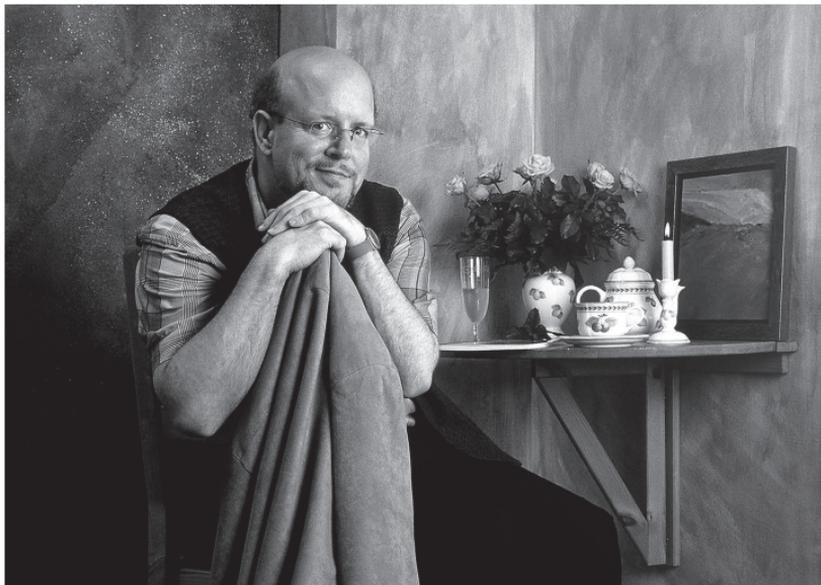
The background is a still life painting in a gestural, expressive style. It depicts a glass of water on a light-colored surface, possibly a table. A knife with a dark handle lies diagonally across the foreground. A piece of paper or parchment is spread out, with some faint, illegible markings. The overall color palette is muted, with greens, browns, and greys. The brushstrokes are visible and textured.

Letters

dreyer
gaido

songs for voice and guitar
by Britten | Argento | Duarte

Scot Weir | tenor
Volker Niehusmann | guitar



Scot Weir

Dominick ´rgento wurde 1927 in Pennsylvania geboren. Er studierte an der Eastman School of Music und erhielt ein Guggenheim-Stipendium, das ihm weiteren Unterricht in Italien bei Luigi Dallapiccola ermöglichte.

Dort komponierte er seine erste Oper und wurde nach seiner Rückkehr in die USA musikalischer Leiter der Hilltop Opera in Baltimore. Zugleich lehrte er Musiktheorie und Komposition an der Eastman School, trat aber 1958 eine Stelle als Dozent am Institut für Musik der Universität Minnesota an, wo er bis 1997 unterrichtete.

Argento komponiert neben Orchesterwerken mit einem besonderem Schwerpunkt auf der menschlichen Stimme Liederzyklen und Opern. Zu seinen bedeutenden Liederzyklen gehören die hier aufgenommenen „Letters from Composers“ von 1968.

1979 nahm ihn die American Academy of Arts and Letters als Mitglied auf, und im Jahr 1997 wurde ihm der lebenslange Titel des Composer Laureate to the Minnesota Orchestra zuerkannt. Nach der Zuerkennung des Pulitzerpreises für Musik erhielt Argento 2004 einen Grammy für die „Beste zeitgenössische klassische Komposition“.

Benjamin Britten wurde 1913 in Suffolk, England, geboren. Nach kindlichen eigenen Kompositionen kam er zunächst zum Unterricht zu dem Komponisten Frank Bridge und dann am Londoner Royal College of Music zu Arthur Benjamin, Harold Samuel und John Ireland. Schon ab 1936 war es ihm möglich, einzig vom Komponieren zu leben. Um diese Zeit begann auch seine langjährige und fruchtbare Zusammenarbeit mit dem Dichter Wystan Hugh Auden.

Als Pazifist floh Britten bei Ausbruch des 2. Weltkriegs in die USA. 1942 kehrte er nach England zurück und komponierte noch Jahre später unter dem Eindruck der Zerstörung in der Heimat das „War Requiem“ (1962).

