictures painted in these selections.

I. *C'est l'extase*

It is languorous rapture

C'est l'extase langoureuse,
C'est la fatigue amoureuse,
C'est tous les frissons des bois
Parmi l'étreinte des brises,
C'est, vers les ramures grises,
Le chœur des petites voix.

It is languorous rapture,
It is amorous fatigue,
It is all the tremors of the forest
In the breezes' embrace,
It is, around the grey branches,
The choir of tiny voices.

Ô le frêle et frais murmure!
Cela gazouille et susurre,
Cela ressemble au cri doux
Que l'herbe agitée expire ...

O the delicate, fresh murmuring!
The warbling and whispering,
It is like the soft cry
The ruffled grass gives out ...

Tu dirais, sous l'eau qui vire,
Le roulis sourd des cailloux.
Cette âme qui se lamente
En cette plainte dormante
C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce pas?
La mienne, dis, et la tienne,
Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne
Par ce tiède soir, tout bas?

You might take it for the muffled sound
Of pebbles in the swirling stream.
This soul which grieves
In this subdued lament,
It is ours, is it not?
Mine, and yours too,
Breathing out our humble hymn
On this warm evening, soft and low?

Translation Richard Stokes⁷

II. *Il pleure dans mon cœur*

Tears fall in my heart

Il pleure dans mon cœur
Comme il pleut sur la ville;
Quelle est cette langueur
Qui pénètre mon cœur?

Tears fall in my heart
As rain falls on the town;
What is this torpor
Pervading my heart?

Ô bruit doux de la pluie
Par terre et sur les toits!
Pour un cœur qui s'ennuie
Ô le bruit de la pluie!
Il pleure sans raison
Dans ce cœur qui s'écœure.

Ah, the soft sound of rain
On the ground and roofs!
For a listless heart,
Ah, the sound of the rain!
Tears fall without reason
In this disheartened heart.

⁷ <https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/2810>

Quoi! nulle trahison? ...
Ce deuil est sans raison.
C'est bien la pire peine
De ne savoir pourquoi
Sans amour et sans haine,
Mon cœur a tant de peine.

What! Was there no treason? ...
This grief's without reason.
And the worst pain of all
Must be not to know why
Without love and without hate
My heart feels such pain.

Translation by Richard Stokes

III. *L'ombre des arbres dans la rivière*

The shadow of trees in the misty stream

L'ombre des arbres dans la rivière embrumée
Meurt comme de la fumée
Tandis qu'en l'air, parmi les ramures réelles,
Se plaignent les tourterelles.
Combien, ô voyageur, ce paysage blême
Te mira blême toi-même,
Et que tristes pleuraient dans les hautes feuillées
Tes espérances noyées!

The shadow of trees in the misty stream
Dies like smoke,
While up above, in the real branches,
The turtle-doves lament.
How this faded landscape, O traveller,
Watched you yourself fade,
And how sadly in the lofty leaves
Your drowned hopes were weeping!

Translation by Richard Stokes

IV. *Paysages belges (Chevaux de bois)*

Belgian landscapes (Merry-go-round)

Tournez, tournez, bons chevaux de bois,
Tournez cent tours, tournez mille tours,
Tournez souvent et tournez toujours,
Tournez, tournez au son des hautbois.

Turn, turn, you fine wooden horses,
Turn a hundred, turn a thousand times,
Turn often and turn for evermore
Turn and turn to the oboe's sound.

L'enfant tout rouge et la mère blanche,
Le gars en noir et la fille en rose,
L'une à la chose et l'autre à la pose,
Chacun se paie un sou de dimanche.

The red-faced child and the pale mother,
The lad in black and the girl in pink,
One down-to-earth, the other showing off,
Each buying a treat with his Sunday sou.

Tournez, tournez, chevaux de leur cœur,
Tandis qu'autour de tous vos tournois
Clignote l'œil du filou sournois,
Tournez au son du piston vainqueur!

Turn, turn, horses of their hearts,
While the furtive pickpocket's eye is flashing
As you whirl about and whirl around,
Turn to the sound of the conquering cornet!

C'est étonnant comme ça vous soûle
D'aller ainsi dans ce cirque bête:

Astonishing how drunk it makes you,
Riding like this in this foolish fair:

Rien dans le ventre et mal dans la tête,
Du mal en masse et du bien en foule.

