



DEARTHE Ben Moore

DEAR THEO: The Red Vineyard • I Found a Woman • Little One • The Man I Have to Paint • When I'm at Work • Already Broken • Souvenir

- Paul Appleby, tenor

SO FREE AM I: Mutta • Interlude • Orinda Upon Little Hector Philips • Nervous Prostration • The Poem as Mask – Orpheus • Mettika

- Susanna Phillips, soprano

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE: My heart aches • O, for a draught • Fade far away •Away! away! • I cannot see what flowers • Darkling I listen • Thou wast not born for death • Adjeu!

- Brett Polegato, baritone

Bonus track: The Lake Isle of Innisfree

- Paul Appleby, tenor

Brian Zeger, piano



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DEARTHEO

3 Song Cycles by Ben Moore

Dear Theo (15:55) *

- 1. The Red Vineyard (3:09)
- 2. I Found a Woman (2:22)
- 3. Little One (1:54)
- 4. The Man I Have to Paint (1:47)
- 5. When I'm at Work (1:25)
- 6. Already Broken (2:16)
- 7. Souvenir (3:02)

So Free Am I (17:06) †

Commissioned by the Marilyn Horne Foundation and the ASCAP Foundation/ Charles Kingsford Fund

- 8. Mutta (1:35)
- 9. Interlude (3:55)
- 10. Orinda Upon Little Hector Philips (3:25)
- 11. Nervous Prostration (2:08)
- 12. The Poem as Mask Orpheus (3:40)
- 13. Mettika (2:23)

Ode to a Nightingale (23:06) §

- 14. My heart aches (3:06)
- 15. O, for a draught (3:10)
- 16. Fade far away (2:46)
- 17. Away! away! (1:25)
- 18. I cannot see what flowers (3:01)
- 19. Darkling I listen (3:29)
- 20. Thou wast not born for death (3:13)
- 21. Adieu! (2:56)

Bonus track: *

22. The Lake Isle of Innisfree (3:48)

Paul Appleby, tenor *
Susanna Phillips, soprano †
Brett Polegato, baritone §
Brian Zeger, piano

Total Playing Time: 60:23

Composer Ben Moore with pianist Brian Zeger



While a single song can open a window to new worlds in and of itself, a song *cycle* can go beyond that and take the listener on an extended psychological and emotional journey.

This album includes three recent song cycles: *Dear Theo*, *So Free Am I* and *Ode to a Nightingale*. Each represents a

distinct approach to the form. *Dear Theo* consists of seven songs that set passages from the letters of Vincent van Gogh to his brother Theo; *So Free Am I* comprises six settings of diverse poems by women from various time periods; and *Ode to a Nightingale* sets to music the great poem by John Keats in eight songs, essentially one for each of the eight stanzas.

As distinctly different as these cycles are, they have themes in common. One is the concept of freedom, or the longing for freedom. In Dear Theo, passages from Van Gogh's letters (translated into English from the original French and Dutch) express deeply held feelings that Vincent revealed to his brother, who was also his benefactor. The longing for freedom is ever-present: freedom from the financial constraints that burdened him throughout his life and freedom from the many barriers that he believed hindered his expression. Vincent persevered, even though he had no idea of how hugely popular and influential his work would become. I have tried to emphasize this poignant fact in the songs.

In So Free Am I, the voices of women are heard in poems that span many centuries. Commissioned by the Marilyn Horne Foundation in 2005, the cycle addresses, in very different ways, the longing to be liberated from the oppression of women that has prevailed for millennia. The title quotes the first line of "Mutta," from writings of Indian Buddhist nuns of the sixth century B.C. (translated from the ancient Pali language). Even from across

the centuries, these words still resonate powerfully. The phrase itself inspired a musical figure that appears in many of the songs serving to unify the cycle.

The longing to be free is also explored in Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale*. The nightingale, singing of summer "in full-throated ease," may embody freedom in its most idealized form. But the more one studies this great work of literature, the more levels of meaning come to light. I hope the listener will accept my particular response to these words which encompass so much of human experience.

Finally, in a bonus track, I have set Yeats' great poem, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," which might be viewed as the ultimate longing for freedom: the sound of "lake water lapping" in "the deep heart's core."

