



Sunday 26 October, 7.30pm
St George's Church

ON THE WINGS OF A SONG

Helen Charlston *mezzo-soprano*

Consone Quartet

Agata Daraškaite *violin*

Magdalena Loth-Hill *violin*

Elitsa Bogdanova *viola*

George Ross *cello*

Clara Schumann 1819–1896
arr. Bill Thorp

Sechs Lieder Op. 13
1. Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen
2. Sie liebten sich beide
3. Liebeszauber
4. Der Mond kommt still gegangen
5. Ich hab' in deinem Auge
6. Die stille Lotosblume

Felix Mendelssohn 1809–1847

Four Pieces Op. 81
1. Theme and Variations
2. Scherzo
3. Capriccio
4. Fuga

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Felix Mendelssohn	Auf Flügeln des Gesanges Op. 34 No. 2
Fanny Mendelssohn 1805–1847	Die Mainacht
Fanny Mendelssohn	Mayenlied
Felix Mendelssohn arr. Bill Thorp	Die Liebende schreibt Op. 86 No. 3
Robert Schumann 1810–1856 arr. Bill Thorp	Frauenliebe und -leben 1. Seit ich ihn gesehen 2. Er, der Herrlichste von allen 3. Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben 4. Du Ring an meinem Finger 5. Helft mir, ihr Schwestern 6. Süßer Freund, du blickest mich verwundert an 7. An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust 8. Nun hast du mir den ersten schmerz getan

Whilst there is no historical precedent for arranging songs in the style you'll hear tonight, one cannot help but imagine that expanding these songs to include string instruments might just be the sort of fun that was had at domestic evenings of music-making, at which these songs would have been first heard. Consider the success of Haydn's Scottish Songs written for voice and string trio or Schubert's inclusion of solo Clarinet in Shepherd on the Rock and our dream to swap the piano for string quartet then doesn't seem so far away.

The music

'On the wings of a song,
I'll carry you, my love, away,
Away...'

Heinrich Heine

Sechs Lieder Op. 13 show Clara Schumann's talents as a miniaturist, each song conjuring its own atmosphere with immense clarity: from the inevitability of sadness to the excitement of new love. The set ends with a musical question mark in the seemingly unfinished final chord of 'Die stille Lotosblume'; are we left in the devastation of loss or the joy of love? Perhaps it is for us to decide.

Siblings Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn wrote prolifically in their short lives, and their song output has become somewhat entwined, as some of Fanny's earliest songs were erroneously published under her brother's name. Today we hear from them both.

The four pieces that make up Felix's Op. 81 were written at various points in his life and were never intended as a set. The Theme and Variations and Scherzo were meant to form another quartet that he never completed. Capitalising on his popularity following his

death, his publisher combined these movements with the earlier Fuga (1827) and Capriccio (1843) and published them as Op. 81 in 1849.

In their songs, Felix shows us the breadth of his expression from simplicity in 'Auf Flügeln des Gesanges' to the extravagance of 'Die Liebende schreibt'. Fanny guides us through a world bursting with joy in 'Mayenlied' and stops time in her enchanting 'Mainacht'.

Frauenliebe und-leben traces a distinctly 19th-century vision of womanhood: from helpless teenage lover, to wife, mother and widow. 'Seit ich ihn gesehen' plunges us headlong into the tunnel vision of love. Schumann perfectly captures the tussle between hesitation and overwhelming possibility as the depth of feeling dawns on our protagonist.

Brimming with energy, 'Er der Herrlichste von allen' begins as a celebratory ode to the beloved – the most wonderful of all, gentle, loving, clear of mind and firm in resolve. Love is reciprocated in 'Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben'. His assurances of love are recalled as if in a dream, but secure nonetheless: "I am yours forever". The music flipflops between breathless disbelief at such a declaration and extroverted glimpses of passion, before reality sets in.