1948 gründete er mit dem Tenor und Lebenspartner Peter Pears zusammen das Aldeburgh Festival. Dort bewohnten sie das sogenannte „Red House“. Zusammen schreiben sie Libretti für Opern (Sommernachtstraum), und Britten schrieb ihm fast alle Lieder seines Ouvres auf den Leib. Darunter auch die zahlreichen Volksliedbearbeitungen. Gern gesehener Gast und Freund in Aldeburgh war der Gitarrist Julian Bream, mit dessen Hilfe sich Britten auch der Gitarre zuwandte. So entstanden die „Folksong Arrangements“, die „Songs from the Chinese“ (1957) und letztlich auch das Solowerk für Gitarre „Nocturnal“ (1963).

Kurz vor seinem Tod 1976 wurde er als erster Komponist Englands auf Lebenszeit in den Adelsstand erhoben.

John William Duarte kam 1919 in Sheffield, England, zur Welt. Er erhielt zunächst eine Ausbildung als Chemiker. Doch zugunsten der Musik und der Gitarre gab er auf Anraten von Len Williams (Vater des Gitarristen John Williams) diesen Beruf auf und nahm Unterricht bei dem Jazz-Gitarristen Terry Usher. Durch Selbststudium lernte er noch das Trompete- und Kontrabassspiel und auch das Komponieren. So spielte er als Begleitmusiker bei Coleman Hawkins und Django Reinhardt und konnte vom Arrangieren, Komponieren, Spielen und Schreiben über Musik erträglich leben. Außerdem unterrichtete er bald als Lehrer am von Len Williams gegründeten „Spanish Guitar Centre“ in London.

Er pflegte eine lebenslange Freundschaft zu dem Gitarristen Andrés Segovia, für dessen Wiederveröffentlichung früher Tonaufnahmen er einen Grammy-Award erhielt. Auch zu Julian Bream pflegte er regen Kontakt. So übernahm er die Editionsarbeit an Breams kompletter Neuauflage der RCA Schallplatten (28 CDs). Er verehrte Ida Presti und betrachtete sie als die größte aller Gitarristen. Die „Five Quiet Songs“ wurden im Zuge ihres tragisch frühen Tod geschrieben. Sie zeigen eine deutlich britische Kompositionssprache in Nähe zu Britten.

Duarte hat über 150 Werke unter Mitwirkung der Gitarre komponiert. Genau wie Britten hat er eine Vorliebe für die Musik der englischen Renaissance, aber durch seine ebenso große Zuneigung zum Jazz findet sich in seinem Ouvre eine sehr große Bandbreite an Stilikonen. John W. Duarte starb im Jahr 2004.

Scot Weir, in New Mexico/USA geboren, erhielt seine Ausbildung an der Musikhochschule der University of Colorado in Boulder/USA bei Prof. Louis Cunningham, Dr. Barbara Doscher, Kammer­sänger Gerhard Hüsch, Gerard Souzay, Renato Cappechi und Ralph Herbert. In den achtziger Jahren wirkte er als lyrischer Tenor am Musiktheater Gelsenkirchen sowie am Hessischen Staatstheater in Wiesbaden. Seit 1989 freischaffend, konzertiert Scot Weir weltweit. So war er regelmäßig Gast am Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brüssel, an der Opéra Bastille und der Opéra Châtelet in Paris, am Opernhaus Zürich sowie an der Nederlands Oper Amsterdam. Scot Weir war auf den Berliner Bachtagen, den Berliner Festwochen, den Festspielen in Salzburg, Ludwigsburg und Schwetzingen, bei Mostly Mozart New York, auf den Haydn Festspielen Eisenstadt, Wien Modern und der Mozartwoche Salzburg zu hören sowie auf zahlreichen Festivals in Europa, Nordamerika, Japan und Israel. Scot Weir ist als Opern-, Konzert- und Liedsänger gleichermaßen etabliert. Sein Repertoire umfasst über 70 Opernpartien, mehr als 200 Oratorien, etwa 1000 Lieder, darunter 47 komplette Zyklen. Er arbeitete mit namhaften Dirigenten wie Nicolaus Harnoncourt, Roger Norrington, Helmuth Rilling, Peter Schreier, Gennadi Nikolajewitsch Roschdestwenskij, Charles Dutoit, Sir Charles Mackerras und Jesus Lopez Cobos zusammen. Seit 1995 ist Scot Weir Professor für Gesang an der Hochschule für Musik „Hanns Eisler“ Berlin und seit 2005 Professor für Gesang an der Hochschule für Musik in Zürich.

