

## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

Charles Turley, baritone and David Riley, piano

### **O du, mein holder Abendstern** from *Tannhäuser* (1845)

**Richard Wagner (1813-1883)**

Wie Todesahnung Dämm rung deckt die Lande,  
umhüllt das Tal mit schwärzlichem Gewande;  
der Seele, die nach jenen Höhn verlangt,  
vor ihrem Flug durch Nacht und Grausen bangt.  
Da scheinst du, o lieblichster der Sterne,  
dein Sanftes Licht entsendest du der Ferne;  
die nächt'ge Dämm rung teilt dein lieber Strahl,  
und freundlich zeigst du den Weg aus dem Tal.

*Like a portent of death, twilight shrouds the earth  
and envelops the valley in its sable robe;  
the soul, that yearns for those heights,  
dreads to take its dark and awful flight.  
There you shine, o fairest of the stars,  
and shed your gentle light from afar;  
your friendly beam penetrates the twilight gloom  
and points the way out from the valley.*

O du, mein holder Abendstern,  
wohl grüsst' ich immer dich so gern:  
vom Herzen, das sie nie verriet,  
grüsse sie, wenn sie vorbei dir zieht,  
wenn sie entschwebt dem Tal der Erden,  
ein sel'ger Engel dort zu werden!

*O my fair evening star,  
I always gladly greeted thee:  
from a heart that never betrayed its faith,  
greet her when she passes,  
when she soars above this earthly valley  
to become a blessed angel in Heaven!*

### **Warm as the Autumn Light** from *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (1956)

**Douglas Moore (1893-1969)**

Warm as the autumn light, soft as a pool at night,  
The sound of your singing, Baby Doe.  
And while I was list'ning, I was recalling  
Things that once I had wanted so much  
And forgotten as years slipped away.  
A girl I knew back home in Vermont, the sea in New Hampshire,  
The first sight of the mountains.  
They say I've been lucky; there's nothing my money won't buy.  
It couldn't be I was unhappy or was missing the good things in life.  
But only tonight came again in your singing,  
That feeling of wonder, of longing and pain.  
Deep in your lovely eyes, all of enchantment lies  
And tenderly beckons, Baby Doe,  
Dearest Baby Doe.

### **Kennst du das Land? (Do you know the land?)** from *Little Women* (1998)

**Mark Adamo**

Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühen,  
Im dunkeln Laub die Goldorangen glühen?  
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,  
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht?  
Kennst du es wohl? Dahin!  
Dahin möcht' ich mit dir,  
O mein Geliebter, ziehn.  
Goethe. *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre.*

*Do you know the land where the lemon trees bloom,  
Where oranges, like gold, beneath the leafy gloom?  
A gentle wind from bluest heaven blows  
The myrtle green and high the laurel grows.  
Do you know that land? 'Tis there!  
Ah, 'tis there, o my beloved,  
'Tis there I dream we would go.*

**Histoires naturelles (Nature stories) (1906)**  
**Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)/Poetry by Jules Renard**

Le paon

Il va sûrement se marier aujourd'hui.  
Ce devait être pour hier.  
En habit de gala, il était prêt.  
Il n'attendait que sa fiancée.  
Elle n'est pas venue. Elle ne peut tarder.  
Glorieux, il se promène avec une allure  
de prince indien et porte sur lui les riches  
présents d'usages.  
L'amour avive l'éclat de ses couleurs et son  
aigrette tremble comme une lyre.  
La fiancée n'arrive pas.  
Il monte au haut du toit et regarde du côté  
du soleil.  
Il jette son cri diabolique: Léon! Léon!  
C'est ainsi qu'il appelle sa fiancée.  
Il ne voit rien venir et personne ne répond.  
Les volailles habituées ne lèvent même  
point la tête. Elles sont lasses de l'admirer.  
Il redescend dans la cour, si sûr d'être beau  
qu'il est incapable de rancune.  
Son mariage sera pour demain.  
Et, ne sachant que faire du reste de la  
journée, il se dirige vers le perron.  
Il gravit les marches, comme des marches  
de temple, d'un pas officiel.  
Il relève sa robe à queue toute lourde des  
yeux qui n'ont pu se détacher d'elle.  
Il répète encore une fois la cérémonie.

Le grillon

C'est l'heure où, las d'errer, l'insecte  
nègre revient de promenade et répare avec  
soin le désordre de son domaine.  
D'abord il ratisse ses étroites allées de sable.  
Il fait du bran de scie qu'il écarte au  
seuil de sa retraite.  
Il lime la racine de cette grande herbe  
propre à le harceler.  
Il se repose.  
Puis il remonte sa minuscule montre.  
A-t-il fini? Est-elle cassée?  
Il se repose encore un peu.  
Il rentre chez lui et ferme sa porte.  
Longtemps il tourne sa clef dans la  
serrure délicate.  
Et il écoute:  
Point d'alarme dehors.  
Mais il ne se trouve pas en sûreté.  
Et comme par une chaînette dont la poulie  
grince, il descend jusqu'au fond de la terre.  
On n'entend plus rien.  
Dans la campagne muette, les peupliers se dressent  
comme des doigts en l'air et désignent la lune.