'Du Ring an meinem Finger' is a hymn of rapt devotion and commitment. Schumann seems to stop time, leaving all doubt and hesitation behind. With its gently rolling quaver counter-subject, and subtle transformations of the exquisite melody each time it returns, this song finds comfort in complete surrender.

The waves of arpeggios that open 'Helft mir, ihr Schwestern' shake us out of that serene world as suddenly as it arrived. Schumann's bubbling arpeggios depict the bustle, nerves and anticipation of a wedding day eventually dissolving into a wedding march.

'Süßer Freund, du blickest mich verwundert an' is really a duet with a silent partner – the beloved, struck dumb with the same disbelief and joy that has carried our protagonist through the cycle. "Why do you look at me in surprise... how can you not understand why I weep... a feeling anxious yet so blissful." Schumann spares us the words of her revelation: that she is pregnant, leaving it to the beauty of this intimate song to share this extraordinary news.

'An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust' finds the new mother lovingly holding her baby in her arms, an arching semiquaver pattern following her rocking or bouncing the child. We hear echoes of the excited arpeggios in 'Helft mir ihr Schwestern'. Perhaps this child had already been in their mother's eye on the wedding day.

The final song begins with startling anger, as this beloved man has, for the first time, caused her pain by dying. The held chords of 'Süßer Freund' return but now with stark minor and diminished harmonies and dramatic *sforzandi*. Yet the anger and the singer eventually retreat. Tempo, dynamic and tessitura disappear until the final line "You are my world" sparks a poignant return to the opening.

Helen Charlston

The texts

Sechs Lieder Op. 13

Translations © Richard Stokes, author of: *The Book of Lieder* (Faber); *The Complete Songs of Hugo Wolf* (Faber), provided via Oxford International Song Festival (oxfordsong.org)

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen

Ich stand in dunklen Träumen
Und starrte ihr Bildnis an,
Und das geliebte Antlitz
Heimlich zu leben begann.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich
Ein Lächeln wunderbar,
Und wie von Wehmutstränen
Erglänzte ihr Augenpaar.

Auch meine Tränen flossen
Mir von den Wangen herab –
Und ach, ich kann's nicht glauben,
Dass ich dich verloren hab!

Text © Heinrich Heine, provided via Oxford
International Song Festival (oxfordsong.org)

Sie liebten sich beide

Sie liebten sich beide, doch keiner
Wollt' es dem andern gestehn;
Sie sahen sich an so feindlich,
Und wollten vor Liebe vergehn.

Sie trennten sich endlich und sah'n sich
Nur noch zuweilen im Traum;
Sie waren längst gestorben
Und wussten es selber kaum.

Text © Heinrich Heine, provided via Oxford
International Song Festival (oxfordsong.org)

Liebeszauber

Die Liebe saß als Nachtigall
Im Rosenbusch und sang;
Es flog der wunderschöne Schall
Den grünen Wald entlang.

I Stood Darkly Dreaming

I stood darkly dreaming
And stared at her picture,
And that beloved face
Sprang mysteriously to life.

About her lips
A wondrous smile played,
And as with sad tears,
Her eyes gleamed.

And my tears flowed
Down my cheeks,
And ah, I cannot believe
That I have lost you!

Translation © Richard Stokes

They Loved One Another

They loved one another, but neither
Wished to tell the other;
They gave each other such hostile looks,
Yet nearly died of love.

In the end they parted and saw
Each other but rarely in dreams.
They died so long ago
And hardly knew it themselves.

Translation © Richard Stokes

Love's magic

Love, as a nightingale,
Perched on a rosebush and sang;
The wondrous sound floated
Along the green forest.

Und wie er klang, – da stieg im Kreis
Aus tausend Kelchen Duft,
Und alle Wipfel rauschten leis',
Und leiser ging die Luft;

Die Bäche schwiegen, die noch kaum
Geplätschert von den Höh'n,
Die Rehlein standen wie im Traum
Und lauschten dem Getön.

Und hell und immer heller floß
Der Sonne Glanz herein,
Um Blumen, Wald und Schlucht ergoß
Sich goldig roter Schein.

