



Robert FÜRSTENTHAL

SONGS AND BALLADS OF LIFE AND PASSING

SETTINGS OF POEMS BY BETHGE, EICHENDORFF, FÜRSTENTHAL,
HOFMANNSTHAL, JOYCE, RILKE AND WEINHEBER

Rafael Fingerlos, baritone
Sascha El Mouissi, piano

FIRST RECORDINGS

ROBERT FÜRSTENTHAL: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

by Françoise Farron-Fürstenthal

My husband, Robert Eugen Fürstenthal,¹ was born in Vienna on 27 June 1920, into a Jewish family. He showed an early love for music and for playing the piano. He was a frequent weekend guest in the home of Françoise, his first cousin and his first love (me). There he accompanied my father, who had a beautiful tenor voice and loved to sing, mainly Schubert songs. At that time, Robert also composed a few songs, some to his own poetry. They were mostly simple love-songs, some dedicated to me.

Robert left Vienna in 1939 – without his family, because an un-hoped-for opportunity had presented itself. A distant relative of ours, who was living in England and whom no one within our close family knew, was aware of the mortal danger in which the Jews of Vienna lived after Hitler had marched into Austria. This good-hearted relative furnished Robert with an affidavit to go to America and also provided a temporary visa to England to wait there for his journey to the USA – waiting in Vienna would be too dangerous.

Robert arrived in New York in October 1940; The Jewish Agency asked him where he wanted to settle, and he chose San Francisco. From there he was able to help his mother to join him, but the Nazis got to his father first, and that wonderful man, whom I loved dearly, perished in a concentration camp.

Once in America, Robert joined the US Army (1942–45), serving in the intelligence division in Europe to interrogate German prisoners-of-war. After his return to the United States, he married Jane Alexander, an American girl (not Jewish), and they settled in San Francisco. They had a son, Joseph.

Back in civilian life Robert entered the civil service as an accountant and rapidly ascended the professional ladder. But his marriage turned sour. He sought solace in the arms of other women, but none seemed to be compatible enough to try another union.

¹ He dropped the umlaut on his arrival in the United States but resurrected it for his dealings with Austria.

Robert eventually discovered that I, his first love, might be the answer to his unhappy situation. He found out that I was living in Boston, phoned me and learned that, although I was married, I had not lived with my husband for the previous six years. He had last been in contact with me, by mail, in 1939. I was then in Switzerland and he proposed that we get married by proxy, I at the American Consulate in Zurich and he at the Consulate in London. But I never received that letter: the Swiss, always very efficient, had sent it back to him, many months later. He showed it to me when we finally got back together again, in 1973, and we mused on what turns our lives might have taken, had I received that letter at the time it had been sent.

One of the first questions I asked was whether he was still composing music. There followed a long silence, and then came the answer: 'No!'. Robert had not written a single song or any kind of music since he had left Vienna. Knowing how much music meant to him, I was devastated. From that phone call on, Robert, who still lived in San Francisco, wrote me long letters every single day: he had to catch up on what had happened during 35 years of separation! In addition he called me on the phone every single evening.

After a few weeks of getting re-acquainted by correspondence and phone conversations, Robert asked me to remain on the line and listen. He had composed his first song since our separation and he played it for me on the piano while I listened on the telephone. I was unspeakably happy. I had always believed – although his first compositions were simple and amateurish – that he was gifted.

When we finally met in person – Robert found an excuse to go to Boston 'on business' – we discovered that the old flame was readily rekindled, and we got married in November 1974.

A reshuffle at the Naval Audit Service, where Robert had worked for about 30 years in San Francisco, necessitated that we relocate to San Diego, where he became head of the office. Once installed there, Robert used every free minute, evenings and weekends, to compose. His endeavours really went into high gear, as he discovered the poetic treasures of Rilke, Eichendorff, Weinheber, Hofmannsthal, Bethge and many others. But only poetry in the German language seemed to inspire him – until very recently, when he discovered the poetry of James Joyce and William Butler Yeats.

Robert worked at the Naval Audit Service until his retirement in 1985. From then he composed full-time and his output grew considerably. His *œuvre* comprises about forty instrumental works, among them sonatas for violin and piano, cello and piano, oboe and piano, flute and piano, a sonata for two pianos, a string quartet, several string trios and about 160 songs and vocal pieces, including two works for choir and string orchestra.

Some of them have been performed in the USA, in California and in New York, to enthusiastic audiences. In 1975 there was a performance of Robert's songs on poems by Josef Weinheber, on the occasion of a Weinheber memorial, in the Palais Palfy in Vienna. The audience went ballistic! But the 'music world', as it were, at least here in California, is enamoured of newer stuff, less melodic, original for the sake of originality, without soul – or so it seemed to Robert.