Volker Niehusmann ist seit 25 Jahren als klassischer Gitarrist international tätig. Er studierte an der Folkwang Universität der Künste in Essen und beendete nach dem Kammermusikabschluss mit Auszeichnung seine Solistenausbildung mit dem Konzertexamen.

Die Stadt Essen verlieh ihm den Kulturpreis, er leitete eine Konzertreihe für Kinder, gab Meisterkurse im In- und Ausland, arbeitete mit Sängern, Schriftstellern und anderen namhaften Musikern und hat zahlreiche CDs eingespielt. Unter seinen Kompositionen sind zwei Concertinos für Gitarre und Streicher, sowie Lieder, Duos und Sololiteratur.

Seit dem Jahr 2000 unterrichtet er an der Folkwang Universität der Künste in Essen.

Zusammen mit seiner Frau konzertiert er seit vielen Jahren als *Niehusmann Gitarren Duo*.

Domenick Argento was born in Pennsylvania in 1927. He studied at the Eastman School of Music and received a Guggenheim Scholarship, which enabled him to study with Luigi Dallapiccola in Italy.

He composed his first opera there and, after returning to the USA, he was named musical director of the Hilltop Opera in Baltimore.

As well as directing the opera he also taught music theory and composing at the Eastman School, but in 1958 he accepted a job as teacher at the Institute of Music of the University of Minnesota, a position which he held until 1997.

Even in his orchestral works, Argento's compositions made use of the human voice, and his other works include Lieder cycles and operas. One of his most important Lieder cycles was "Letters from Composers" from 1968, which can be heard on this recording.

In 1979 he was made a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and in 1997 was awarded the title of life-long Composer Laureate to the Minnesota Orchestra.

After being awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music he received a Grammy in 2004 for the "Best Contemporary Classical Composition".

Benjamin Britten was born in Suffolk, England in 1913. After composing some works as a child he received lessons from the composer Frank Bridge and then went to the Royal College of Music in London to study with Arthur Benjamin, Harold Samuel and John Ireland. From 1936 onward he was able to live from his income as a composer. About this time he struck up a life-long friendship and fruitful cooperation with the poet Wystan Hugh Auden.

Britten was a pacifist and fled to the USA at the outbreak of the 2nd World War. In 1942 he returned to England and years later in 1962 worked the impressions of the destruction of his home country into his work "War Requiem".

In 1948, together with the tenor Peter Pears, who was his life-long partner, Britten founded the Aldeburgh Festival and the two lived there together in the so-called "Red House". They cooperated on the libretti for operas (e.g. A Midsummer Night's Dream) and Britten wrote almost all of his songs especially for Pears. Amongst these songs are numerous transcriptions of folk songs. One of Britten's friends who was a frequent guest in Aldeburgh was the guitarist Julian Bream, who awakened Britten's interest in the guitar. This resulted in the "Folksong Arrangements", the "Songs from the Chinese" (1957) and finally the work for solo guitar, "Nocturnal", from 1963. Shortly before his death in 1976 Britten became the first English composer to be honoured with a life peerage.

John William Duarte was born in Sheffield, England in 1919. He first trained as a chemist. However, on the advice of Len Williams (father of the guitarist John Williams) he gave up his job and turned his hand to music and the guitar, taking lessons with the jazz guitarist Terry Usher. He also taught himself the trumpet and the double bass and started composing. Django Reinhardt and Coleman Hawkins employed him as a band member and this allowed him to earn his living by arranging, composing, playing and writing about music. Soon he was also employed as a teacher at the “Spanish Guitar Centre” in London, which was founded by Len Williams. He was a life-long friend of the guitarist Andrés Segovia, winning a Grammy Award for his new release of Segovia’s early recordings. Julian Bream was also amongst his close contacts. Thus he took on the task of editing the re-release of Bream’s complete recordings for RCA (28 CDs). He was a great admirer of Ida Presti and regarded her as the greatest guitarist of all time. The “Five Quiet Songs” were written as a result of her tragic early death. They reflect a very English compositional style, close to that of Britten. Duarte wrote over 150 works which involve the guitar. Just like Britten, he had a predilection for the music of the English Renaissance, but his equally great love of jazz music means that there is a great diversity of style in his music. John W. Duarte died in 2004.