Ben Moore

Dear Theo

Based on letters of Vincent van Gogh to his brother Theo*

The Red Vineyard

"Dear Theo... my brother... if only you had been there when I saw the red vineyard, all red like red wine. In the distance it turned to yellow, and then a green sky with the sun, and the earth after the rain, violet, sparkling yellow here and there where it caught the reflection of the setting sun." (November 1888)

"Oh Theo, brother...I think that I must have a starry night with cypresses, in blue and yellow light, or surmounting a field of ripe corn...there are such wonderful nights here...I am in a continual fever of work! ...I hope the weather is as fine in Paris as it is here. Write as soon as you can.

Ever yours, Vincent" (April 1888)

I Found a Woman

"I found a woman, not young, not beautiful. But oh, this woman, she had a charm for me. It's not the first time I was unable to resist that feeling of affection, yes affection and love for these women, who are so damned and condemned. I do not condemn them...Would you think that I have never felt the need for love? We talked, about her life, about her cares, about her misery... about everything..." (December 1881)

Little One

"Often I think of your little one, Theo, and what he means to you now in your life. Surely it's better to have a child than to expend all one's vigor as I have. Often I think of him there in his cradle. But for myself, I'm too old, too old to desire something else. Yet often I think of your baby, your baby. Oh Theo, I'm hard at work and still I say it's better by far to have a child. But, for myself, that desire was gone long ago. Long ago. Gone." (Adapted from letter of July 1890)

The Man I Have to Paint

"I think of the man I have to paint. Terrible in the furnace of the full ardor of the harvest at the heart of the south. Hence the orange shades like storm flashes, vivid as red hot iron, and hence the luminous tones of the old gold in the shadows. Oh my dear boy, and the nice

people will only see the exaggeration as caricature! ... The only choice I have is between being a good painter and a bad one. I choose the first. But the needs of painting are like those of a ruinous mistress: you can do nothing without money. And you never have enough of it... If you should happen to send a little extra this month I would be most grateful." (August 1888)

When I'm at work

"But when I'm at work I feel an unlimited faith in art and that I shall succeed... And when doubt overwhelms me I try to defeat it by setting to work once again...Poverty is at my back but I'm still at work. I'm still at work...Gauguin and I, our arguments are electric!...And when that delirium of mine shakes all I dearly love, I do not accept it as reality...I'm still at work. I'm still at work." (from various letters)

Already Broken

"At times I feel already...broken, and what will come of it I do not know... my deepest hope remains the same, as you well know, brother, that I might be a lighter burden in your life...but I can see

a time that's just on the horizon, a time when you might show my pictures with no shame." (*summer 1887*)

"It's true I'm often sick and troubled, but there is harmony inside of me. For in the poorest little hut I see a picture, and I believe that very soon you will be proud to show my work; you will be satisfied...you will have something for your sacrifices, brother." (July 1882)

Souvenir

"I must leave a souvenir, a souvenir that I might offer in the shape of something true, the shape of drawings and of pictures. I must leave a souvenir, a souvenir that might remain to say to those who care to see, to those with eyes who care to see that this man felt deeply... I know I'll never do what I intended. Success requires a nature unlike mine. My strength has been depleted far too quickly, but for others, Theo, there is a chance. There is a chance for something more...

If only you had been there when I saw the red vineyard, all red like red wine...

There is a chance for something more. A souvenir that might remain to say

to those who care to see that here was someone who felt deeply, brother, dear brother, dear Theo." (adapted from letters of August 1883, November 1888 and September 1889)

*based on the first English translation of the letters published in *The Letters of Vincent van Gogh* (Constable, 1927), a majority of which were translated by van Gogh's sister-in-law, Johanna van Gogh.

So Free Am I

Seven settings of poems by women

Commissioned by the Marilyn Horne Foundation and the ASCAP Foundation/ Charles Kingsford Fund

Mutta

From Songs of Buddhist nuns, 6th century B.C.

Translated by Uma Chakravarti and Kumkum Roy Used by permission of the translators

So free am I, so gloriously free, Free from three petty things – From mortar, from pestle and from my twisted lord, Freed from rebirth and death I am, And all that has held me down Is hurled away.

Interlude

Poem by Amy Lowell (1874-1825)

When I have baked white cakes And grated green almonds to spread upon them; When I have picked the green crowns from the strawberries And piled them, cone-pointed, in a blue and yellow platter; When I have smoothed the seam of the linen I have been working; What then? To-morrow it will be the same: Cakes and strawberries, And needles in and out of cloth. If the sun is beautiful on bricks and pewter, How much more beautiful is the moon, Slanting down the gauffered branches of a plum-tree; The moon Wavering across a bed of tulips; The moon, Still, Upon your face. You shine, Beloved,

You and the moon.
But which is the reflection?
The clock is striking eleven.
I think, when we have shut and barred the door,
The night will be dark
Outside.