We were sometimes asked to explain what inspired each individual work. In the case of songs, the answer is simple: the poetry. What inspired his instrumental works, Robert did not know. As you will hear, his style is avowedly and proudly late-Romantic, for which he made no apology. It seemed to us that there is still room for it in this world.

Robert died in the morning of 16 November 2016, at the age of 96. The last words he said while he was still lucid were: 'I am happy to have you by my side'.

An Autobiographical Addendum

Now Françoise Farron-Furstenthal, I was born Franziska Trinczer on 19 September 1923 in Vienna. When Hitler marched into Austria, I was fifteen years old and attending the Realgymnasium in the Albertgasse. I was able to find refuge in Switzerland with my mother in 1939. I wanted to go to Palestine into a kibbutz and help build the country, but my mother would not let me.

As soon as I was able to emigrate to America, in 1956, I worked during the day and attended night college in the town of White Plains, New York, was accepted to Berkeley in 1960, and obtained my Ph.D. in biochemistry from New York University in 1969. After a post-doctoral stay at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) in Zurich, from 1969 to 1970, I joined Harvard Medical School Faculty as an Assistant

Professor for Research. When Robert got in touch with me after 35 years of separation and re-ignited the old flame, I left Harvard to get married to Robert and share his life from then until death us did part.

As well as being the wife of Robert Fürstenthal, Françoise Farron-Furstenthal was, until her retirement, Associate Professor for Research at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, where her chief interest was, and still is, the mechanism of gene expression in the development of the embryo.

EXILE, IDENTITY AND MUSIC

by Michael Haas

There can hardly be two more different locations than San Diego and Vienna: the modern American naval base bathed in perpetual sunshine and warmth, and the chilly imperial capital of the Habsburgs. By 1920, the year of Robert Fürstenthal's birth, the Habsburgs had been consigned to history and Austria lay defeated, impoverished and unsure of its future in a more complex world-order. By March 1938, the point by which the seventeen-year-old Fürstenthal was forced to confront Hitler's murderous anti-Semitism, Austria had decided that its place in the world was as an appendage on Nazi Germany's south-eastern flank.

Even so, the spirit of the imperial, multi-cultural city of only a quarter-of-a-century before was still alive. Perhaps few musical expressions captured its *fin de siècle* complexity more innately than the songs of Hugo Wolf, whose Vienna was a feverish mixture of Slavic delirium, Latin passion and Teutonic understated beauty. This was the Vienna that Fürstenthal carried in his heart and inner ear. It is the Vienna that accompanied him throughout an outwardly successful life as a fully assimilated American. Yet if outward appearances showed every indication of seamless translocation, the inner wounds – loss of home, language, first romantic attachment, friends and family – would remain open and undressed.

The idea that music can become therapy for exiles is long and complex. Music itself is linguistically transcendent, at a time when one's native language was (in this instance) seen as barbaric. No cultural marker is as distinct as music – not even literature, since translation will always involve involuntary degrees of cultural and linguistic assimilation. Translating jokes from one language to another proves how some element of transmutation is inevitable to be effective. Music stands alone as a means of narrative communication without intermediary. It thus remains the closest companion to a stranger in a strange land. To quote Hanns Eisler,

So what should I do as an émigré from 8:00 every morning, other than compose? [...] The greatest source of inspiration for an émigré is [...] the torturous power of boredom that forces him to gaze at himself for twelve hours. That's productive power.²

Eisler, like less well-known composers such as Walter Arlen and Richard Fuchs, would retreat into art-song. It was that most quintessential of Austro-German musical landmarks. His *Hollywooder Liederbuch* is a compendium of inner anguish composed for an audience that no longer existed. Even a progressive such as Eisler was forced into the retreat offered by the past. Composing for the desk-drawer with no thought, and in some cases no ambition, that works be heard, would constitute at the very least an inner return to the only true self-identity.

For Austrian Jews, this consideration was particularly relevant: after 1938, Austria no longer existed, and as Jews they were excluded from being Germans. Their recent arrival in strange countries meant that they had almost no opportunity to take root and feel culturally at home. Being 'Jewish' was for most secular *émigrés* the only identity left. It's why the commissions of the German-born Los Angeles rabbi Jakob Sonderling would result in what for Arnold Schoenberg was one of his most conventional works: *Kol Nidre*. Sonderling's other commissions resulted in works by Ernst Toch, Erich Zeisl and Erich Korngold, none of whom would have instinctively chosen 'Jewish' as their primary cultural identity – and yet all of them would provide works that reached into a

² Hanns Eisler, *Fragen Sie mehr über Brecht – Gespräche mit Hans Bunge*, Sammlung Luchterhand, Berlin, 1986, p. 72.

past, even when applying universalist ideas, such as Toch's *Cantata of the Bitter Herbs*, or the oxymoron of Zeisl's *Requiem Ebraico*.