Ich aber zog den Wald entlang
Und hörte auch den Schall.
Ach! was seit jener Stund' ich sang,
War nur sein Widerhall.

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International Song Festival (oxfordsong.org)

Der Mond kommt still gegangen

Der Mond kommt still gegangen
Mit seinem gold'nen Schein.
Da schläft in holdem Prangen
Die müde Erde ein.

Und auf den Lüften schwanken
Aus manchem treuen Sinn
Viel tausend Liebesgedanken
Über die Schläfer hin.

Und drunten im Tale, da funkeln
Die Fenster von Liebchens Haus;
Ich aber blicke im Dunklen
Still in die Welt hinaus.

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International Song Festival (oxfordsong.org)

Ich hab' in deinem Auge

Ich hab' in deinem Auge
Den Strahl der ewigen Liebe gesehen,
Ich sah auf deinen Wangen
Einmal die Rosen des Himmels stehn.

And as it sounded, there arose a scent
From a thousand calyxes,
And all the treetops rustled softly,
And the breeze moved softer still;

The brooks fell silent, barely
Having babbled from the heights,
The fawns stood as if in a dream
And listened to the sound.

Brighter, and ever brighter
The sun shone on the scene,
And poured its red glow
Over flowers, forest and glen.

But I made my way along the path
And also heard the sound.
Ah! all that I've sung since that hour
Was merely its echo.

Translation © Richard Stokes

The moon rises silently

The moon rises silently
With its golden glow.
The weary earth then falls asleep
In beauty and splendour.

Many thousand loving thoughts
From many faithful minds
Sway on the breezes
Over those who slumber.

And down in the valley
The windows sparkle of my beloved's house;
But I in the darkness gaze
Silently out into the world.

Translation © Richard Stokes

I saw in your eyes

I saw in your eyes
The ray of eternal love,
I saw on your cheeks
The roses of heaven.

Und wie der Strahl im Aug' erlischt
Und wie die Rosen zerstieben,
Ihr Abglanz ewig neu erfrischt,
Ist mir im Herzen geblieben,

Und niemals werd' ich die Wangen seh'n
Und nie in's Auge dir blicken,
So werden sie mir in Rosen steh'n
Und es den Strahl mir schicken.

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Die stille Lotosblume

Die stille Lotosblume
Steigt aus dem blauen See,
Die Blätter flimmern und blitzen,
Der Kelch ist weiß wie Schnee.

Da gießt der Mond vom Himmel
All seinen gold'nen Schein,
Gießt alle seine Strahlen
In ihren Schoß hinein.

Im Wasser um die Blume
Kreiset ein weißer Schwan,
Er singt so süß, so leise
Und schaut die Blume an.

Er singt so süß, so leise
Und will im Singen vergehn.
O Blume, weiße Blume,
Kannst du das Lied verstehn?

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International Song Festival (oxfordsong.org)

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges,
Herzliebchen, trag ich dich fort,
Fort nach den Fluren des Ganges,
Dort weiß ich den schönsten Ort.

Dort liegt ein rotblühender Garten
Im stillen Mondenschein;
Die Lotosblumen erwarten
Ihr trautes Schwesterlein.

And as the ray dies in your eyes,
And as the roses scatter,
Their reflection, forever new,
Has remained in my heart,

And never will I look at your cheeks,
And never will I gaze into your eyes,
And not see the glow of roses,
And the ray of love.

Translation © Richard Stokes

The silent lotus flower

The silent lotus flower
Rises out of the blue lake,
Its leaves glitter and glow,
Its cup is as white as snow.

The moon then pours from heaven
All its golden light,
Pours all its rays
Into the lotus flower's bosom.

In the water, round the flower,
A white swan circles,
It sings so sweetly, so quietly,
And gazes on the flower.

It sings so sweetly, so quietly,
And wishes to die as it sings.
O flower, white flower,
Can you fathom the song?