The peacock

*He must surely be getting married today.  
It was to have been for yesterday.  
Dressed in his gala clothes, he was ready.  
He was only waiting for his bride.  
She did not come. She cannot tarry.  
Magnificent, he parades at the pace  
of an Indian prince, bearing the customary  
rich gifts.  
Love heightens the splendour of  
his colours and his crest trembles like a lyre.  
The bride does not come.  
He climbs to the top of the roof and looks  
in the direction of the sun.  
He utters his dreadful cry: Léon! Léon!  
This is how he calls his bride.  
He sees nothing coming and no one replies.  
Accustomed to this, the fowl do not even  
raise their heads. They are tired of admiring him.  
He climbs back down into the yard, so convinced of  
being handsome that he is incapable of resentment.  
His wedding will be tomorrow.  
And, not knowing what to do with the rest  
of the day, he heads for the porch.  
He ascends the steps, like steps of a temple,  
with an official stride.  
He lifts his tail-coat, heavy with the  
eyes which were unable to detach themselves.  
He rehearses the ceremony once more.*

The cricket

*This is the time when, tired of wandering,  
the black insect returns from his walk and  
carefully repairs the disorder about his domain.  
First he rakes his narrow, sandy paths.  
He makes some sawdust which he spreads  
on the threshold of his retreat.  
He files at the root of this tall grass  
which is likely to annoy him.  
He rests.  
Then he rewinds his tiny watch.  
Has he finished? Is it broken?  
He rests again for a while longer.  
He enters his home and shuts the door.  
He spends a long time turning his key in the  
delicate lock.  
And he listens:  
Nothing to fear outside.  
But he does not feel at ease.  
And as though by a little chain whose pulley creaks,  
he climbs down into the depths of the earth.  
Nothing more can be heard.  
In the silent countryside, the poplars stretch up  
like fingers in the air and point to the moon.*

### Le cygne

Il glisse sur le bassin, comme un traîneau blanc, de nuage en nuage.  
Car il n'a faim que des nuages floconneux qu'il voit naître, bouger, et se perdre dans l'eau. C'est l'un d'eux qu'il désire.  
Il le vise du bec, et il plonge tout à coup son col vêtu de neige.  
Puis, tel un bras de femme sort d'une manche, il le retire.  
Il n'a rien.  
Il regarde: les nuages effarouchés ont disparu. Il ne reste qu'un instant désabusé, car les nuages tardent peu à revenir, et, là-bas, où meurent les ondulations de l'eau, en voici un qui se reforme.  
Doucement, sur son léger coussin de plumes, le cygne rame et s'approche...  
Il s'épuise à pêcher de vains reflets, et peut-être qu'il mourra, victime de cette illusion, avant d'attraper un seul morceau de nuage.  
Mais qu'est-ce que je dis?  
Chaque fois qu'il plonge, il fouille du bec la vase nourissante et ramène un ver.  
Il engraisse comme une oie.

### Le martin-pêcheur

Ça n'a pas mordu, ce soir, mais je rapporte une rare émotion.  
Comme je tenais ma perche de ligne tendue, un martin-pêcheur est venu s'y poser.  
Nous n'avons pas d'oiseau plus éclatant.  
Il semblait une grosse fleur bleue au bout d'une longue tige.  
La perche pliait sous le poids.  
Je ne respirais plus, tout fier d'être pris pour un arbre par un martin-pêcheur.  
Et je suis sûr qu'il ne s'est pas envolé de peur, mais qu'il a cru qu'il ne faisait que passer d'une branche à une autre.

### La pintade

C'est la bossue de ma cour.  
Elle ne rêve que plaies à cause de sa bosse.  
  