Composers who before Hitler had rarely or never composed a symphony began, once separated from their homeland, to churn them out. Some composers, such as Hanns Eisler, Paul Kletzki, Erich Korngold and Karol Rathaus, would write only a single symphony in exile, while others, such as Ernst Toch, Hans Gál, Karl Rankl, Egon Wellesz and Karl Weigl, produced entire cycles. All of them synthesised the experience of translocation with a past that was valued in their music only retrospectively. An even more notable marker of cultural belonging was the string quartet, which became a significant *émigré* autobiographical reference. Egon Wellesz wrote a quartet in 1942, only when he felt he could start composing again, after a silence of five years; Korngold's first work after the War, following years of composing film music, was a quartet; Ernst Toch wrote quartets as a form of personal diary. By retreating to such forms as symphonies, quartets and Lieder, composers were forced into conservative reaction rather than modernist assertion. Affirming cultural identity as a transplanted artist naturally resulted in a degree of nostalgia for an irretrievable tradition.

For that reason, it is understandable that the Lieder of Robert FÜRSTENTHAL should radiate a sensibility that might surprise listeners expecting to hear music more idiomatically 'twentieth century'. His Lieder, like so much of the music of so many other exiled composers, had inevitably to reach back into the past. Since he did not have the benefit of any formal musical instruction, the beauty of his work is as much a reflection on the inner turmoil of the creative *émigré* as personal musical statement. It demands a suspension of prejudice and expectation with an accompanying openness to an inner cosmos unique to FÜRSTENTHAL and the experiences that shaped him.

Michael Haas is the producer of this recording, co-director of exil.arte Zentrum, a centre for exile music studies at the Performing Arts University in Vienna, and author of Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers banned by the Nazis, published by Yale University Press, Yale and London, 2013. His blog on exiled and other such composers can be read at <https://forbiddenmusic.org/>.

AN ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PAST: ROBERT FÜRSTENTHAL'S SONGS

by Erik Levi

Even in the turbulent cultural environment of the late twentieth century, it is unusual to encounter a composer whose musical language appears as profoundly embedded in the past as that of Robert Fürstenthal. In Fürstenthal's case, it's an idiom that refers back to the great Austro-German musical tradition that existed before the First World War. As Michael Haas points out above, Hugo Wolf is perhaps the seminal influence on these songs. The parallels between the two composers are obvious, not merely in their shared concept of chromatic tonal harmony, but more importantly in the ways both respond with instinct and sensibility to the specific character of their chosen poetic texts. A particularly good example of this stylistic link is evident in Fürstenthal's settings of Eichendorff, a poet who was also much favoured by Wolf. The three Eichendorff songs featured here ('Auf meines Kindes Tod' [8], 'Ergebung' [9] and 'Seeliges Vergessen' [10]) display musical characteristics closely allied to Wolf's idiom, from the pensively chromatic piano-writing that opens each song to the simple, often folk-like melodic line in the voice.

Other musical influences are also apparent. The dramatic semiquaver rumblings in the piano in the Bethge settings 'Aber ich seh dich ja nicht' [2] and 'Es braust mein Blut' [7], as well as Rilke's 'Advent' [14], recall dramatic songs by Schubert such as *Der Zwerg*. Another Schubertian feature is the frequent juxtaposition of passages in major and minor tonality, most powerfully projected in the von Hofmannsthal setting 'Terzinen über Vergänglichkeit' [16] and in Rilke's 'Herbst' [6], the latter song one of the few here in which the piano supplies an almost constant stream of flowing arpeggiated harmonies. There are momentary echoes of Brahms in the limpid piano-

writing of the Weinheber settings ‘Liebeslied’ [1] and ‘Einmal’ [4].¹ The fanfare-like piano motifs that are predominant in the relatively extrovert ‘Reiselied’ [3] seem close to Richard Strauss. Finally, an almost Mahlerian sense of longing and intimacy inflects ‘An F’ [20], where – ‘F’ presumably being Fürstenthal’s wife, Françoise – he sets his own text, assuring her that she will never be alone. It thus makes an especially poignant epilogue to this recital.