Orinda Upon Little Hector Philips

Poem by Katherine Philips (1631-1664) – excerpt

Twice forty months of wedlock I did stay, Then had my vows crown'd with a lovely boy,

And yet in forty days he dropt away, O swift vicissitude of human joy.

I did but see him as he disappear'd, I did but pluck the rose-bud and it fell, A sorrow unforeseen and scarcely fear'd, For ill can mortals their affections spell.

And now (sweet babe) what can my trembling heart
Suggest to right my doleful fate or thee,
Tears are my Muse and sorrows all my art,
So piercing groans must be thy elegy.

Thus whilst no eye is witness of my moan, I grieve thy loss (Ah boy too dear to live) And let the unconcerned world alone, Who neither will, nor can refreshment give.

Nervous Prostration

From the poem by Anna Wickham (1884-1947)

Used by permission of Margaret Hepburn

I married a man of the Croydon class When I was twenty-two. And I vex him, and he bores me Till we don't know what to do! It isn't good form in the Croydon class To say you love your wife, So I spend my days with the tradesmen's books

And pray for the end of life.
In green fields are blossoming trees
And a golden wealth of gorse,
And young birds sing for the joy of worms:
It's perfectly clear, of course,
That it wouldn't be taste in the Croydon class

To sing over dinner or tea: But I sometimes wish the gentleman Would turn and talk to me! But every man of the Croydon class Lives in terror of joy and speech. "Words are betrayers," "Joys are brief" – The maxims their wise ones teach – And for all my labor of love and life I shall be clothed and fed, And they'll give me an orderly funeral When I'm still enough to be dead.

The Poem as Mask -- Orpheus

Poem by Muriel Rukeyser (1913-1980) from the Collected Poems of Muriel Rukeyser, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005, copyright William L. Rukeyser, By permission of International Creative Management, Inc.

When I wrote of the women in their dances and wildness, it was a mask, on their mountain, god-hunting, singing in orgy, it was a mask; when I wrote of the god, fragmented, exiled from himself, his life, the love gone down with song, it was myself, split open, unable to speak, in exile from myself.

There is no mountain, there is no god, there is memory of my torn life, myself split open in sleep, the rescued child beside me among the doctors, and a word of rescue from the great eyes.

No more masks! No more mythologies!

Now, for the first time, the god lifts his hand, the fragments join in me with their own music.

Mettika

From Songs of Buddhist nuns, 6th century B.C. - excerpt
Translated by Uma Chakravarti and Kumkum Roy
Used by permission of the translators

Though I am weak and tired now,
And my youthful step long gone,
Leaning on this staff,
I climb the mountain peak.
My cloak cast off, my bowl overturned,
I sit here on this rock.
And over my spirit blows
The breath
Of liberty

Ode to a Nightingale

John Keats

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, But being too happy in thine happiness,— That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees In some melodious plot Of beechen green, and shadows numberless, Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been

Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth, Tasting of Flora and the country green, Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South, Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene, With beaded bubbles winking at the brim, And purple-stained mouth; That I might drink, and leave the world unseen, And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget What thou among the leaves hast never known,

The weariness, the fever, and the fret Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,

Where youth grows pale, and spectrethin, and dies;

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow And leaden-eyed despairs,

Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,

Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee, Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards, But on the viewless wings of Poesy, Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:

Already with thee! tender is the night, And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,

Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays; But here there is no light, Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet, Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,

But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet

Wherewith the seasonable month endows The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;

White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;

Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves; And mid-May's eldest child,

The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine, The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time I have been half in love with easeful Death,

Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,

To take into the air my quiet breath; Now more than ever seems it rich to die, To cease upon the midnight with no pain, While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad

In such an ecstasy! Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—

To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!

No hungry generations tread thee down; The voice I hear this passing night was heard

In ancient days by emperor and clown: Perhaps the self-same song that found a path

Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,

She stood in tears amid the alien corn; The same that oft-times hath Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam

Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell To toll me back from thee to my sole self! Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf. Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades Past the near meadows, over the still stream,

Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep In the next valley-glades:

Was it a vision, or a waking dream? Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

William Butler Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

Ben Moore has been described by the New York Times as "an American songwriter with a knack for matching texts to lyrically generous, harmonically rich music." The Times has also characterized his work as "brilliant" and "gorgeously lyrical," while Opera News states that "it's easy to see why singers such as Deborah Voigt and Susan Graham have embraced his work."