Tournez, dadas, sans qu'il soit besoin
D'user jamais de nuls éperons
Pour commander à vos galops ronds:
Tournez, tournez, sans espoir de foin.

Et dépêchez, chevaux de leur âme,
Déjà voici que sonne à la soupe
La nuit qui tombe et chasse la troupe
De gais buveurs que leur soif affame.

Tournez, tournez! Le ciel en velours
D'astres en or se vêt lentement.
L'église tinte un glas tristement.
Tournez au son joyeux des tambours!

With an empty stomach and an aching head,
Discomfort in plenty and masses of fun!

Gee-gees, turn, you'll never need
The help of any spur
To make your horses gallop round:
Turn, turn, without hope of hay.

And hurry on, horses of their souls:
Nightfall already calls them to supper
And disperses the crowd of happy revellers,
Ravenous with thirst.

Turn, turn! The velvet sky
Is slowly decked with golden stars.
The church bell tolls a mournful knell—
Turn to the joyful sound of drums!

Translation by Richard Stokes

Lee Hoiby (1926-2011)⁸ was an American composer and classical pianist. Best known as a composer of operas and songs, he was a disciple of composer Gian Carlo Menotti. Soprano Leontyne Price introduced many of his best known songs and arias to the public, even songs Hoiby wrote specifically for Price herself. This collection of six songs is titled *Songs for Leontyne*, and utilizes the works of various poets and covers varying subjects from serious to silly. “Autumn” and “Winter Song” come from this collection and tell two stories of the seasons and the unique beauty and intensity that comes with each season. “Summer Song” and “Always it’s Spring” come from another collection of songs titled *Thirteen Songs for High Voice and Piano* also featuring works of various poets with a range of moods. “*Summer Song*” is a meditative reflection of the still air and warm shade of the summer. “Always it’s spring” is a text by e. e. cummings, with imagery of people in love floating away into the sky.

Summer Song

Air, still as picture lakes
Ravenshade hammocked me
Skies, calm as postcard blue
Dreamed, hovered over me.

Phlox, prim as needlepoint
Wintergreen bowered me.

⁸ <https://www.macdowell.org/artists/lee-hoiby>

Day, tall as tamaracks, leaned, lowered over me.

Sun, hushed as silences,
Butterflies shadowed me.
World, wide as wonderful,
Bloomed, blossomed over me.

Text by John Fandell⁹

Autumn

The leaves are falling, falling down
As far as though from gardens deep in heaven
fading.
They fall with gestures of complete negation.
And in the night the heavy earth is falling
From all the stars into its loneliness.
And we are falling, even this hand must fall,
And see, the other, too. All falling, all.
And yet, one holds all falling everywhere
Endlessly, gently, in his hand's caress.

Text by Rainer Maria Rilke, translated by Harry
Duncan

Winter Song

The browns, the olives, and the yellows died,
And were swept up to heaven; where they glowed
Each dawn and set of sun till Christmastide,
And when the land lay pale for them,
pale-snowed,
Fell back, and down the snow-drifts flamed and
flowed.

From off your face, into the winds of winter,
The sun-brown and the summer-gold are blowing;
But they shall gleam with spiritual glinter,
When paler beauty on your brows falls snowing,
And through those snows my looks shall be
soft-going.

⁹ <http://www.leechoiby.net/songs-with-piano.html>

Text by Wilfred Owen

Always it's Spring

who knows if the moon's
a balloon, coming out of a keen city
in the sky—filled with pretty people?
(and if you and I should
get into it, if they
should take me and take you into their balloon,
why then
we'd go up higher with all the pretty people

than houses and steeples and clouds:
go sailing
away and away sailing into a keen
city which nobody's ever visited, where

always
it's
Spring) and everyone's
in love and flowers pick themselves.