In view of Fürstenthal’s obvious indebtedness to these past composers, to what extent can his songs be regarded as original contributions to the genre rather than effective exercises in pastiche? To some extent, the answer to this question lies in the conviction and sincerity with which the composer approaches each setting. In this respect, Fürstenthal is not necessarily governed by such protocols as having to begin and end a song in the same key, good examples being ‘Der Tag der weissen Chrysanthemen’ [5] and ‘Notturmo’ [15]. Likewise, his fluid vocal writing is generated by the natural flow of the text rather than through a conscious urge to create strongly defined recurring melodies, a feature more characteristic of earlier *Lieder* by Schubert and Brahms. Perhaps the unifying factor in all these songs is their melancholic, introverted character. Certainly, the recourse to gentle waltz-like patterns (in, for example, ‘Liebeslied’ [1], ‘Einmal’ [4] and ‘Notturmo’ [15]) evokes a nostalgic Viennese landscape far removed from the external environment in which he was composing such music.

It’s equally fascinating that when Fürstenthal turns his hand to setting poems by James Joyce, he deliberately eschews the Austro-German idiom that he cultivated so assiduously in his *Lieder*. Instead, ‘Sleep Now’ [18] and ‘O Cool’ [19] are surprisingly austere songs, notable for their severe two-part piano-writing and tonally ambiguous vocal line.

In spite of the largely retrospective nature of Fürstenthal’s musical voice, one has to marvel at his ability to compose music of such sophistication without ever having

¹ Josef Weinheber (1892–1945) is still a controversial figure. He joined the Austrian branch of the Nazi Party as early as 1931 and was a loyal supporter of the Greater German Reich. It is therefore somewhat ironic that an exiled Viennese Jew should have chosen to set some of his poems, though Fürstenthal may well have been aware of Richard Strauss’ two settings of Weinheber which form part of his set of Op. 88 *Lieder*.

studied composition professionally. Of course, there are countless examples throughout the history of music of competent and even inspired autodidactic composers. Yet few manage to encapsulate the essence of a poem with the same degree of sensitivity and understanding as Fürstenthal does in this fascinating collection of songs.

*Erik Levi is Professor of Music at Royal Holloway, University of London, broadcaster, critic and author of the books *Music in the Third Reich* (Macmillan, London, 1994) and *Mozart and the Nazis* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2010), as well as numerous chapters and articles on musical life in the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy and Franco's Spain. Together with David Fanning, he is editing a book on musical life under German occupation during the Second World War, to be published in 2017.*

Rafael Fingerlos, baritone, was born in Salzburg. In November 2013 he received a master's degree in voice with honours from the Konservatorium Wien Privatuniversität, where he studied with Uta Schwabe. He has deepened his artistic education in masterclasses with Angelika Kirchschrager and Helmut Deutsch. The young baritone is a laureate of national and international competitions (the Fidelio Competition in 2012, Musica Juventutis in 2013, first prize and audience award at the International Franz Schubert Competition in Steyr in 2013 and third prize at the International Johannes Brahms Competition in Pörtlach in the same year). His stage appearances have so far included Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Melisso in *Alcina*, Marco in *Gianni Schicci*, Dr Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Melchior in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and Conte Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*. In summer 2015 he took part in the Young Singers Project of the Salzburg Festival and in 2016 he returned to the Salzburg Festival as Pablo in the world premiere of Thomas Adès' *The Exterminating Angel*. In spring 2016 he had his debut at the Semperoper Dresden as Papageno. In autumn 2016 he toured Holland with the Nationale Reisopera as Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. As of 2016–17 he will be an ensemble member of the Staatsoper in Vienna, starting with a tour to Japan as Harlekin and making his house debut as Figaro in *Barbiere di Siviglia*. In 2017 he will have his debut at Bregenz Festival as Morales in *Carmen* and in 2018 at the Teatro Real in Madrid in Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*.



Recital and concert work take a central place in his artistic activity. While still a student, he was invited to take part in national and international festivals, including the Roskilde Festival Schubertiaden in Denmark, and in the Wiener Musikverein and Konzerthaus he performed Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and songs by Clara and Robert Schumann. More recently, he was invited to the Herkulessaal in Munich and sang in Bach's *Weihnachtsoratorium* in the Brucknerhaus in Linz. In autumn 2015 he toured northern Italy with *Die schöne Müllerin*, including a date in Milan, and had his first recital in London. He gave a recital at the Znojmo Festival in the Czech Republic in summer 2016 and has been reinvited to Milan for 2017. His concert and church-music repertoire encompasses many cantatas, oratorios and Masses, including Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Handel's *Messiah* and the Brahms and Fauré Requiems. He will sing the *St Matthew Passion* with the Kreuzchor in Dresden in April 2017.

Rafael has recorded Bach cantatas with Das Neue Orchester conducted by Christoph Spring, released on Harmonia Mundi. This recital of songs by Robert Fürstenthal is his first collaboration with Toccata Classics.

Born in Frankfurt-am-Main, the pianist **Sascha El Mouissi** studied piano at the Mainz School of Music and piano-vocal accompaniment at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna with Charles Spencer. Alongside many other prizes, he was awarded the Johannes Gutenberg Prize from the University of Mainz, the 'Lied Prize' from the Ministry of Culture of the State of Schleswig-Holstein and the Theodor Storm Prize in Piano.

