



“This concert is presented in association with Chamber Music New Zealand”

Julien Van Mellaerts and James Baillieu

Song selection

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Seligkeit (Bliss), 1816 – poem by Ludwig Heinrich Christoph Hölty
Der Musensohn (The Muse's son), 1822 – poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
Der Wanderer an den Mond (The Wanderer to the Moon), 1826 – poem by Johann Gabriel Seidl
Prometheus, 1819 – poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
Rastlose Liebe (Restless love), 1815 – poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Schubert *Lied* (plural *Lieder*) is quintessentially music-up-close – intimate music written for drawing room performance. What became known as Schubertiads were private concerts to a select number of invited guests in the house of one of Schubert's admirers. Schubert, who is often referred to (not quite accurately) as the 'father' of the *Lied*, championed this genre. *Lied* simply means 'song', but in this context it is a setting in which the piano is an equal partner with the voice. This selection of songs sets poems by Schubert's contemporaries to music, with the compositions always highly responsive to the meaning of the verse. The jubilation of *Der Musensohn* ('The Muses' son') captures the charming and animated character of the muse's son, while the piano accompaniment in *Rastlose Liebe* ('Restless love') is appropriately turbulent. *Seligkeit* ('Bliss') is a giddy waltz that matches the poem's mood of uncomplicated joy; *Der Wanderer an den Mond's* neatly strummed and purposeful piano accompaniment becomes flowing and serene as the poem's wanderer approaches enlightenment.

Dichterliebe: settings of poems by Heinrich Heine

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

I *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai* (In the glorious month of May)
II *Aus meinen Tränen sprühen* (From my tears spring up)
III *Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube, die Sonne* (The rose, the lily, the dove, the sun)
IV *Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'* (When I look into your eyes)
V *Ich will meine Seele tauchen* (I want to bathe my soul)
VI *Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome* (In the Rhine, the holy river)
VII *Ich grolle nicht* (I don't complain)
VIII *Und wüßten's die Blumen, die kleinen* (And if the flowers knew, the tiny ones)
IX *Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen* (There's fluting and violin-playing)
X *Hör' ich das Liedchen klingen* (When I hear the little song playing)

- XI *Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen* (A young man loved a girl)
- XII *Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen* (On a radiant summer morning)
- XIII *Ich hab' im Traum geweinet* (I wept in my dream)
- XIV *Allnächtlich im Traume seh' ich dich* (Every night in my dreams I see you)
- XV *Aus alten Märchen winkt es hervor* (From old fairy tales it beckons)
- XVI *Die alten, bösen Lieder* (The old, bad songs)

Schumann's *Dichterliebe* ('A Poet's Love') was written in 1840 during his remarkable *Liederjahr* – a 'year of song', in which he composed more than half of his total lyrical output. The cycle, which was written very quickly over a period of nine days, sets a group of poems by the German Romantic Heinrich Heine to music. Heine's poems are prefaced by the story of a lonely knight who has been seduced by a wood nymph. The rest of the work describes a feverish and ultimately unfulfilled love, the knight's dreams punctuated by fairytales, legends and songs of love betrayed.

The *Dichterliebe* was written shortly before Schumann's long-awaited marriage to the composer and pianist Clara Wieck. After years of battle with Friedrich Wieck – Clara's father and Schumann's former piano teacher – a court decision finally enabled the couple to marry in August 1840. The love and turmoil expressed in the cycle has often been related to the high emotions of this time in Schumann's life.

The *Dichterliebe* was not performed in full until 1861, after Schumann's death. It is remarkable for the care with which Schumann has set Heine's verse – the music meeting perfectly with the meaning, metre, and emphasis of the poems. Schumann uses the piano to define the mood and emotion of each song, and the cycle recognizes the important role that the piano could play in vocal music – as equal partner rather than accompaniment.

Ornithological Anecdotes

Gareth Farr (b. 1968)

Dotterel
Takahe
Huia
Tui

Gareth Farr, one of our most feted New Zealand composers, has an extensive list of works, including vocal works, but not until *Ornithological Anecdotes* has he written just for voice and piano. This commission, instigated by Julien van Mellaerts, brings Farr together with arguably this country's greatest living poet, Bill Manhire (b. 1946).

'Dotterel' is inspired by watching these brave little birds protecting their young on the sandspit at Opoutere. The filigree of sound in the accompaniment captures the lightness ('a fluttering and a scurrying') of the text. The Takahe, on the other hand, ('plod a lot') has an asymmetrical, galumphing 5/8 metre. Manhire's 'Huia' poem captures all the sadnesses associated with this vanished bird: its iconic beauty, its musical call (Ngā Taonga Sound and Vision say that their recording of Henare Hāmāna remembering the sound of the huia is their most requested item), and the damage wrought by human greed. Farr's setting, with its pianissimo arpeggiated chords and haunting repeated call, is beautifully apt. Finally the Tui. Manhire's poem, with its whimsical tone, portrays the tui as a show-off and a talented mimic. Farr's setting (marked 'cocky – with attitude') plays with the tui's call – principally the high-pitched, flamboyantly virtuosic flourishes rather than the vulgar coda.