Text by E.E. Cummings

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805-1847) was long and unjustly overlooked as a serious composer, despite a considerable and impressive output. She was writing music at a time when it was considered unsuitable for a woman from the upper middle classes to have ambitions as a professional musician and even published works under her brother's name, the well-known Felix Mendelssohn. Fanny published her first work in her own name – her Opus 1 Lieder – in 1846, at age 41. These selections feature poetry by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Joseph von Eichendorff, and Heinrich Heine who was a frequent visitor to the Mendelssohn household.¹⁰ The first of the set is "Schwanenlied."¹¹ The imagery is richly romantic, and speaks of a star that fell down "from its glittering height;" it is the Star of Love. The white leaves are also falling from the apple trees and are swirled about by "the teasing wind." The second verse begins after a "meaningful" silence, and in the same music as the first verse describes the gentle singing of the swan as it becomes submerged in the "floody grave." "Warum sind denn die Rosen so blass" (Then why are the roses so pale), poses a series of questions describing happenings in the

¹⁰<https://publish.iupress.indiana.edu/read/historical-anthology-of-music-by-women/section/4f214a76-d010-4c23-b883-683e82a0bfe6>

¹¹ <https://www.allmusic.com/composition/songs-6-for-voice-piano-op-1-mc0002375415>

landscape ("Then why are the violets so speechless? Then why does the sun shine on the field so cold and annoyingly? Then why is the earth so grey and desolate like a grave?"). The "Mayenlied" (May Song), with words by Eichendorff, is the most conventional of the set yet it is filled with energy and brightness as the wonders of spring are lauded as experienced by a young man with fine blond locks. The "Morgenständchen" (Morning Serenade) revels in the sights through a window upon waking. The "Gondellied" (Gondola Song) flows along like the boat under a moonlit night and contains some beautiful chromatically altered harmonies.

Schwanenlied

Es fällt ein Stern herunter
Aus seiner funkelnden Höh,
Das ist der Stern der Liebe,
Den ich dort fallen seh.

Es fallen vom Apfelbaume,
Der weissen Blätter so viel,
Es kommen die neckenden Lüfte,
Und treiben damit ihr Spiel.

Es singt der Schwan im Weiher,
Und rudert auf und ab,
Und immer leiser singend,
Taucht er ins Flutengrab.

Es ist so still und dunkel,
Verweht ist Blatt und Blüt',
Der Stern ist knisternd zerstoßen,
Verklungen das Schwanenlied.

Text by Heinrich Heine

Swan Song

A star falls to earth
From its glittering height,
That is the star of love
I see falling there.

The apple tree sheds
A host of white leaves,
Cajoling breezes come along
And play with them.

A swan sings on the lake,
Gliding to and fro,
And singing ever more softly
Dives into its watery grave.

It is so silent and dark,
Blossom and leaf have dispersed,
The star has guttered and gone out,
The song of the swan has faded away.

Translation by Richard Stokes¹²

Warum sind denn die Rosen so blaß

Warum sind denn die Rosen so blaß,
O sprich, mein Lieb, warum?
Warum sind denn im grünen Gras
Die blauen Veilchen so stumm?

Warum singt denn mit so kläglichem Laut
Die Lerche in der Luft?
Warum steigt denn aus dem Balsamkraut

Then why are all the roses so pale

Then why are all the roses so pale,
Oh speak, my love, oh why?
Then why in the verdant grass
Are the blue violets so mute?

Then why does the lark in the air
Sing such a song of gloom?
Why does a corpse-like odour rise

¹² <https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/5171>

Hervor ein Leichenduft?

Warum scheint denn die Sonn auf die Au
So kalt und verdrießlich herab?
Warum ist denn die Erde so grau
Und öde wie ein Grab?

Warum bin ich selbst so krank und so trüb,
Mein liebes Liebchen, sprich?
O sprich, mein herzallerliebstes Lieb,
Warum verließest du mich?

Text by Heinrich Heine

From the balsam plants?

Then why does the sun shine on the fields
So cold and peevishly?
Then why is the earth so grey
And desolate as a grave?

Why am I myself so sick and sad,
Oh tell me, my dearest love!
Tell me my sweetheart, tell me my love,
Why did you abandon me?

Translation by Richard Stokes

Mayenlied

Läuten kaum die Maienglocken,
Leise durch den lauen Wind,
Hebt ein Knabe froh erschrocken,
Aus dem Grase sich geschwind.
Schüttelt in den Blütenflocken,
Seine feinen blonden Locken,
Schelmisch sinnend wie ein Kind.

Und nun wehen Lerchenlieder
Und es schlägt die Nachtigall,
Von den Bergen rauschend wieder
Kommt der kühle Wasserfall.
Rings im Walde bunt Gefieder,
Frühling, Frühling ist es wieder
Und ein Jauchzen überall.

Text by Joseph von Eichendorff

Hardly do the lilies-of-the-valley ring

Hardly do the lilies-of-the-valley ring
faintly in the gentle wind,
than a boy starts gaily
and quickly from the grass.
In the blossoms he shakes
his fine blond locks,
with roguish feeling, like a child.