Les poules ne lui disent rien:  
 brusquement, elle se précipite et les harcèle.  
Puis elle baisse la tête, penche le corps, et, de toute la vitesse de ses pattes maigres, elle court frapper, de son bec dur, juste au centre de la roue d'une dinde.  
Cette poseuse l'agaçait.  
Ainsi, la tête bleuie, ses barbillons à vif, cocardière, elle rage, du matin au soir  
Elle se bat sans motif, peut-être parce qu'elle s'imagine toujours qu'on se moque de sa

### The swan

*He glides over the lake, like a white sleigh, from cloud to cloud.  
For he is only hungry for the fleecy clouds that he sees born, move, and disappear in the water.  
It is for one of those that he longs.  
He takes aim with his beak, and suddenly plunges his snowy neck into the water.  
Then, like a woman's arm withdrawing from a sleeve, he draws it out again.  
He has nothing.  
He looks: the startled clouds have vanished.  
Only for a moment is he disenchanted, for the clouds don't tarry on their return, and over there, where the ripples on the water are dying, there is another re-forming.  
Gently, on his light cushion of feathers, the swan paddles and draws near...  
He is exhausting himself by fishing for empty reflections and perhaps he will die, a victim of this illusion, before catching a single morsel of cloud.  
But what am I saying?  
Each time that he dives, he searches the nourishing mud with his beak and brings out a worm.  
He is fattening like a goose.*

### The kingfisher

*Not one bite this evening, but I bring back a rare experience.  
As I was holding my rod out-stretched, a kingfisher came and perched on it.  
We have no more dazzling bird.  
He seemed like a big blue flower at the end of a long stalk.  
The rod sagged beneath the weight.  
I held my breath, so proud of being taken for a tree by a kingfisher.  
And I am sure that he did not fly away through fear but that he thought that he was just going from one branch to another.*

### The guinea-hen

*She's the hunchback of my yard.  
She dreams of nothing but trouble because of her hump.  
The hens say nothing to her:  
suddenly she dives in and harasses them.  
Then she lowers her head, leans her body, and as fast as her skinny legs will carry her, she runs and strikes, with her hard beak, the very centre of a turkey's tail-wheel.  
This show-off irritated her.  
In this way, blue in the face, her beard flapping, bumptious, she rages from dawn till dusk.  
She fights without reason, perhaps because she still imagines that she is mocked for*

taille, de son crâne chauve et de sa queue basse.  
 Et elle ne cesse de jeter un cri discordant  
 qui perce l'air comme une pointe.  
 Parfois elle quitte la cour et disparaît.  
 Elle laisse aux volailles pacifiques un  
 moment de répit.  
 Mais elle revient plus turbulente et plus criarde.  
 Et, frénétique, elle se vautre par terre.  
 Qu'a-t-elle donc?  
 La sournoise fait une farce.  
 Elle est allée pondre son œuf à la campagne.  
 Je peux le chercher si ça m'amuse.  
 Et elle se roule dans la poussière, comme  
 une bossue.

*her size, her bald head and for her low tail.*  
*And she never stops uttering her rasping*  
*cry, which pierces the air like a needle.*  
*Sometimes she leaves the yard and disappears.*  
*She gives the peaceful fowl a moment*  
*of respite.*  
*But she returns even more turbulent and more noisy.*  
*And, in a frenzy, she wallows in the dirt.*  
*Whatever can be the matter with her?*  
*The sly creature is playing a joke.*  
*She has gone to lay her egg in the country.*  
*I can look for it should I so wish.*  
*And she rolls in the dust, like*  
*a hunchback.*

**The Songs of Travel (1904) (copyright 1905-1960)**  
**Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)**  
**on poems by Robert Louis Stevenson**

*The Vagabond*

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

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

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

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

*Let Beauty Awake*

Let beauty awake in the morn from  
 beautiful dreams,  
 Beauty awake from rest!  
 Let beauty awake for beauty's sake-  
 In the hour when the birds awake in the brake  
 And the stars are bright in the west!

Let beauty awake in the eve from the  
 slumber of day,  
 Awake in the crimson eve!  
 In the day's dusk end  
 When the shades ascend  
 Let her wake to the kiss of a tender friend,  
 To render again and receive!

*The Roadside Fire*

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight,  
 Of birdsong at morning and starshine 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.

*Youth and Love*

To the heart of youth, the world is a highway side.  
Passing forever, he fares; and on either hand,  
Deep in the gardens golden pavilions hide,  
Nestle in orchard bloom, and far on the level land  
Call him with lighted lamp in the eventide.

*In Dreams*

In dreams unhappy, I behold you stand as heretofore:  
The unremembered tokens in your hand avail no more.  
No more the morning glow, no more the grace,  
enshrines, endears.  
Cold beats the light of time upon your face  
and shows your tears.

*The Infinite Shining Heavens*

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.

*Whither must I wander?*

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;  
King 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.

*Bright is the ring of words*

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.

*I have trod the upward and the downward slope*

I have trod the upward and the downward slope;  
I have endured and done in days before;

Thick as stars at night, when the moon is down  
Pleasures assail him. He to his nobler fate  
Fares; and but waves a hand as he passes on,  
Cries but a wayside word to her at the garden gate,  
Sings but a boyish stave and his face is gone.

He came and went. Perchance you wept a  
while and then forgot.  
Ah me! But he that left you with a smile  
forgets you not.

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

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

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

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

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.

I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope;  
And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.