He has a busy international concert schedule, with invitations to numerous festivals, among them the Festwochen in Vienna and the Istanbul Music Festival. His concert tours have taken him to Austria, England, France, Italy, Morocco, Switzerland and Turkey. His recitals have featured in the London Arts Festival in St Martin in the Fields, at the Beethoven Society of Europe and the 'Salzburger Schlosskonzerte' and elsewhere, and he has performed in such renowned venues as the Viennese Konzerthaus, Arnold Schönberg Center and Musikverein, the Alte Oper in Frankfurt and the Mozarteum Salzburg.

In addition to his solo piano performances, he appears as a chamber musician and, most often, as accompanist to a number of renowned vocalists. His radio and video recordings have been seen and heard in Germany and Austria on SWR2 and the ORF. With the bass-baritone



Ulf Bästlein he has recorded an album for Gramola with songs to texts by Friedrich Hebbel, and for Coviello Classics he recorded the album *media vita in morte sumus* with vocal chamber music by Volker David Kirchner.

He works as official piano accompanist for the International Hilde Zadek Competition and the International Sommer Academy Mozarteum in Salzburg and is currently senior lecturer at the University for Music and Performing Arts in Graz.

Texts and Translations

1 *Spätlese I: No. 8, 'Liebeslied'* **Josef Weinheber**

'Love Song'

Wenn nie mehr die Sonne wär
und nie mehr Frühling und nie,
nie Mond mehr über bleichen Dächern,
wenn alle Farben tot und alles Helle;
Ich würde trauern, aber nicht verderben.

If the sun were no more,
And spring no more and no,
No more moon upon pale roofs,
If all colours were dead
And everything bright,
I would mourn, but I would not perish.

Wenn Gott, den ich so schmerzvollwerbend
suchte,
plötzlich gemordet wär in meinem Herzen
oder betrunken läg' vor meiner Schwelle:
Ich würde weinen, aber weiterwerben.

If God, whom I sought so painfully,
Were suddenly murdered in my heart
Or lay drunk before my door:
I would weep, but carry on my efforts.

Wenn nie mehr Deiner Augen süsse Quelle
im Schatten meiner dunklen Küsse schliefe
und aufgewacht, nie wieder "trink mich" rief:
ich würde schweigen. Doch ich müsste
sterben...

[2] *Spätles II: No. 10, 'Aber ich seh dich ja nicht'*

Hans Bethge

Aber ich seh dich ja nicht,
aber wo blitzt denn dein Aug?
Graue Wolken am grauen Himmel
drängen wild an das graue Meer.

Aber ein Ton in den Zweigen,
eine Windharfe klang.
Ach! nur der Atem des Abends
klagt dem entschwundenen Mädchen nach.

[3] *Spätles IV: No. 5, 'Reiselied'*
Hugo von Hoffmannsthal

Wasser stürzt, uns zu verschlingen,
Rollt der Fels, uns zu erschlagen,
Kommen schon auf starken Schwingen
Vögel her, uns fortzutragen.

If the sweet source of your eyes never again
Crept into the shadows of my kiss
And, awoken, never again cried 'Drink me':
I would fall silent. Then I would have to die...

'But I don't see you'

But I don't see you,
But where does your eye flash?
Grey clouds in the grey sky
Push wildly onto the grey sea.

But the wind plays a note
In the branches
Ah, only the breath of the evening
Laments the girl who has vanished.

'Song of Travel'

Water surges to engulf us,
The cliff rolls to strike us down,
Birds are coming on strong wings
To carry us away.

Aber unten liegt ein Land,
Früchte spiegelnd ohne Ende
In den alterslosen Seen.

Marmorstirn und Brunnenrand
Steigt aus blumigem Gelände,
Und die leichten Winde wehn.

[4] *Spätlese V: No. 4, 'Einmal'*
Robert Fürstenthal

Einmal werden wieder Stunden kommen,
da der Wind dir durch die Haare streicht,
da das Leid dir von der Stirn genommen,
deiner ewigen Vergangenheit nur gleicht.

Und einmal werden Lieder kommen,
die die Erde singt nur und das Feld,
wenn die Sonne hinterm Wald verglommen,
und die Einsamkeit das Glück ist dieser Welt.

[5] *Spätlese III: No. 4, 'Der Tag der weissen Chrysanthemen'*
Rainer Maria Rilke

Das war der Tag der weissen Chrysanthemen, –
mir bangte fast vor seiner schweren Pracht ...