Scot Weir was born in New Mexico in the USA and received his musical training at the Music High School of the University of Colorado in Boulder, USA with Prof. Louis Cunningham, Dr. Barbara Doscher, 'Kammersänger' Gerhard Hüscher, Gerard Souza, Renato Cappechi and Ralph Herbert. In the 1980's he worked as lyric tenor at the Musiktheater Gelsenkirchen and at the Hessische Staatstheater in Wiesbaden. Working as a freelance soloist since 1989, Scot Weir has performed all over the world. He was a regular guest at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, at the Opéra Bastille and the Opéra Châtelet in Paris, at the Opernhaus Zürich and the Nederlands Oper Amsterdam. Scot Weir was to be heard at the Berliner Bachtagen, the Berliner Festwochen, the Festspielen in Salzburg, Ludwigsburg and Schwetzingen, at 'Mostly Mozart New York', at the Haydn Festspielen Eisenstadt, Wien Modern and the Mozartwoche Salzburg, as well as at numerous other festivals in Europe, North America, Japan and Israel. Scot Weir is equally renowned as a singer of opera, concerts and Lied. His repertoire encompasses over 70 operatic roles, more than 200 oratorios and some 1000 Lieder, including 47 complete cycles. He has worked with renowned conductors such as Nicolaus Harnoncourt, Roger Norrington, Helmuth Rilling, Peter Schreier, Gennadi Nikolajewitsch Roschdestwenskij, Charles Dutoit, Sir Charles Mackerras and Jesus Lopez Cobos. In 1995 he was named Professor of Singing at the Hochschule für Musik "Hanns Eisler" in Berlin and since 2005 he holds the same post at the Hochschule für Musik in Zürich.

Volker Niehusmann has performed internationally as a classical guitarist for 25 years. He studied at the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen and, after finishing his chamber music studies with distinction, completed his studies as a soloist with the concert exam. The City of Essen awarded him its Culture Prize, he directed a series of concerts for children, has given Master Classes at home and abroad, works with singers, authors and other renowned musicians and has recorded numerous CDs. As a composer his works include 2 Concertinos for Guitar and Strings, Lieder, duos and solo pieces. Since 2000 he has taught at the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen. He has performed with his wife for many years under the name *Niehusmann Guitar Duo*.

translation: David Boyd

Benjamin Britten: Folksong Arrangements

Master Kilby

In the heat of the day
When the sun shines so freely,
There I met Master Kilby,
So fine and so gay.

Then I pull'd off my hat
And I bowed to the ground
And I said: "Master Kilby,
Pray where are you bound?"

"I am bound for the West,
There in hopes to find rest,
And in Nancy's soft bosom
I will build a new nest.

And if I was the master
Of ten thousand pounds
All in gay Gold and silver
Or in King William's crowns.

I would part with it all
With my own heart so freely,
But all for the sake
Of my charming Nancy.

She's the fairest of girls,
She's the choice of my own heart,
She is painted like wax-work
In every part."

I will give my Love an ´ pple

I will give my love an apple without e´er a core,
I will give my love a house without e´er a door,
I will give my love a palace wherein she may be,
And she may unlock it without any key.

My head is the apple without e´er a core,
My mind is the house without e´er a door,
My heart is the palace wherein she may be
And she may unlock it without any key.

The Soldier and the Sailor

As the soldier and the sailor
Was a-walking one day,
Said the soldier to the sailor:
I´ve a mind for to pray.
Pray on then, said the sailor,
Pray on once again,
And whatever you do pray for,
I will answer Amen.

Now the first thing I´ll pray for,
I´ll pray for the Queen,
That she have peace and plenty
All the days of her reign,
And where she got one man
I wish she´s had ten;
And never want for an Army.
Said the Sailor: Amen.

Now the next thing I´ll pray for,
I´ll pray for the Queen,
That she have peace and plenty
All the days of her reign.

And where she got one ship
I wish she had ten;
And never want for a Navy.
Said the Sailor: Amen.

Now the next thing I'll pray for,
Is a pot of good beer,
For good liquor were sent us
Our spirits to cheer,
And where we got one pot,
I wish we had ten,
And never want for liquor,
Said the sailor: Amen.

The Shooting of his Dear

O come all you young fellows that carry a gun,
I'd have you get home by the light of the sun,
For young Jimmy was a fowler and a fowling alone,
When he sot his own true love in the room of a swan.

Then home went young Jimmy with his dog and his gun,
Saying "Uncle, dear uncle, have you heard what I've done?
Cursed be that old gunsmith that made my old gun,
For I've shot my own true love in the room of a swan."

