

FINZI

Earth and Air and Rain

By Footpath and Stile • To a Poet

Roderick Williams, Baritone

Iain Burnside, Piano • Sacconi Quartet



Gerald Finzi (1901–1956)

Earth and Air and Rain • To a Poet • By Footpath and Stile

Earth and Air and Rain, Op. 15

1	Summer Schemes	31:39
2	When I set out for Lyonesse	2:34
3	Waiting both	2:06
4	The phantom	3:24
5	So I have fared	3:45
6	Rollicum-Rorum	2:49
7	To Lizbie Browne	1:41
8	The Clock of the Years	4:01
9	In a churchyard	4:24
10	Proud Songsters	3:51
		3:05

To a Poet, Op. 13a

11	To a poet a thousand years hence	17:02
12	On parent knees	5:02
13	Intrada	1:33
14	The birthnight	1:34
15	June on Castle Hill	1:45
16	Ode on the rejection of St Cecilia	2:01
		5:07

By Footpath and Stile, Op. 2

17	Paying calls	23:14
18	Where the picnic was	3:47
19	The oxen	4:04
20	The master and the leaves	2:42
21	Voices from things growing in a churchyard	2:49
22	Exeunt omnes	6:34
		3:17

Roderick Williams, Baritone

Iain Burnside, Piano (1-16) • Sacconi Quartet (17-22)

Gerald Finzi (1901–1956)

Earth and Air and Rain • To a Poet • By Footpath and Stile

Gerald Finzi studied with Ernest Farrar, Edward Bairstow and R.O. Morris. He came to attention with works like the orchestral miniature *A Severn Rhapsody* (1923) and a song-cycle to poems by Thomas Hardy, *By Footpath and Stile* (1921-2). Finzi's reputation grew during the 1930s with performances of two groups of Hardy settings, *A Young Man's Exhortation* (1926-9) and *Earth and Air and Rain* (1928-32), and was consolidated with the première in 1940 of his cantata *Dies Natalis* (1925-39). During World War II Finzi worked at the Ministry of War Transport and founded a fine, mainly amateur, orchestra, the Newbury String Players. Two of his most popular works appeared during the war, the *Five Bagatelles* for clarinet (1920s, 1941-3), and the Shakespeare settings, *Let us garlands bring* (1938-40).

To the post-war years belong the festival anthem *Lo, the Full, Final Sacrifice* (1946), the ceremonial ode *For St Cecilia* (1947) and a further Hardy song set *Before and After Summer* (1932-49), the *Clarinet Concerto* (1948-9) and *Intimations of Immortality* for chorus and orchestra (late 1936-8, 1949-50). Although the final years of his life were lived under the shadow of an incurable illness, he completed the Christmas scene *In Terra Pax* (1951-4) and the *Cello Concerto* (1951-5).

Song-writing is at the heart of Finzi's output and he made a significant contribution to British twentieth-century music in this genre, especially the settings of Thomas Hardy, his favourite poet, whom he set more than any other. His volume of Hardy's *Collected Poems* was a treasured possession; as he wrote to a friend: 'If I had to be cut off from everything *that* would be the one book I should choose'. He felt an empathy with Hardy's bleak fatalism, his sense of transience, and his anger at the suffering that mankind afflicts on mankind. About Hardy he wrote tellingly: 'I have always loved him so

much and from earliest days responded, not so much to an influence, as to a kinship with him.'

The songs that comprise *Earth and Air and Rain* were composed between 1928 and 1932 and published in 1936. Several songs were performed individually, or in groups, but it was not until 1943 that the first complete performance took place on 23rd March with Robert Irwin, accompanied by Howard Ferguson. The work marks a significant step forward in Finzi's development as his mature voice comes to the fore in the impressive range of emotions tackled.

In *Summer Schemes*, Finzi aptly captures the contrast between the eager anticipation of the summer idylls that the poet dreams he and his sweetheart will share, and the measured caution of the caveat in the final lines of each verse – so long as fate does not intervene. *When I set out for Lyonesse*, recalls Hardy's visit to Cornwall as a young man when he fell in love with Emma Gifford who became his first wife. Its brisk march rhythm creates a sense of adventure and the song culminates radiantly as the poet returns with 'magic' in his eyes.