But below lies a land
Reflecting endless fruits
In the timeless lakes

Marbled stone and fountain's edge
Rise from the flower-filled terrain,
And the light winds blow.

'One Day'

One day the time will come again
when the wind strokes once more through
your hair,
when the pain lifted from your brow
is no more than that of your eternal past.

And one day the songs will come
That only the earth sings and the field,
When the sun has faded behind the woods,
And solitude is the happiness of this world.

'The Day of the White Chrysanthemums'

That was the day of the white
chrysanthemums;
I almost trembled before its glory ...

Und dann, dann kamst du mir die Seele
nehmen
tief in der Nacht.

Mir war so bang, und du kommst lieb, lieb
und leise, –
ich hatte grad im Traum an dich gedacht.
Du kamst, und leis wie eine Märchenweise
erklang die Nacht ...

**6 16 Lieder und Balladen vom Leben und
Vergehen: No. 14, 'Herbst'**

Rainer Maria Rilke

Die Blätter fallen, fallen wie von weit,
als welkten in den Himmeln ferne Gärten;
sie fallen mit verneinender Gebärde.

Und in den Nächten fällt die schwere Erde
aus allen Sternen in die Einsamkeit.

Wir alle fallen. Diese Hand da fällt.
Und sieh dir andre an: es ist in allen.

Und doch ist Einer, welcher dieses Fallen
unendlich sanft in seinen Händen hält.

And then, then you came to me to take my
soul
Deep in the night.

I was so afraid, and you come lovingly and
gently, –
I had just been thinking about you in a dream.
You came, and softly, like a fairy tale,
the night rang out.

'Autumn'

The leaves fall, fall as from far,
as if distant gardens were withering in the
heavens;
they fall with a gesture of denial.

And in the nights the heavy Earth falls
from all the stars into loneliness.

We all fall. This hand here falls.
And look at other people: it is in everything.

And yet there is one who holds this fall
In his immensely gentle hands.

[7] 16 Lieder und Balladen vom Leben und Vergehen: No. 8, 'Es braust mein Blut'
Hans Bethge

Es braust mein Blut.
Der dunkle Himmel im Gewittersturm
ist nicht wild bewegt wie ich,
der ich dein Bild im Herzen trage
gleich einem Dolchstich,
der mich qualvoll tötet.

Lass stürzen mich zu deinen Füßen!
Bade in meinem Blut mit deinen kleinen
Füßen.
Schwing dich aufs Roß und reite durch die
Auen,
daß rot es darin aufblüht von den Blumen des
Herzens,
das für dich verblutete!

[8] 16 Lieder und Balladen vom Leben und Vergehen: No. 11, 'Auf meines Kindes Tod'
Joseph von Eichendorff

Von fern die Uhren schlagen,
Es ist schon tiefe Nacht,
Die Lampe brennt so düster,
Dein Bettlein ist gemacht.

'My blood roars'

My blood roars.
The dark sky in a thunderstorm
Is not as wildly moved as I am,
Who carry your image in my heart
Like a stab from a dagger
Putting me to an agonising death.

Let me throw myself at your feet!
Bathe in my blood with your little feet.
Swing onto your steed and ride through the
meadows,
So that red blossoms there from the flowers of
the heart
That bleeds to death for you!

'On the Death of my Child'

The clocks strike in the distance,
It is already deep in the night,
The lamp burns so dimly,
Your little bed is made.

Die Winde nur noch gehen
Wehklagend um das Haus,
Wir sitzen einsam drinnen
Und lauschen oft hinaus.

Es ist, als müßtest leise
Du klopfen an die Tür,
Du hast dich nur verirret,
Und kämst nun müd herfür.

Wir armen, armen Toren!
Wir irren ja im Graus
Des Dunkels noch verloren –
Du fandst ja längst nach Haus.

**9 16 Lieder und Balladen vom Leben und
Vergehen: No. 9, 'Ergebung'
Joseph von Eichendorff**

Es wandelt, was wir schauen,
Tag sinkt ins Abendrot,
Die Lust hat eignes Grauen,
Und alles hat den Tod.

Ins Leben schleicht das Leiden
Sich heimlich wie ein Dieb,
Wir alle müssen scheiden
Von allem, was uns lieb.

Only the winds are still circling
The house, lamenting,
On our own, we sit inside
And often listen to what's happening outside.

It seems that you must be about
To knock at the door,
That you had only lost your way,
And were now returning, tired.

We poor, poor fools!
We are still lost,
Wandering in the horror of darkness –
You long since found your way home.

'Submission'

What we see is transformed,
Day sinks into dusk,
Desire has its own horrors,
And everything must die.

Suffering slips into life,
Secretly, like a thief,
We must all leave
Everything we love.