Born on January 2, 1960, in Syracuse, New York, Moore grew up in Clinton, New York and graduated from Hamilton College. Besides art songs, Moore's works include opera, musical theatre, cabaret, chamber music, choral music and comedy material. His songs have been performed by many leading singers, including soprano Deborah Voigt; mezzo-sopranos Susan Graham, Isabel Leonard and Frederica von Stade; tenors Lawrence Brownlee, Robert White, and the late Jerry Hadley; baritone Nathan Gunn and five-time Tony winner Audra McDonald. His works have been performed in major venues across the globe including Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Wigmore Hall and the Metropolitan Opera.

Moore's first opera, Enemies, a Love Story,

will be given its premiere at Palm Beach Opera in February, 2015. The recipient of an Opera America development grant, *Enemies* is based on the novel by Isaac Bashevis Singer and is set to a libretto by Nahma Sandrow. It is at once a comedy of a man who ends up juggling three wives, and a dark story chronicling the legacy of the Holocaust. Chamber works include *The House on Kronnenstrasse*, a multimedia piece for piano, viola, clarinet and an actress created in collaboration with the author Shira Nayman.

Recordings include Deborah Voigt's recital CD entitled *All My Heart* (EMI) with eight Moore songs, Nathan Gunn's *Just Before Sunrise* (Sony/BMG), Lawrence Brownlee's *This Heart that Flutters* (Opus Arte) and *Susan Graham at Carnegie Hall* (Warner Classics). Moore has also been recognized for his comedic and specialty material set to his own lyrics. In 2006, the Metropolitan Opera's farewell gala for Joseph Volpe, broadcast nationally, featured two Moore specialty songs: one for Deborah Voigt and one for Susan Graham.

Moore has written many extended songs and song cycles. In 2005, *So Free Am I*





(featured on this album) was commissioned by the Marilyn Horne Foundation and premiered at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall in 2006. Besides the other cycles on this disc, Ben has written *Love Remained*, commissioned by SongFusion, on texts concerning LGBT youth; and the extended song duet *John and Abigail*, commissioned by SongFest, setting the letters of John and Abigail Adams.

The collection, *Ben Moore:* 14 Songs, was published by G. Schirmer in 2006. Reviewing the album, *Classical Singer Magazine* wrote: "...you can find a breath of fresh air in the settings included in this volume...This composer is not afraid of the past, but rather embraces many of the most beautiful aspects of his artistic heritage while imbuing his work with its own personal colors and tones."

Brian Zeger has built an important career, not only as a pianist, appearing in distinguished concert venues throughout the United States and Europe, but also as an ensemble performer *par excellence*, radio broadcaster, artistic administrator and educator.

In a career spanning more than two decades, Mr. Zeger has enjoyed collaborations with many of the world's top artists including Marilyn Horne, Deborah Voigt, Susan Graham, Anna Netrebko, René Pape, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Bryn Terfel and Joyce DiDonato. Recent and upcoming engagements include recitals with Deborah Voigt, René Pape, Anna Netrebko, Bryn Terfel, Adrianne Pieczonka and Piotr Beczala.

Mr. Zeger also enjoys an active career as a chamber musician, having collaborated with the Borromeo and Brentano Quartets as well as with Bernard Greenhouse, Glenn Dicterow, Eugene Drucker and Paula Robison. In addition to his distinguished concert career, he also serves as Artistic Director of the Vocal Arts Department at The Juilliard School and the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Program; he recently stepped down as director of the vocal program at the Steans Institute at the Ravinia Festival.

Mr. Zeger has appeared frequently on Metropolitan Opera radio broadcasts, both on the opera quiz and as intermission host and performer. He has the distinction of creating, narrating and performing in five intermission features devoted to art song, a first in the long history of the Met broadcasts. His recordings may be heard on the EMI Classics, New World, Naxos and Koch record labels; his most recent recording being *Portraits and Elegies* with violinist Frank Almond.