Waiting both is an imaginary conversation between the poet and a star, each pondering on the meaning of existence, with Finzi evoking the vastness of eternity through the use of the extremes of the piano's range. *The phantom* is Hardy's recollection, after the death of his first wife, of her as a young woman riding along the Cornish cliffs during their courtship. Finzi reflects this image in the cantering gait of the accompaniment, which by the final verse, with its chromatic inflections in the vocal line, has become an obsessive fixation in the poet's mind.

In *So I have fared*, Finzi sets the convoluted syntax of Hardy's macaronic verse to a supple, quasi recitative-like vocal line, broadening in the penultimate verse to an

evocation of the relentless tread of time. *Rollicum-Rorum* is a drinking song with a bravura rollicking accompaniment deftly placed half-way through the work to provide maximum contrast. *To Lizbie Browne*, a poem of regret for what might have been, has a touching simplicity and a haunting refrain which Finzi subtly varies. The most ambitious song is *The Clock of the Years* which is like a miniature solo cantata, compact in its combination of recitative, arioso and instrumental commentary, and linked motivically by the rhythm at the words 'Agreed to that'. It ends dramatically in bleak despair with the spirit's chilling admonishment.

In a churchyard also has a range of expression: the sentient Yew tree communicates the view that the dead are more content than the living to a listless rocking rhythm, whilst in the final verse the changed perception of the poet is reflected in a flowing piano figuration and a change to a major key. *Proud Songsters* opens with an extended piano introduction, with a lilting appoggiatura figure, that binds the song and returns full circle in the postlude, bringing a sense of conclusion to the set as a whole. It is also blessed with sublimely beautiful music in the setting of the second stanza where Finzi's lyricism captures the heart of Hardy's words and philosophy.

At Finzi's death some two dozen songs were left complete. Howard Ferguson, together with Finzi's widow, Joy, and eldest son Christopher, divided them into four song sets of which *To a poet* brought together six songs for baritone by various poets. John Carol Case and Ferguson gave the first performance on 20th February 1959. The songs span the whole of Finzi's career, *To a poet a thousand years hence* dating from the early 1920s, although it was revised in 1940. It is a song brimming with lyrical felicities in which Flecker's words match exactly Finzi's own artistic creed that a work of art spans time and space to create a bond between the artist and individuals yet to be born. Significantly Finzi buried this song in a time capsule under his house whilst it was

being built.

On parent knees (1935) is a setting of an epigram translated from the Persian, attributed to the eighteenth-century orientalist William Jones, although Finzi's erudite footnote points to an alternative source. Finzi perfectly balances the poem's conceit – a crying baby is watched by smiling faces: a man on his death bed smiles peacefully whilst onlookers weep – by inserting a bar's rest in between the two halves. *Intrada* sets words from *Centuries of Meditation* by Thomas Traherne as a quasi recitative. It may date from the 1920s when Finzi was setting other Traherne texts for *Dies Natalis*.

Finzi had intended to compose a set of songs to poems by Walter de la Mare; one was completed in 1920, the next, *The birthnight*, 36 years later, three months before his death. Particularly effective is this tranquil song's ending with its rapt change of key ushering in human warmth and happiness at the arrival of the new born child, after the chill evocation of icy night outside. In *June on Castle Hill* (1940) Lucas's image of the laden bee, transformed into a plane loaded with bombs, is captured by Finzi in the syncopated, throbbing chords of the accompaniment, heavy with foreboding. *Ode on the rejection of St Cecilia* was a BBC commission of 1948. Six new poems were to be set by different composers for a programme about composers' approach to word setting. In the event only Finzi fulfilled the brief, writing a scenalike song with far-ranging moods that conjours the 'fury and magnificence' he found in George Barker's poetry.