Then out came bold uncle with his locks hanging grey,
Saying "Jimmy, dear Jimmy, don't you go away
Don't leave your own country till the trial come on,
For you never will be hanged for the shooting a swan."

So the trial came on and pretty Polly did appear,
Saying "Uncle, dear uncle, let Jimmy go clear,
For my apron was bound round me and he took me for a swan,
And his poor heart lay bleeding for Polly his own"

Sailor-boy

We go walking on the green grass
tus, thus, thus.

Come all you pretty fair maids.

Come walk along with us.

So pretty and so fair

As you take yourself to be,

I'll choose you for a partner,

Come walk along with me.

We go walking on the green grass
tus, thus, thus.

We go walking on the green grass
tus, thus, thus.

I would not be a blacksmith
That smuts his nose and chin.

I'd rather be a sailor-boy

That sails thro' the wind.

Sailor-boy, sailor-boy,

Sailor-boy for me.

If ever I get married

A sailor's wife she'll be.

We go walking on the green grass
tus, thus, thus.

We go walking on the green grass
tus, thus, thus.

Bonny at Morn

The sheep's in the meadows,

The kye's in the corn,

Thou's ower lang in thy bed,

Bonny at morn.

Canny at night,
bonny at morn,
Thou's ower lang in thy bed,
Bonny at morn.

The bird's in the nest,
The trout's in the burn,
Thou hinders thy mother
In many a turn.

Canny at night,
bonny at morn,
Thou's ower lang in thy bed,
Bonny at morn.

We're all laid idle
Wi' keeping the bairn,
The lad winnot work
And the lass winnot lairn.

Canny at night,
bonny at morn,
Thou's ower lang in thy bed,
Bonny at morn.

Benjamin Britten: Songs from the Chinese, op. 58
Chinese traditional poems, translated by Arthur Waley

The Big Chariot

Don't help-on the big chariot;
You will only make yourself dusty.
Don't think about the sorrows of the world;
You will only make yourself wretched.
Don't help-on the big chariot;
You won't be able to see for dust.

Don't think about the sorrows of the world;
Or you will never escape from your despair.
Don't hel-on the big chariot;
You'll be stifled with dust.

The Old Lute

Of cord and cassiawood ist the lute compounded;
Within it lie ancient melodies.
Ancient melodies weak and savourless,
Not appealing to present men's taste.
Light and colour are faded from the jade stops;
Dust has covered the rosered strings.
Decay and ruin came to it long ago,
But the sound that is left is still cold and clear.
I do not refuse to play it, if you want me to;
But even if I play people will not listen.
How did it com to be neglected so?
Because of the Ch'iang flute and the zithern of Ch'in.

The ' utumn Wind

Autumn wind rises; white clouds fly.
Grass and trees wither; geese go south.
Orchids all in bloom; chrysanthemums smell sweet.
I think of my lovely lady; I never can forget.
Floating pagoda boat crosses Fen River;
Across the midstream white waves rise.
Flute and drum keep time, keep time to sound of rowes' song;
Amidst revel and feasting sad thoughts come;
Youth's years how few, age how sure!

The Herd-Boy

In the southern village the boy who minds the ox
With his naked feet stands on the ox's back.
Through the hole in his coat the river wind blows;
Through his broken hat the mountain rain pours.
On the long dyke he seemed do be far away;
In the narrow lane suddenly we were face to face.
The boy is home and the ox in back in its stall;
And a dark smoke oozes through the thatched roof.

Depression

Turned to jade are the boy's rosy cheeks;
To his sick temples the frost of winter clings.
Do not wonder that my body sinks to decay;
Though my limbs are old, my heart is older, yet.

Dance Song

The unicorn's hoofs! The duke's sons throng.
Alas for the unicorn! Alas!
The unicorn's brow! The duke's kingsmen throng.
Alas for the unicorn! Alas!
The unicorn's horn! The unicorn's horn!
The unicorn's horn! The duke's clansmen throng.
Alas for the unicorn! Alas!

Dominick 'rgento: Letters from Composers

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN to a friend

Imagine me between rocks and sea,
in a cell in an immense deserted monastery,
it's doors bigger than the coach entrance to any Paris mansion.
Here I am with my hair uncurled,
no white gloves, and as pale as usual.

My cell, shaped like a great coffin,
has a vast and dusty arched ceiling,
and a little window looking to the garden
with its orange trees, palms and cypresses.