Born in upstate New York, Mr. Zeger is now a resident of Manhattan. He holds a bachelor's degree in English Literature from Harvard College, a master's degree from The Juilliard School and a doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music. His important teachers have included Morris Borenstein, Sascha Gorodnitzki and Nina Svetlanova.

A recipient of a 2012 Leonore Annenberg Fellowship in the Performing and Visual Arts, **Paul Appleby** has emerged as one of the most inspired voices of his generation: an admired and exciting presence on the world's leading concert, recital, and opera stages. Passionate about the art of song, the tenor has performed recitals with the New York Festival of Song, the Kennedy



Center under the auspices of the Vocal Arts Society, for the Marilyn Horne Foundation, at the Aspen Music Festival, the Caramoor Festival, the Joy in Singing Foundation, and *A Prairie Home Companion*. He made

his Lincoln Center recital debut at Alice Tully Hall accompanied by Brian Zeger, offering Schubert's Die Schöne Müllerin. Operatic engagements in the 2013-14 season include the role of Brian in the Metropolitan Opera's new production (and company commissioned) premiere of Nico Muhly's Two Boys, and reprising the role of Ferrando in Mozart's Così fan tutte with the Canadian Opera Company and with Oper Frankfurt. The 2012-13 season included two productions with the Metropolitan Opera - as the Chevalier de la Force in Poulenc's Dialogues des Carmélites and as Hylas in Les Troyens. Mr. Appleby has been recognized with a 2011 Richard Tucker Career Grant, a George London Foundation Award, and was a National Winner of the 2009 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Alabama-born soprano **Susanna Phillips**, recipient of the Metropolitan Opera's 2010 Beverly Sills Artist Award, continues to establish herself as one of today's most sought-after singing actors and recitalists. With productions at the Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and other major houses, Susanna has delighted audiences in a

varied collection of major roles including Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Musetta (*La Bohème*), Rosalinde (*Die Fledermaus*), Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), the Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), and Euridice (*Orfeo ed Euridice*).

Her ever-expanding concert repertoire has been showcased with many pre-stigious organizations. In 2013, Susanna joined the St.LouisSymphonyunderDavidRobertson to sing Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes* at Carnegie Hall on Britten's 100th birthday. Other orchestral collaborations include works with the Chicago Symphony, the Santa Fe and Santa Barbara Symphonies, the New York Pops, the Oratorio Society of New York, and the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic. Following her Baltimore Symphony Orchestra debut, the Baltimore Sun proclaimed: "She's the real deal."

She has received top awards from foundations including Operalia, MacAllister Awards, the George London Foundation, the Marilyn Horne Foundation, and the American Opera Society. *The San Francisco Chronicle* hailed *Paysages*, her first solo album, as "sumptuous and elegantly sung."



Phillips is co-founder of Twickenham Fest, Alabama's only annual summer chamber music festival, in Huntsville.

Baritone **Brett Polegato's** artistic sensibility has earned him the highest praise from audiences and critics: *The New York Times* has praised him for his "burnished, well-focused voice" which he uses with "considerable intelligence and nuance."

He appears regularly on the world's most distinguished stages, including those of Lincoln Center, La Scala, the Concertgebouw, the Opéra National de Paris, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Teatro Real, the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall; he has collaborated with conductors such as Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Andris Nelsons, Robert Haitink, Seiji Ozawa, and Martyn Brabbins. He can be heard as soloist in the GRAMMY Awards' Best Classical Recording of 2003: Vaughan Williams' A Sea Symphony (Telarc) with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Robert Spano.

One of today's most sought-after lyric baritones, Brett has made a name for himself in a number of dramatic roles, most notably the title roles in *Eugene Onegin* and *Don Giovanni*, Il Conte Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and the



title role in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, which marked his Paris Opera debut in 2004.

Equally at ease on concert and recital stages, Mr. Polegato made his Carnegie Hall recital debut at Weill Recital Hall in May 2003 with pianist Warren Jones, and returned in subsequent years with the Atlanta Symphony in performances of A Sea Symphony and Walton's Belshazzar's Feast. He has appeared with most major U.S. and Canadian orchestras. In 2012, he garnered critical acclaim as soloist in Zemlinsky's Lyrische Symphonie with conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and for his interpretation of the title role in Mendelssohn's Elijah for the Elora Festival. As a recitalist, Mr. Polegato appears frequently throughout North America and Europe, and is particularly noted for his programming choices and wide range of repertoire.

Produced, Engineered, Edited/Mixed, & Mastered by Adam Abeshouse.

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