By Footpath and Stile, for baritone and string quartet, was Finzi's earliest collection of Hardy settings, begun in 1921 and completed the following year. It was performed on 24th October 1923 by Sumner Austin, with the Charles Woodhouse String Quartet and published two years later. Finzi, however, withdrew the work intending to revise it and replace some songs with new ones; he revised the first and third songs in 1940, but undertook no further work. In 1981 Finzi's friend Howard Ferguson

edited the work for republication mainly adding dynamic markings which were scant in Finzi's early scores. Unlike most of Finzi's song collections this work was conceived as an integrated cycle, and it shows him seeking his own identity as a composer; the melodies, for instance, rarely have the stamp of his maturity. What is characteristic though, is the preoccupation with death and the transience of life, a salutary reminder that Finzi by this time had frequently brushed shoulders with death having lost father, three brothers and beloved teacher Ernest Farrar.

Paying calls develops out of a serene, lyrical modal phrase played by the first violin, and at the beginning of the second verse there is a momentary flash of Finzi's mature voice. The oscillating chords at the end of *Where the picnic was* recall *Clun* from *On Wenlock Edge* by Vaughan Williams, who was an important influence on Finzi at this time. This is apparent too through the use of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century harmonic traits in *The*

oxen, which is also unified by a binding refrain. *The master and the leaves* provides welcome contrast from the predominant slow tempos in its *Presto* marking and lively counterpoint; the last verse has a Holstian marching bass line which Finzi often adopted in later works.

This poem and the next, *Voices from things growing in a churchyard*, share Hardy's pantheistic philosophy that the dead return to become the branches, leaves, berries of trees and plants. The latter is the most ambitious and impressive song of the cycle, almost a scena, in which Finzi deftly characterises the different participants of this dance of the dead as they appear in turn. In *Exeunt omnes* the cycle comes full circle with themes from earlier songs returning. Towards the end the melody of the first song is reached once more and the music slips into the rocking peace of eternity.

Andrew Burn

Roderick Williams

Roderick Williams is an exceptionally versatile artist whose intelligent musicality is admired in music from Monteverdi to Maxwell Davies. He has become a familiar and commanding presence on the operatic stage and has made something of a speciality of opera in concert. His burnished and flexible baritone is equally in demand for recitals and oratorio. He has sung concert repertoire with all the BBC orchestras, and many other ensembles including the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Russian National Orchestra, Academy of Ancient Music, and Bamberg Symphony Orchestra. He has won particular recent success with a performance of Tippett's *The Vision of St Augustine* with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales at the 2005 BBC Proms and Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers* with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Britten's *War Requiem* with the Philharmonia and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* in Toulouse. Opera rôles include many of the great Mozart baritone parts, Guglielmo in a new production of *Così fan tutte*, the title-rôle in *Don Giovanni* and the Count in *The Marriage of Figaro* (all for Opera North), as well as Figaro in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. For Scottish Opera he has sung Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème* and Lord Byron in the world première of Sally Beamish's *Monster*. Other notable world premières include David Sawer's *From Morning to Midnight* and Martin Butler's *A Better Place*, both for English National Opera, his début with Netherlands Opera in Alexander Knaifel's *Alice in Wonderland* and the world première of Michel van der Aa's *After Life* (also Netherlands Opera). Roderick Williams is also an accomplished recital artist, who can be heard at the Wigmore Hall, at many festivals, and on BBC Radio 3, where he has appeared on Iain Burnside's *Voices* programme. Among his numerous recordings, most recent releases are a première recording of Vaughan Williams's *Willow Wood* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and further Naxos discs of English song with the pianist Iain Burnside.

Iain Burnside

Iain Burnside enjoys a unique reputation as pianist and broadcaster, forged through his commitment to the song repertoire and his collaborations with leading international singers. Such artists have included Dame Margaret Price, Susan Chilcott, Galina Gorchakova, Adrianne Pieczonka, Amanda Roocroft, Yvonne Kenny and Susan Bickley; David Daniels, John Mark Ainsley, Mark Padmore and Bryn Terfel. He has also worked with some outstanding younger singers, including Lisa Milne, Sally Matthews, Sarah Connolly; Christopher Maltman, William Dazeley, Roderick Williams and Jonathan Lemalu. His broadcasting career covers both radio and television. He continues to present BBC Radio 3's *Voices* programme, and has recently been honoured with a Sony Radio Award. His innovative programming led to highly acclaimed recordings comprising songs by Schoenberg with Sarah Connolly and Roderick Williams, Debussy with Lisa Milne and Susan Bickley, and Copland with Susan Chilcott. His television involvement includes the Cardiff Singer of the World, Leeds International Piano Competition and BBC Young Musician of the Year. He has devised concert series for a number of organizations, among them *Musique et Poésie* in Brussels, the acclaimed *Century Songs* for the Bath Festival, the International Song Recital Series at London's South Bank Centre, and the Finzi Friends' triennial festival of English Song in Ludlow. He has given master-classes at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, the Juilliard School in New York, and the Canadian Banff Centre.