Opposite the window, below a rosette in the lacy Moorish style,
is a campbed.

Beside the bed is an old untaouchable,
a kind of square desk, on which stands a wax candle...
on the same desk, Bach, my scribbles, and other papers,
not mine....

(...and the orange trees, palms and cypresses...)

Silence... If you shout... silence again...

In short, I am writing from a very strange place...

WOLFG' NG' M' DEUS MOZ' RT to his father

Mon très cher Père,

Well, Count Arco has managed things to perfection!

So that ist the way to persuade peaple, to win them over,

to refuse petitions out of congenial stupidity,

not to say a word to your master for lack of spirit and love of sycophancy,

to keep a man hanging about for four weeks

and at last, when he is obliged to present the petition himself,

instead of arranging for his admittance,
to throw him out and give him a kick in the pants...
I wrote three petitions, handed them in five times,
and each time had them thrown back at me...
and since the Archbishop was planning to leave on the next day,
I was quiet beside myself with rage and wrote another petition,
in which I disclosed to him that I had had a petition
in readiness for the past four weeks!
With that petition I received my discharge in the most galant way.
So seeing the reasons why I left him
no father could be angry with his own son.

FR' NZ SCHUBERT to a friend

My brightest hopes have come to nothing,
the joys of friendship and love soon turn to sorrows,
and even my pleasure in beauty itself is in danger of dying away!

„Meine Ruh‘ ist hin, mein Herz ist schwer;“
thus sang Gretchen at her spinning wheel.
So might I now sing every day,
for every night I go to bed hoping that I shall not wake again,
and each morning only brings back
all the sorrows and grief af the day before.

„Meine Ruh‘ ist hin, mein Herz ist schwer;“
thus sang Gretchen at her spinning wheel.
And so I spend my days, joyless and friendless.

JOH' NN SEB' STI' N B' CH to the Town Council

Magnificent, most honourable gentlemen,
our wise and learned councillors, distinguished Lords and Patrons,
et ceter, et cetera, et cetera...

May it please you to condescend to hear how
Herr Johannes Friedrich Eitelwein, a merchant in the town of Leipzig,
was married on the twelfth of August of the present year out of town,
and therefore thinks himself entitled to withhold the fees due us
in all such cases, and has made bold to disregard our many kind reminders.
Whereas the said fees make up the greater part of our emoluments,
a perquisite of this position and no one has hitherto endeavoured
to withhold us our lawful share.

We therefore fell compelled to beg you, honored Lords and Gracious Patrons
for this reason to take us under your protection
and by your decision to uphold us in our old rights and agreed Salario,
and further to enjoin upon the said Herr Eitelwein
that he remit to us a due proportion of the foresaid marriage fees,
together with the costs occasioned, in this instance, which we also claim,
with all respect and reverence.

Magnificent and honourable gentlemen,
most wise and learned councillors, distinguished Lords and Patrons,
from your most humble and devoted servant,
Johann Sebastian Bach.

CL' UDE DEBUSSY to a friend

I go on with this waiting life,
I might say, for I am a poor traveler,
waiting for a train that will never come again.
They tell me it's the morphine! No!
Something is broken in this strange mechanism
that used to be my brain.
Who's to blame? Perhaps this miserable war
that loses some of its nobility with every passing day.
Who's to blame? It was stupid enough to trust the Bulgarians.
But it's even worse to trust the Greeks for anything!

And good King George looks like a hawker of lead pencil
with no lead in them.
Of course, rumors spread like weeds.
Everyone appoints a new commander-in-chief every morning.
It's like a hunch-back changing his tailor
in hope that the new one will be able to conceal his hump...
...and after all, what does it matter?

GI' COMO PUCCINI to a friend

I am sick of Paris! I am panting for the fragrant woods,
for the free movement of my belly in wide trousers
and no waist-coat:
I pant, I pant after the wind that blows free
and fragrant from the sea:
I savor with wide flaring nostrils its saltry breath,
and stretch my lungs to breath it all!
I hate pavements! I hate palaces! I hate cpitals!
I hate columns of marble!
I love the beautiful column of poplar and fir;
I love the vault of shady glades;
I love the green expanse of cool shelter in forrest old or young;
I love the blackbird in flight;
I love the woodpecker, seagull and lark!
I hate the horse, the cat and the toydog!
I hate the steamer, the tophat, the dress coat,
and I hate Paris!