Was gäb es doch auf Erden,
Wer hielt den Jammer aus,
Wer möchte geboren werden,
Hieltest Du nicht droben Haus!

Du bist, der, was wir bauen,
Mild über uns zerbricht,
Dass wir den Himmel schauen –
Darum so klag ich nicht.

**[10] 16 Lieder und Balladen vom Leben und
Vergehen: No. 7, 'Seeliges Vergessen'
(Aus dem Spanischen)
Joseph von Eichendorff**

Im Winde fächeln,
Mutter, die Blätter,
Und bei dem Säuseln
schlummre ich ein.

Über mir schwanken
Und spielen die Winde,
Wiegen so linde
Das Schiff der Gedanken,
Wie wenn ohne Schranken
Der Himmel mir offen,
Dass still wird mein Hoffen
und Frieden ich finde,

Whatever might happen on Earth,
Who could withstand such grief,
Who would want to be born,
If Your house were not above us!

It is because of You that the collapse of our
plans
Occurs so gently
And we can see heaven –
That is why I do not complain.

'Blessed Oblivion'

The leaves are fluttering
In the wind, Mother,
And to the sound of their rustling
I fall asleep.

Above me the winds
Sway and play,
Rocking so gently
The ship of my thoughts,
As if heaven, without barriers,
Stood open to me,
So that my hopes fall quiet
And I find peace,

Und bei dem Säuseln
Schlummre ich ein.

Erwachend dann sehe,
Als ob sie mich kränzen,
Rings Blumen ich glänzen,
Und all meine Wehen
Verschweben, vergehen,
Der Traum hält sie nieder,
Und Leben gibt wieder
Das Flüstern der Blätter,
Und bei dem Säuseln
Schlummre ich ein.

**[11] 16 Lieder und Balladen vom Leben und
Vergehen: No. 2, 'Der Abend ist mein Buch'
Rainer Maria Rilke**

Der Abend ist mein Buch. Ihm prangen
die Deckel purpurn in Damast;
ich löse seine goldnen Spangen
mit kühlen Händen, ohne Hast.

Und lese seine erste Seite,
beglückt durch den vertrauten Ton, –
und lese leiser seine zweite,
und seine dritte träum ich schon.

And to the sound of rustling
I fall asleep.

When I wake, I see,
As were they garlanding me,
Flowers shining all around,
And all my woes
Evaporate, evanesce,
Dreaming holds them back,
And the whispering of the leaves
Brings life once again,
And to the sound of rustling
I fall asleep.

'The Evening is my Book'

The evening is my book. Its purple covers
are resplendent in damask,
I loosen its golden clips
with cool hands, without haste.

And read its first page,
happy at its familiar tone, –
And read its second page more quietly,
And by the third I am already dreaming.

**[12] 16 Lieder und Balladen vom Leben und
Vergehen: No. 16, 'Schlussstück'**
Rainer Maria Rilke

Der Tod ist gross.
Wir sind die Seinen
lachenden Munds.
Wenn uns mitten im Leben meinen,
wagt er zu weinen
mitten in uns.

**[13] Spätlese I: No. 3, 'Auf einer goldenen
Flöte'**
Josef Weinheber

Am Himmel wandert kühl und fern der
Hirtenstern.
Auf einer goldnen Flöte klingt sein tiefes Lied.
Durch blauen Brückenbogen zieht die stille
Schar,
Die Herden schimmern silberblond in ihrem
Seidenhaar.
Der Hirte trinkt im dunklen Quell,
der Quell versinkt,
und heimathell im Süden steigt der Mond.

'Final Piece'

Death is great.
We are his
With laughing mouths.
When we think ourselves in the middle of our
lives,
he dares to cry
inside us.

'On a Golden Flute'

The shepherds' star wanders through the sky,
cool and distant,
Its song rings out on a golden flute.
The silent crown moves through blue arches,
The silken hair of the herds shimmers silver-
blond.
The shepherd drinks in the the dark spring,
The spring sinks,
And in the south the moon rises, bright with
the light of home.

[14] *Spätlese III: No. 5, 'Advent'*

Rainer Maria Rilke

Es treibt der Wind im Winterwalde
die Flockenherde wie ein Hirt,
und manche Tanne ahnt,
wie bald sie fromm und lichterheilig wird,
und lauscht hinaus.

Den weissen Wegen streckt sie die Zweige hin
bereit,
und wehrt dem Wind und wächst entgegen
der einen Nacht der Herrlichkeit.

[15] *Spätlese III: No. 5, 'Notturmo'*

Josef Weinheber

Vom süssen Spiel gesättigt,
ruhn die Liebenden.
Noch steht der Mond im offenen Fenster.
Vom Gebirg weht Kühle,
und drunten, wo der Lindenweg zum Fluss
hinabgeleitet,
lebt wie Göttergruss ein Raunen auf;
einmal und noch einmal,
eh der Mond versinkt.