Sacconi Quartet

Ben Hancox, Violin I • Hannah Dawson, Violin II
Robin Ashwell, Viola • Cara Berridge, Cello

First Prize winners in the Trondheim International String Quartet Competition and triple Prize winners in the London International String Quartet Competition, the Sacconi Quartet is established as one of Europe's finest young string quartets, since its formation at London's Royal College of Music in 2001. The quartet has made its début at both the Wigmore Hall and the Purcell Room, and won the Kurtag Prize at the Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition. The quartet was also awarded first prize in the Royal Overseas League chamber music competition, and shortlisted for a Royal Philharmonic Society Award. There has followed a début in Aldeburgh, at the Lincoln International Chamber Music Festival, and at numerous festivals and concert societies across Britain. There have been collaborations with the Chilingirian Quartet, Wihan Quartet, Tim Boulton, Laurence Power and Raphael Wallfisch in quintet, sextet and octet concerts, and annual participation in the International Musicians' Seminar at Prussia Cove, where the players study with Gabor Takacs-Nagy and continue to draw much inspiration from master-classes with the Wihan Quartet at Pro Corda. The Sacconi Quartet has a keen interest in educational work, and has a programme of recitals in London schools in collaboration with the Cavatina Chamber Music Trust. The ensemble holds the Leverhulme Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music, through which the players offer guidance and support to the many quartets at the College. They make regular visits to schools, hospitals and other community venues on behalf of Live Music Now! and the Wigmore Hall, and were Ensemble in Residence at the National Young Pianists' Week in Uppingham. The name of the group comes from the outstanding twentieth-century Italian violin-maker and restorer Simone Sacconi, whose book *The Secrets of Stradivari* is considered an indispensable source of reference for violin-makers.

Gerald Finzi (1901–1956)

Earth and Air and Rain • To a Poet • By Footpath and Stile

Gerald Finzi studierte bei Ernest Farrar (1885–1918), Sir Edward Bairstow (1874–1946) und Reginald Owen Morris (1886–1948). Aufmerksamkeit erregte er mit Werken wie der Orchesterminiatur *A Severn Rhapsody* (1923) und dem Liedzyklus *By Footpath and Stile* (1921/22) nach Gedichten von Thomas Hardy (1840–1928). In den dreißiger Jahren wuchs sein Ansehen durch Aufführungen zweier Folgen von Hardy-Vertonungen – *A Young Man's Exhortation* (1926–29) und *Earth and Air and Rain* (1928–32) – und festigte sich mit der Premiere seiner Kantate *Dies Natalis* (1925–39) im Jahr 1940. Während des Zweiten Weltkriegs arbeitete Finzi im Ministerium für Kriegs-transport und gründete ein vorzügliches, weitgehend aus Laien bestehendes Orchester: die Newsbury String Players. Zwei seiner populärsten Werke erschienen im Krieg: die *Fünf Bagatellen* für Klarinette (1920er Jahre, 1941–43) und die Shakespeare-Vertonungen *Let us garlands bring* (1938–40).

In die Nachkriegsjahre gehören die Festhymne *Lo, the Full, Final Sacrifice* (1946), die feierliche Ode *For St Cecilia* (1947) und ein weitere Folge von Hardy-Liedern, *Before and After Summer* (1932–49), das *Klarinettenkonzert* (1948/49) und *Intimations of Immortality* für Chor und Orchester (1936–38, 1949/50). Obwohl die letzten Jahre seines Lebens von einer unheilbaren Krankheit überschattet waren, vollendete er die Weihnachtsszene *In Terra Pax* (1951–54) und das *Cellokonzert* (1951–55).