Translation © Richard Stokes

On wings of song

On wings of song
I'll bear you, beloved, away,
Away to the fields by the Ganges
Where I know the loveliest spot.

A red-blossoming garden lies there
In the quiet light of the moon;
The lotus flowers await
Their dear little sister.

Die Veilchen kichern und kosen,
Und schaun nach den Sternen empor;
Heimlich erzählen die Rosen
Sich duftende Märchen ins Ohr.

Es hüpfen herbei und lauschen
Die frommen, klugen Gazellen;
Und in der Ferne rauschen
Des heiligen Stromes Wellen.

Dort wollen wir niedersinken
Unter dem Palmenbaum,
Und Liebe und Ruhe trinken,
Und träumen seligen Traum.

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International Song Festival (oxfordsong.org)

Die Mainacht

Wann der silberne Mond durch die Gesträuche
blinkt,
Und sein schlummerndes Licht über den Rasen
streut,
Und die Nachtigall flötet,
Wandl' ich traurig von Busch zu Busch.

Selig preis' ich dich dann, flötende Nachtigall,
Weil dein Weibchen mit dir wohnt in Einem
Nest,
Ihrem singenden Gatten
Tausend trauliche Küsse giebt.

Überhüllet von Laub girret ein Taubenpaar
Sein Entzücken mir vor; aber ich wende mich,
Suche dunklere Schatten,
Und die einsame Thräne rinnt.

Text © Ludwig Christoph Heinrich Hölty,
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The violets titter and flirt
And gaze up at the stars;
Secretly the roses whisper
Fragrant tales to each other.

The knowing and innocent gazelles
Come leaping up to listen;
And in the distance murmur
The waves of the sacred stream.

Let us lie down by its banks,
Underneath the palm,
And drink in love and peace
And dream a blissful dream.

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The May Night

When the silver moon shines through the
shrubbery
and casts its drowsy light over the grass;

when the nightingale warbles,
I wander mournfully from bush to bush.

Then I deem you blessed, fluting nightingale,
because your sweetheart dwells with you in a
single nest,
and gives a thousand loving kisses
to her warbling mate.

Concealed in foliage, a pair of doves
coo to me in delight; but I turn away
in search of deeper shadows,
and shed a solitary tear.

Translation © Richard Wigmore, author of
Schubert: The Complete Song Texts (Schirmer
Books), provided via Oxford International Song
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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: Joseph Karl Benedikt, Freiherr von
Eichendorff

Die Liebende schreibt

Ein Blick von deinen Augen in die meinen,
Ein Kuß von deinem Mund auf meinem Munde,
Wer davon hat, wie ich, gewisse Kunde,
Mag dem was anders wohl erfreulich scheinen?

Entfernt von dir, entfremdet von den Meinen,
Da führ ich die Gedanken in die Runde,
Und immer treffen sie auf jene Stunde,
Die einzige; da fang ich an zu weinen.

Die Träne trocknet wieder unversehens:
Er liebt ja, denk ich, her in diese Stille,
O solltest du nicht in die Ferne reichen?

Vernimm das Lispeln dieses Liebewehens;
Mein einzig Glück auf Erden ist dein Wille,
Dein freundlicher, zu mir; gib mir ein Zeichen!

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May Song

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 © Emily Ezust, from the
LiederNet Archive

The Beloved Writes

One glance from your eyes into mine,
One kiss from your mouth onto my mouth,
Who, like me, is assured of these,
Can he take pleasure in anything else?

Far from you, estranged from my family,
I let my thoughts rove constantly,
And always they fix on that hour,
That precious hour; and I begin to weep.

Suddenly my tears grow dry again:
His love, I think, he sends into this silence,
And should you not reach out into the
distance?

Receive the murmurs of this loving sigh;
Your will is my sole happiness on earth,
Your kind will; give me a sign!

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Frauenliebe und -leben

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Seit ich ihn gesehen

Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub ich blind zu sein;
Wo ich hin nur blicke,
Seh ich ihn allein;
Wie im wachen Traume
Schwebt sein Bild mir vor,
Taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel,
Heller nur empor.