ROBERT SCHUM' NN to his fiancée

The most certain thing is still that we continue
to love each other with all our hearts
and I feel sure that in your heart ther is a rich fund of love,
and you will make your husband happy for a long, long time.
You are a wonderful girl, Clara!

There is such a host of varied and beautiful qualities in you
that I will never know how you have managed
to bring them all together during your short life.
But there is one thing I know, Klara, and that is:
I believe you would have been a very different girl
if you had never met me at so early a stage
and been impressed by my gentle way.
Leave me this belief, it makes me happy.
I taught you to love, and drew you close, to be the ideal bride
as I imagine her; you were my most gifted pupil,
and as my reward you said to me: "Well, then, take me,
take me, take me, take me, take me, take me!"

John William Duarte: Five Quiet Songs, op. 37

Dirge in Woods (George Meredith)

A wind sways the pines, and below not a breath of wild air;
still as the mosses that glow on the flooring and over the
lines of the roots here and there.
The pine tree drops its dead;
They are quiet as under the sea;
overhead, overhead rushes life in a race,
as we go, and we drop like the fruits of the tree;
Even we, even so.

Silence (Thomas Hood)

There is a silence where hath been no sound;
There is a silence where sound may be;
in the old grave, under the deep, deep sea.
or in a wide desert where no life is found,
Which hath been mute and still must sleep profound.

No voice ist hushed, no life treads silently;
but clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
that never spoke, over the idle ground.
But in the green ruins in the desolate walls of
antique palaces where man hath been.
though the dun fox, or wild hyena calls and owls that flit
continually between, shriek to the echo,
and the loos wind moans there the true silence is,
self conscious and alone.

An Epitaph (Walter de la Mare)

Here lies a most beautiful lady,
light of step and heart was she.
I think she was the most beautiful lady
who ever lived in the West Country.
But beauty vanishes, Beauty passes;
However rare, rare it be.
And when I crumble, who will remember
The Lady from the West Country?

Omar's Lament (Edward Fitzgerald)

Alas, that Spring should vanish with the rose!
That youth's sweet scented manuscript should close!
The nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah, whence and whither flown again, who knows?
Ah Love! Could thou and I with fate conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits and then
Remould it closer to the heart's desire?
The heart's desire.

The Birds (Hilaire Belloc)

When Jesus Christ was four years old,
The angels brought him toys of gold
Which no man ever bought or sold;
And yet with them he would not play.
He made Him wild fowl out of clay,
And blessed them till they flew away;
Tu creasti Domine.
O, Jesus Christ, Thou child so wise,
Bless mine hands and fill mine eyes,
And bring my soul to Paradise.

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Bèrben Edizioni musicali, Ancona (John W. Duarte)
and Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock, Berlin (Benjamin Britten & Dominick Argento)

Recorded at Casa Redonda de Los Brazos, New Mexico, USA
from August 30 - September 02, 2004
Edit and Mix at SONIC YARD Studio, Düsseldorf, Germany
Soundengineer: Georg Niehusmann
photos:
Philippe Frese (Scot Weir), Elisabeth Cölfen (Volker Niehusmann)



Volker Niehusmann

Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)

Folksong Arrangements

1 Master Kilby	1:51
2 I will give my Love an Apple	1:29
3 The Soldier and the Sailor	2:38
4 The Shooting of his Dear	2:46
5 Sailor-boy	1:48
6 Bonny at Morn	3:01

Benjamin Britten

Songs from the Chinese, op. 58

7 The Big Chariot	2:07
8 The Old Lute	2:30
9 The Autumn Wind	1:33
10 The Herd-Boy	1:26
11 Depression	1:30
12 Dance Song	1:15

Dominick Argento (*1927)

Letters from Composers

13 Frédéric Chopin to a Friend	3:42
14 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to his Father	3:11
15 Franz Schubert to a Friend	4:59
16 Johann Sebastian Bach to the Town Council	3:06
17 Claude Debussy to a Friend	3:45
18 Giacomo Puccini to a Friend	2:42
19 Robert Schumann to his Fiancée	3:52

John W. Duarte (1919 - 2004)

Five Quiet Songs, op. 37

20 Dirge in Woods	1:27
21 Silence	3:41
22 An Epitaph	2:05
23 Omar's Lament	1:41
24 The Birds	2:13

total time: 61:05