Die Lieder sind das Herz von Finzis Œuvre; er leistete einen signifikanten Beitrag zur britischen Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts in diesem Genre, vor allem mit seinen Thomas Hardy-Vertonungen, seinem bevorzugten Dichter, den er häufiger vertonte als jeden anderen. Sein Band mit Hardys *Gesammelten Gedichten*

war ein wohlgeheuteter Schatz.

An einen Freund schrieb er: „Ich habe ihn schon immer sehr geliebt; von den frühesten Tagen an fühlte ich nicht so sehr einen Einfluss als vielmehr eine Verwandtschaft.“

Die Lieder von *Earth and Air and Rain op. 15* entstanden zwischen 1928 und 1932 und wurden 1936 publiziert. Einige der Lieder wurden bereits einzeln oder auch in Gruppen aufgeführt; erst am 23. März 1943 fand eine komplette Aufführung statt. Robert Irwin wurde von Howard Ferguson begleitet. Das Werk markiert eine signifikante Etappe in Finzis Entwicklung, da in der eindrucksvollen Skala von Emotionen seine reife Stimme zutage tritt.

In *Summer Schemes* erfasst Finzi trefflich den Kontrast zwischen der erwartungsvollen Vorwegnahme des Sommeridylls, das der Dichter für sich und seine Geliebte erträumt, und der wohl überlegten Mahnung in den letzten Zeilen einer jeden Strophe: ... solange das Schicksal nicht eingreift. *When I set out for Lyonesse* erinnert an Hardys Reise nach Cornwall in jungen Jahren, als er sich in Emma Gifford verliebte, die dann seine erste Frau wurde. Der energische Marschrhythmus vermittelt ein Gefühl des Abenteuers, und das Lied gipfelt strahlend, als der Dichter mit Glanz in den Augen zurückkehrt.

Waiting both ist eine fiktive Konversation zwischen dem Dichter und einem Stern über die Bedeutung des Seins; Finzi vergegenwärtigt die Grenzenlosigkeit der Ewigkeit durch Verwendung der Extreme im Stimmumfang des Klaviers. In *The phantom* erinnert sich Hardy an seine verstorbene erste Frau, wie sie in der Zeit ihrer jungen Liebe an der Steilküste von Cornwall entlang reitet. Finzi reflektiert dieses Bild in der galoppierenden Gangart der Begleitung, das bis zur

letzten Strophe mit ihren chromatischen Modulationen in der Gesangslinie zu einer obsessiven Fixierung im Bewusstsein des Dichters wird.

In *So I have fared* überträgt Finzi die verschachtelte Syntax von Hardys Strophen in eine flexible, quasi rezitativartige Gesangslinie, die sich in der vorletzten Strophe zu einer Evokation des unaufhörlichen Vergehens der Zeit erweitert. *Rollicum-Rorum* ist ein Trinklied mit bravourös-ausgelassener Begleitung, das geschickt in der Mitte des Werks platziert ist, um so einen größtmöglichen Kontrast zu bilden. *To Lizbie Browne*, ein Gedicht des Bedauerns über vergangene Möglichkeiten, ist von berührender Einfachheit und hat einen sehnsuchtsvollen Refrain, den Finzi feinsinnig variiert. Das anspruchsvollste Lied ist *The Clock of the Years*, das in seiner kompakten Verbindung von Rezitativ, Arie und instrumentalem Kommentar einer kleinen Solokantate gleicht. Motivisch wird es vom Rhythmus der Worte „Agreed to that“ zusammengehalten. Es endet in tiefer Verzweiflung.

Auch *In a chruchyard* hat eine breite Ausdrucksskala: Die empfindungsfähige Eibe vermittelt über einem teilnahmslos schlagenden Rhythmus die Ansicht, dass die Toten zufriedener sind als die Lebenden; in der letzten Strophe spiegelt sich die veränderte Wahrnehmung des Dichters in fließenden Klavierfigurationen und im Wechsel zu einer Dur-Tonart. *Proud Songsters* beginnt mit einer ausgedehnten Klavierintroduktion mit einer schwungvollen Appogiatura-Figur, die das Lied einfasst und im Nachspiel wiederkehrt. Damit ist auch eine Art Schlusspunkt des gesamten Zyklus gesetzt. Das Lied ist in der Vertonung der zweiten Strophe, wo Finzis Lyrismus gleichsam ins Herz von Hardys Worten und seiner Philosophie trifft, mit unvergleichlich schöner Musik gesegnet.