Sonst ist licht- und farblos
Alles um mich her,
Nach der Schwestern Spiele
Nicht begehrt ich mehr,
Möchte lieber weinen,
Still im Kämmerlein;
Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub ich blind zu sein.

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Er, der Herrlichste von allen

Er, der Herrlichste von allen,
Wie so milde, wie so gut!
Holde Lippen, klares Auge,
Heller Sinn und fester Mut.

So wie dort in blauer Tiefe,
Hell und herrlich, jener Stern,
Also er an meinem Himmel,
Hell und herrlich, hehr und fern.

Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen;
Nur betrachten deinen Schein,
Nur in Demut ihn betrachten,
Selig nur und traurig sein!

Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,
Deinem Glücke nur geweiht;
Darfst mich niedre Magd nicht kennen,
Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!

Since first seeing him

Since first seeing him,
I think I am blind,
Wherever I look,
Him only I see;
As in a waking dream
His image hovers before me,
Rising out of deepest darkness
Ever more brightly.

All else is dark and pale
Around me,
My sisters' games
I no more long to share,
I would rather weep
Quietly in my room;
Since first seeing him,
I think I am blind.

Translation © Richard Stokes

He, the most wonderful of all

He, the most wonderful of all,
How gentle and loving he is!
Sweet lips, bright eyes,
A clear mind and firm resolve.

Just as there in the deep-blue distance
That star gleams bright and brilliant,
So does he shine in my sky,
Bright and brilliant, distant and sublime.

Wander, wander on your way,
Just to gaze on your radiance,
Just to gaze on in humility,
To be but blissful and sad!

Do not heed my silent prayer,
Uttered for your happiness alone,
You shall never know me, lowly as I am,
You noble star of splendour!

Nur die Würdigste von allen
Darf beglücken deine Wahl,
Und ich will die Hohe segnen,
Viele tausendmal.

Will mich freuen dann und weinen,
Selig, selig bin ich dann;
Sollte mir das Herz auch brechen,
Brich, o Herz, was liegt daran?

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Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben,
Es hat ein Traum mich berückt;
Wie hätt er doch unter allen
Mich Arme erhöht und beglückt?

Mir war's, er habe gesprochen:
„Ich bin auf ewig dein“—
Mir war's—ich träume noch immer,
Es kann ja nimmer so sein.

O lass im Traume mich sterben,
Gewieget an seiner Brust,
Den seligen Tod mich schlürfen
In Tränen unendlicher Lust.

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Du Ring an meinem Finger

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringlein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

Ich hatt ihn ausgeträumet,
Der Kindheit friedlich schönen Traum,
Ich fand allein mich, verloren
Im öden, unendlichen Raum.

Du Ring an meinem Finger
Da hast du mich erst belehrt,
Hast meinem Blick erschlossen
Des Lebens unendlichen, tiefen Wert.

Only the worthiest woman of all
May your choice elate,
And I shall bless that exalted one
Many thousands of times.

Then shall I rejoice and weep,
Blissful, blissful shall I be,
Even if my heart should break,
Break, O heart, what does it matter?

Translation © Richard Stokes

I cannot grasp it, believe it

I cannot grasp it, believe it,
A dream has beguiled me;
How, from all women, could he
Have exalted and favoured poor me?

He said, I thought,
'I am yours forever',
I was, I thought, still dreaming,
After all, it can never be.

O let me, dreaming, die,
Cradled on his breast;
Let me savour blissful death
In tears of endless joy.

Translation © Richard Stokes

You ring on my finger

You ring on my finger,
My golden little ring,
I press you devoutly to my lips,
To my heart.

I had finished dreaming
Childhood's peaceful dream,
I found myself alone, forlorn
In boundless desolation.

You ring on my finger,
You first taught me,
Opened my eyes
To life's deep eternal worth.