Nun hört – o stille Schattenwelt –
die Liebende im heiligen Schlaf,
am Herzen des Freundes liegend,

'Advent'

In the winter woods the wind is driving
the flock of flakes like a shepherd,
and many a fir-tree senses
how soon it will be devoutly sanctified in light,
And listens out.

It already stretches out its twigs towards the
white pathways,
And, resisting the winds, grows towards that
one night of glory.

'Notturmo'

Satisfied by their sweet game,
the lovers rest.
the moon can still be seen through the open
window,
and cool winds waft from the mountains,
and down there, where the path, lined with
lime-trees, leads to the river,
a murmur like a greeting of the gods arises;
once and then once more,
before the moon sinks.

Now, o still world of shadows,
the woman in sacred sleep,

Saitenspiel und regt sich zart dem Schweigen
zu,
das einen Sommer gönnt wie *den*,
und lächelt...

**[16] Spätlese I: No. 10, 'Terzinen über
Vergänglichkeit'
Hugo von Hofmannsthal**

Noch spür ich ihren Atem auf den Wangen:
Wie kann das sein, daß diese nahen Tage
fort sind, für immer fort und ganz vergangen?

Dies ist ein Ding, das keiner voll aussinnt,
und viel zu grauenvoll, als daß man klage:
daß alles gleitet und vorüberirrt.

Und daß mein eignes Ich, durch nichts
gehemmt,
Herüberglitt aus einem kleinen Kind
Mir wie ein Hund unheimlich stumm und
fremd.

Dann: daß ich auch vor hundert Jahren war
und meine Ahnen, die im Totenhemd,
mit mir verwandt sind wie mein eignes Haar,
So eins mit mir als wie mein eignes Haar.

lying by the heart of her friend,
hears strings being played and takes pleasure
in the silence
that allows a summer like this one,
and smiles

'Tercets on Transience'

I can still feel her breath on my cheeks:
How can it be that these recent days
are gone, are gone forever and entirely past?

It's something that no one entirely understands,
and too horrible for lamentation:
that everything slips away and passes on.

And that my own I, with nothing holding it
back,
Slips from a small child
To me, like an unnaturally silent and strange
dog.

Then: that I existed a hundred years ago
And my ancestors, those in shrouds,
Are as related to me as my own hair,
As at one with me as my own hair.

[17] *Spätlese III: No. 6, 'Träume'*

Rainer Maria Rilke

Es kommt die Nacht, reich mit Geschmeiden
geschmückt des blauen Kleides Saum;
sie reicht mir mild mit ihren beiden
Madonnenhänden einen Traum.

Dann geht sie, ihre Pflicht zu üben,
hinfort die Stadt mit leisem Schritt
und nimmt, als Sold des Traumes, drüben
des kranken Kindes Seele, die Seele mit.

'Dreams'

Night comes, richly decorated with jewels
From the hem of the blue cloth;
With its two Madonna hands
it brought me a gentle dream.

Then to do its duty it goes
towards the town with gentle step
and carries off, as payment for dreams,
the soul, the soul of the sick child.

**[18] *Songs after Poems by James Joyce, Vol. III,
No. 7, 'Sleep now'***

James Joyce

Sleep now, O sleep now,
O you unquiet heart!
A voice crying 'Sleep now'
is heard in my heart.

The voice of the winter
is heard at the door.
O sleep, for the winter is crying
'Sleep no more.'

My kiss will give peace now
And quiet to your heart:

Sleep on in peace now,
O you unquiet heart!

[19] *Songs after Poems by James Joyce, Vol. II,*
No. 1, 'O Cool'
James Joyce

O cool is the valley now
And there, love, will we go
For many a choir is singing now
where Love did sometime go.

And hear you not the thrushes calling,
calling us away?
O cool and pleasant is the valley
and there, love, will we stay.

[20] *Spätles VI: No. 1, 'An F'*
Robert Fürstenthal

Weine nicht, weine nicht,
wenn einst ich sterbe
woimmerhin ich gehe,
du wirst allein nicht sein,
denn mein Blick erfasst dich.
Wenn von himmlischen Gärten ich dich sehe.

'To F'

Do not weep, do not weep,
If one day I should die,
Wherever I might go,
You will not be alone,
For my gaze will hold you.
If I see you from the gardens of Heaven.

English translations by Martin Anderson



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ROBERT FÜRSTENTHAL Songs and Ballads of Life and Passing

Spätlese

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16 Lieder und Balladen vom Leben und Vergehen

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Rafael Fingerlos, baritone
Sascha El Mouissi, piano

TT 61:01
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