Finzi hat rund zwei Dutzend vollendete Lieder hinterlassen. Howard Ferguson hat sie zusammen mit Finzis Witwe Joy und dem ältesten Sohn Christopher in

vier Liederfolgen zusammengefasst, von denen *To a poet op. 13a* sechs Lieder verschiedener Dichter für Bariton vereinigt. John Carol Case und Ferguson gaben am 20. Februar 1959 die erste Aufführung. Die Lieder umspannen Finzis gesamte Schaffenszeit: *To a poet a thousand years hence* stammt aus den frühen 1920er Jahren, wurde allerdings 1940 revidiert. Das Lied ist voll von lyrischen Formulierungen, in denen Fleckers Worte exakt Finzis eigenes künstlerisches Credo treffen, dass nämlich ein Kunstwerk Zeit und Raum umspannt, um ein Band zu knüpfen zwischen dem Künstler und Individuen, die erst noch geboren werden müssen. Bemerkenswerter Weise vergrub Finzi dieses Lied in einer Kapsel unter seinem Haus, während es gebaut wurde.

On parent knees (1935) ist die Vertonung eines Epigramms aus dem Persischen, das dem Orientalisten William Jones aus dem 18. Jahrhundert zugeschrieben wird, obwohl Finzis gelehrte Fußnote eine andere Quelle angibt. Finzi balanciert die inhaltliche Struktur des Gedichts perfekt aus – ein schreiendes Baby wird von lächelnden Gesichtern betrachtet; ein Mann auf dem Totenbett lächelt friedlich, während die Umstehenden weinen –, indem er einen Takt Pause zwischen die beiden Hälften schaltet. *Intrada* vertont Worte aus *Centuries of Meditation* von Thomas Traherne in der Art eines Rezitativs. Es könnte aus den 1920er Jahren stammen, als Finzi für *Dies Natalis* auch andere Traherne-Texte vertonte.

Finzi hatte geplant, eine Liedfolge nach Gedichten von Walter de la Mare zu komponieren: eines wurde 1920 vollendet, das nächste, *The birthnight*, 36 Jahre später, drei Monate vor seinem Tod. Besonders effektiv ist das Ende dieses ruhigen Liedes mit seinem Tonartwechsel, der menschliche Wärme und Freude über die Ankunft des Neugeborenen herbeiführt, nachdem zuvor eine eisige Nacht im Freien evoziert worden war. In *June on Castle Hill* (1940) überträgt Finzi Lucas' Bild der beladenen Biene, die in ein bombenbeladenes

Flugzeug verwandelt wird, in synkopierte, hämmernde Akkorde der Begleitung – schwer von böser Vorahnung. *Ode on the rejection of St Cecilia* war ein Kompositionsauftrag der BBC von 1948. Sechs neue Gedichte sollten von verschiedenen Komponisten vertont werden für ein Programm über Formen der Wortvertonung. Nur Finzi erfüllte den Auftrag eines szenenartigen Liedes mit weit gefächerten Stimmungen, das „Ungestüm und Größe“ der Dichtung George Barkers einfängt.