Ich will ihm dienen, ihm leben,
Ihm angehören ganz,
Hin selber mich geben und finden
Verklärt mich in seinem Glanz.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringlein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

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Helft mir, ihr Schwestern

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
Freundlich mich schmücken,
Dient der Glücklichen heute mir,
Windet geschäftig
Mir um die Stirne
Noch der blühenden Myrte Zier.

Als ich befriedigt,
Freudigen Herzens,
Sonst dem Geliebten im Arme lag,
Immer noch rief er,
Sehnsucht im Herzen,
Ungeduldig den heutigen Tag.

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
Helft mir verscheuchen
Eine törichte Bangigkeit,
Dass ich mit klarem
Aug ihn empfange,
Ihn, die Quelle der Freudigkeit.

Bist, mein Geliebter,
Du mir erschienen,
Giebst du mir, Sonne, deinen Schein?
Lass mich in Andacht,
Lass mich in Demut,
Lass mich verneigen dem Herren mein.

Streuet ihm, Schwestern,
Streuet ihm Blumen,
Bringet ihm knospende Rosen dar,
Aber euch, Schwestern,
Grüss ich mit Wehmut,
Freudig scheidend aus eurer Schar.

I shall serve him, live for him,
Belong to him wholly,
Yield to him and find
Myself transfigured in his light.

You ring on my finger,
My golden little ring,
I press you devoutly to my lips,
To my heart.

Translation © Richard Stokes

Help me, my sisters

Help me, my sisters,
With my bridal attire,
Serve me today in my joy,
Busily braid
About my brow
The wreath of blossoming myrtle.

When with contentment
And joy in my heart
I lay in my beloved's arms,
He still called,
With longing heart,
Impatiently for this day.

Help me, my sisters,
Help me banish
A foolish fearfulness;
So that I with bright eyes
May receive him,
The source of all my joy.

Have you, my love,
Really entered my life,
Do you, O sun, give me your glow?
Let me in reverence,
Let me in humility
Bow before my lord.

Scatter flowers, O sisters,
Scatter flowers before him,
Bring him budding roses.
But you, sisters,
I greet with sadness,
As I joyfully take leave of you.

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Süsser Freund, du blickest

Süsser Freund, du blickest
Mich verwundert an,
Kannst es nicht begreifen,
Wie ich weinen kann;
Lass der feuchten Perlen
Ungewohnte Zier
Freudig hell erzittern
In dem Auge mir!

Wie so bang mein Busen,
Wie so wonnevoll!
Wüsst ich nur mit Worten,
Wie ich's sagen soll;
Komm und birg dein Antlitz
Hier an meiner Brust,
Will in's Ohr dir flüstern
Alle meine Lust.

Weisst du nun die Tränen,
Die ich weinen kann,
Sollst du nicht sie sehen,
Du geliebter Mann?
Bleib an meinem Herzen,
Fühle dessen Schlag,
Dass ich fest und fester
Nur dich drücken mag.

Hier an meinem Bette
Hat die Wiege Raum,
Wo sie still verberge
Meinen holden Traum;
Kommen wird der Morgen,
Wo der Traum erwacht,
Und daraus dein Bildnis
Mir entgegen lacht.

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Translation © Richard Stokes

Sweet friend, you look

Sweet friend, you look
At me in wonder,
You cannot understand
How I can weep;
Let the unfamiliar beauty
Of these moist pearls
Tremble joyfully bright
In my eyes!

How anxious my heart is,
How full of bliss!
If only I knew
How to say it in words;
Come and hide your face
Here against my breast,
For me to whisper you
All my joy.

Do you now understand the tears
That I can weep,
Should you not see them,
Beloved husband?
Stay by my heart,
Feel how it beats,
That I may press you
Closer and closer.

Here by my bed
There is room for the cradle,
Silently hiding
My blissful dream;
The morning shall come
When the dream awakens,
And your likeness
Laughs up at me.

Translation © Richard Stokes

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!