Commissioned with assistance from the Chamber Music New Zealand Trust and Wanaka Festival of Colour to be performed by Julien Van Mellaerts and James Baillieu

Folk Songs

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Sally in Our Alley
The Plough Boy
Down by the Sally Gardens
O Waly Waly
Oliver Cromwell

Like many of his contemporaries, Benjamin Britten was drawn to folk music from the 1930s. Between 1943 and 1976, initially while living in the United States, he arranged eight volumes of primarily English, Irish and French folk songs. Writing in 1940 that 'The chief attractions of English folksongs are the sweetness of the melodies, the close connection between words and music, and the quiet uneventful charm of the atmosphere', Britten took this material and boldly transformed it into his own distinctive work. The songs, full of emotion, humour and rich texture, are remarkable as much for their renewal of tradition as for the striking personality and skill of their arranger.

Ballads and legends

Lord Randall	David Farquhar (1928-2007)
Svarta rosor	Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)
Säv, säv, susa	Sibelius
Belsazar	Robert Schumann
Lorelei	Clara Schumann(1819-1896)
The Lorelei	George Gershwin (1898-1937)
The Tale of the Oyster	Cole Porter (1891-1964)

'Lord Randall' is from a group of three ballads written by the New Zealand composer David Farquhar in 1960, setting traditional Scottish poems to music. From an earlier period, but showing a similar interest in local, folk traditions, Jean Sibelius' songs – described by Fabian Dahlström and James Hepokoski as 'deeply melancholic and soberly chilling' – have Swedish texts: 'Svarta rosor' ('Black Roses') by the painter and poet Ernst Josephson (1851-1906) and Säv, säv, susa ('Sigh, rushes, sigh') by Gustaf Fröding (1860-1911). Sibelius, the champion of Finnish culture, grew up as part of a Swedish-speaking elite. As a young man he explained to his fiancé that he would reply to her letters in Swedish 'so that it does not take five minutes to write out each word'.

George Gershwin's 'Lorelei' (with lyrics by his brother, Ira) comes from the ill-fated 1933 musical *Pardon My English*. The comedy of the 'Lorelei' is supercharged through the implied reference to Heinrich Heine's poem (set as a *Lied* by Liszt, Clara Schumann and others). Heine's Lorelei, a mysterious *femme fatale* luring sailors to a tragic death becomes an exuberant protagonist in Ira Gershwin's hands.

Cole Porter's witty 'Tale of the Oyster' comes from the 1929 musical *Fifty Million Frenchman*. It repulsed at least one opening night critic, who called it a 'tasteless song of regurgitation'.

BIOGRAPHIES

“**Julien Van Mellaerts** has recently graduated from the Royal College of Music International Opera School, where he was a Fishmongers Scholar studying with Russell Smythe. On graduation, he was awarded the Tagore Gold Medal. Before moving to London, Julien studied music and languages at the University of Otago, NZ. Accolades include the Kiwi Music Scholarship and a Countess of Munster Award 2016/2017, winner of the 2016 Joan Chissell Schumann Song Prize, 2016 Brooks-Van Der Pump English Song Competition, and the 2015 Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards.

Recent operatic roles include: Second soldier and second Nazarene in Salome at the Verbier Festival with Charles Dutoit; Dandini in La Cenerentola with Diva Opera; Schaunard in La Bohème as a Christine Collins Young Artist at Opera Holland Park; Danilo in Lehar's The Merry Widow for Ryedale Festival; Le mari/le directeur in Poulenc's Les Mamelles de Tirésias, Mr Gedge in Albert Herring, and Eisenstein in Die Fledermaus at the RCMIOS.

Highlights this season include baritone soloist with the Royal Ballet in their production of Elizabeth, with performances at the Barbican and on tour, the world premiere of 'Christmas Carol' by Will Todd with Opera Holland Park, Schaunard in La Bohème with New Zealand Opera, the title role in Eugene Onegin with the Cambridge Philharmonic, the Referee in Mozart vs the Machine for Mahogany Opera Group, recitals with Julius Drake in Madrid, performances at Wigmore and Cadogan Hall, baritone soloist in Fauré Requiem at the Royal Albert Hall, and recitals at the London Song, Leeds Lieder and Oxford Lieder Festivals.”

“Described by *The Daily Telegraph* as ‘in a class of his own’ **James Baillieu** has been the prize-winner of the Wigmore Hall Song Competition, Das Lied International Song Competition, Kathleen Ferrier and Richard Tauber Competitions. He was selected for representation by Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) in 2010 and in 2012 received a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship and a Geoffrey Parsons Memorial Trust Award. In 2016 he was shortlisted for the Royal Philharmonic Society Outstanding Young Artist Award.

James has given solo and chamber recitals throughout Europe and further afield. He collaborates with a wide range of singers and instrumentalists including Lawrence Power, Jack Liebeck, the Elias and Heath Quartets, Ian Bostridge, Dame Kiri te Kanawa, Annette Dasch, Pumeza Matshikiza, Jamie Barton, Markus Werba and Catherine Wyn Rogers. Venues include Wigmore Hall, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Berlin Konzerthaus, Vienna Musikverein, the Barbican Centre London, Wiener Konzerthaus, Cologne Philharmonie and the Laeiszhalle Hamburg. Festivals include Festpillene i Bergen, Spitalfields, Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, Bath, City of London, Aix-en-Provence, Verbier, St Magnus, Derry, Norfolk & Norwich and Brighton Festivals. As a soloist, he has appeared with the Ulster Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra and the Wiener Kammerphilharmonie.

An innovative programmer, James has already curated a number of projects, including series for the Brighton Festival, Wigmore Hall, BBC Radio 3, Bath International Festival and Perth Concert Hall.”