And now the lark songs can be heard,
and the nightingale sings;
from the mountains roars again
the sound of the cool waterfall.
Around the forest are bright feathers;
It is Spring again
and there is rejoicing everywhere.

Translation by Emily Ezust¹³

Morgenständchen

In den Wipfeln frische Lüfte,
Fern melod'scher Quellen Fall
Durch die Einsamkeit der Klüfte,
Waldeslaut und Vogelschall,

In the treetops, fresh breezes;
distant, melodious springs rustling
through the solitude of the ravine;
forest sounds and bird calls.

¹³ https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=5229

Scheuer Träume Spielgenossen,
Steigen all' beim Morgenschein
Auf des Weinlaubs schwanken Sprossen
Dir zum Fenster aus und ein.

Und wir nah'n noch halb in Träumen
Und wir thun in Klängen kund,
Was da draußen in den Bäumen
Singt der weite Frühlingsgrund.

Regt der Tag erst laut die Schwingen:
Sind wir Alle wieder weit --
Aber tief im Herzen klingen
Lange nach noch Lust und Leid.

Text by Joseph von Eichendorff

The playmates of shy dreams
all ascend by the morning light
on the grapevine's swaying branches
in and out of your window

and we come near, half in a dream,
and we make known in our sounds
what, outside among the trees,
the wide Spring valley sings.

Once the day loudly moves its wings,
we are all once again far away;
but deep in your heart resound
joy and sorrow for a long time afterward.

Translation by Emily Ezust

Gondellied

O komm zu mir, wenn durch die Nacht
Wandelt das Sternenheer,
Dann schwebt mit uns in Mondespracht
Die Gondel übers Meer.

Die Luft ist weich wie Liebesscherz
Sanft spielt der goldne Schein,
Die Cither klingt und zieht dein Herz
Mit in die Lust hinein.

Dies ist für sel'ge Lieb' die Stund,
Liebchen, o komm und schau,
so friedlich strahlt des Himmels Rund,
es schläft des Meeres Blau.
So friedlich strahlt des Himmels Rund,
Es schläft des Meeres blau.

Und wie es schläft, so sagt der Blick
Was nie die Lippe spricht,
Das Auge zieht sich nicht zurück,
Zurück die Seele nicht

Text by Emanuel von Geibel

Oh come to me, when the legion of stars
wanders through the night!
Then, in the glory of moonlight,
the gondola will gently float with us over the sea!

The air is as soft as love's teasing,
the golden glow is playing gently.
The zither sounds and draws your heart
along with it into joy.

This is the blessed hour of love!
My darling, oh come and see!
The heavenly vault is glowing so peacefully,
the blueness of the sea is sleeping!

And as it sleeps, [our] glances speak
what [our] lips never dare to say.
[Our] eyes do not retreat,
our souls do not shrink back.

Translation by Sharon Krebs¹⁴

¹⁴https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=38953&RF=1

The last piece featured tonight is an original song, written by yours truly, during quarantine as part of my first EP titled *Healing*. This past year has been a struggle for everyone as many of us experienced devastating loss in some way or another. This song is written from a place of healing just as the album title suggests, discussing what it is like to be confronted with past trauma, uncertainties, and anxieties in a time where the rest of the world is also dealing with a collective crisis. In the end of the song, there is a realization that my purpose is to live my life in a way that makes me feel the most whole and fulfilled. As I have been a singer my whole life, singing is one of the things that makes me feel the most whole as it allows me to be an activist, an advocate, a preserver of traditions, and so much more, “and so I’ll sing something good for my soul.”

“Soul”

Daydreaming about love letters, and vast views
Of fairytale realms and colorful hues

Most days are a patchwork of haunting memories
who knows if they were ever mine
Or just me stuck in my dreams
Or just me stuck in my dreams

Sometimes I feel like I'm running in water
Fighting against the current to stand on my feet
I'm trying to keep it together
if not for anyone else, than for me.

I get stuck in expectations about the future;
About you, about me, our friends, our dreams, about everything
about what it means to be alive.
Am I doing enough to get it right this time?
To get it right this time

So i'll sing something good for my soul
Take these puzzle pieces and make something whole
And I pray that you hear me when I'm low
And i'll sing something good for my soul