Das Glück ist die Liebe, die Lieb ist das Glück,
Ich hab's gesagt und nehm's nicht zurück.

Hab überschwenglich mich geschätzt,
Bin überglücklich aber jetzt.

Nur die da säugt, nur die da liebt
Das Kind, dem sie die Nahrung giebt;

Nur eine Mutter weiss allein,
Was lieben heisst und glücklich sein.

O, wie bedaur' ich doch den Mann,
Der Mutterglück nicht fühlen kann!

Du lieber, lieber Engel, Du
Du schauest mich an und lächelst dazu!

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!

Text © Adelbert von Chamisso, provided via
Oxford International Song Festival
(oxfordsong.org)

Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan

Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan,
Der aber traf.
Du schläfst, du harter, unbarmherz'ger Mann,
Den Todesschlaf.

Es blicket die Verlassne vor sich hin,
Die Welt ist leer.
Geliebet hab ich und gelebt, ich bin
Nicht lebend mehr.

Ich zieh' mich in mein Innres still zurück,
Der Schleier fällt,
Da hab ich dich und mein verlornes Glück,
Du meine Welt!

Text © Adelbert von Chamisso, provided via
Oxford International Song Festival
(oxfordsong.org)

On my heart, at my breast

On my heart, at my breast,
You my delight, my joy!

Happiness is love, love is happiness,
I've always said and say so still.

I thought myself rapturous,
But now am delirious with joy.

Only she who suckles, only she who loves
The child that she nourishes;

Only a mother knows
What it means to love and be happy.

Ah, how I pity the man
Who cannot feel a mother's bliss!

You dear, dear angel, you,
You look at me and you smile!

On my heart, at my breast,
You my delight, my joy!

Translation © Richard Stokes

Now you have caused me my first pain

Now you have caused me my first pain,
But it struck hard,
You sleep, you harsh and pitiless man,
The sleep of death.

The deserted one stares ahead,
The world is void.
I have loved and I have lived,
And now my life is done.

Silently I withdraw into myself,
The veil falls,
There I have you and my lost happiness,
You, my world!

Translation © Richard Stokes

The performers

Helen Charlston's ability to make each performance completely her own and her depth of connection with audiences has earned her international acclaim. She was the 2023 Gramophone Award winner for Best Concept Album and also collected the Vocal award at the BBC Music Magazine Awards for her second Delphian album: *Battle Cry*.

This season, Helen makes her debut at Dutch National Opera in the world premiere of Michel van der Aa's *Theory of Flames* in the role of Marianne. On the concert platform she sings the title role in Handel's *Solomon* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Mozart's Requiem at Casa da Música Porto under Andreas Spering and also the Czech Philharmonic under Giovanni Antonini, Bach's Mass in B minor with De Nederlandse Bachvereniging and Richard Egarr, Bach's St Matthew Passion with the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra under Laurence Cummings, and Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* on tour in Asia and Europe with Les Arts Florissants. In recital she collaborates with the Consone Quartet at the Brighton Early Music Festival and also at Oxford Song, with Sholto Kynoch at the Wimbledon Festival and the National Centre for Early Music amongst other venues, with Roman Rabinovich in Canada, and she performs an ensemble programme at Fundación Juan March in Madrid.

helencharlston.com

The **Consone Quartet** is the first period instrument string quartet selected as BBC New Generation Artists, celebrated for their expressive performances of classical and romantic repertoire. Formed at the Royal College of Music, they launched their professional career in 2015, earning multiple international awards, including a Borletti-Buitoni Trust fellowship in 2022. They have performed at major venues and festivals across Europe and North America and collaborated with artists such as Kristian Bezuidenhout and the Chiaroscuro Quartet.

Their recent projects include premieres by Gavin Bryars and Oliver Leith, reflecting a growing commitment to contemporary music. Education is central to their mission, with teaching roles at top institutions and community work in South Yorkshire. Their forward-thinking approach continues to shape a dynamic identity that bridges historical performance with fresh artistic exploration.

consonequartet.com

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