By Footpath and Stile op. 2 für Bariton und Streichquartett ist Finzis früheste Sammlung von Hardy-Vertonungen, begonnen 1921 und vollendet im Jahr darauf. Sie wurde am 24. Oktober 1923 von Summer Austin und dem Charles Woodhouse String Quartett aufgeführt und zwei Jahre später veröffentlicht. Dennoch zog Finzi das Werk in der Absicht zurück, es zu revidieren und einige Lieder durch andere zu ersetzen; er überarbeitete 1940 das erste und das dritte Lied, unternahm aber weiter nichts. Im Jahr 1981 bearbeitete Finzis Freund Howard Ferguson (1908–1999) das Werk für die Wiederveröffentlichung, indem er vor allem dynamische Bezeichnungen hinzufügte, die in Finzis früher Partitur unzureichend waren. Anders als die meisten Liedsammlungen Finzis ist dieses Werk als geschlossener Zyklus konzipiert – es zeigt ihn auf der Suche nach seiner eigenen Identität als Komponist. So haben zum Beispiel die Melodien selten den Duktus seines reifen Stils. Charakteristisch ist jedoch die Beschäftigung mit dem Thema Tod und Vergänglichkeit des Lebens – Finzi war in jener Zeit mehrfach mit dem Tod konfrontiert, hatte er doch seinen Vaters, drei Brüder und seinen geliebten Lehrer Ernest Farrar verloren.

Paying calls entwickelt sich aus einer ruhigen,

lyrischen modalen Phrase der ersten Violine; am Beginn der zweiten Strophe blitzt kurz einmal Finzis reife Stimme auf. Die oszillierenden Akkorde am Ende von *Where the picnic was* erinnern an *Clun* aus *On Wenlock Edge* von Vaughan Williams, der in jener Zeit einen wichtigen Einfluss auf Finzi ausübte. Dieser ist auch in der Verwendung harmonischer Eigenheiten des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts in *The oxen* erkennbar, das ebenfalls von einem verbindenden Refrain zusammengehalten wird. *The master and the leaves* bildet mit der Bezeichnung *Presto* und dem lebhaften Kontrapunkt einen markanten Kontrast zu den vorherrschenden langsamen Tempi. Die letzte Strophe hat eine an Gustav Holst gemahnende marschartige Basslinie, die Finzi in späteren Werken oft verwendet hat.

Dieses Gedicht und das folgende *Voices from things growing in a churchyard* veranschaulichen Hardys pantheistische Philosophie, nach der die Toten als Zweige, Blätter und Früchte von Bäumen und Pflanzen wiederkehren. Letzteres ist das ambitionierteste und eindrucksvollste Lied des gesamten Zyklus, fast eine Szene, in der Finzi geschickt die verschiedenen Teilnehmer dieses Totentanzes, wie sie nach einander auftreten, charakterisiert. Mit *Exeunt omnes* schließt sich der Kreis dieses Zyklus, indem Themen aus den vorigen Liedern wiederkehren. Gegen Ende wird die Melodie des ersten Liedes nochmals erreicht, worauf die Musik in den wiegenden Frieden der Ewigkeit versinkt.

Andrew Burn

Deutsche Fassung: Thomas Theise

Earth and Air and Rain, Op. 15

Texts by Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

① Summer Schemes

When friendly summer calls again,
Calls again

Her little fifers to these hills,
We'll go - we two - to that arched fane
Of leafage where they prime their bills
Before they start to flood the plain
With quavers,, minims, shakes, and trills.
'- We'll go', I sing; but who shall say
What may not chance before that day!

And we shall see the waters spring,
Waters spring
From chinks the scrubby copses crown;
And we shall trace their oncreeping
To where the cascade tumbles down
And sends the bobbing growths aswing,
And ferns not quite but almost drown.
'- We shall', I say; but who may sing
Of what another moon will bring!

② When I set out for Lyonesse

When I set out for Lyonesse,
A hundred miles away,
The rime was on the spray,
And starlight lit my lonesomeness
When I set out for Lyonesse
A hundred miles away.

What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there
No prophet durst declare,
Nor did the wisest wizard guess
What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there.

When I came back from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes,
All marked with mute surmise
My radiance rare and fathomless,
When I came back from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes!

③ Waiting both

A star looks down at me,
And says: "Here I and you
Stand, each in our degree:
What do you mean to do, -
Mean to do?"

I say: "For all I know,
Wait, and let Time go by,
Till my change come." - "Just so,"
The star says: "So mean I: -
So mean I."

④ The phantom

Queer are the ways of a man I know:
He comes and stands
In a careworn craze,
And looks at the sands
And the seaward haze
With moveless hands
And face and gaze,
Then turns to go...
And what does he see when he gazes so?

They say he sees as an instant thing
More clear than to-day,
A sweet soft scene
That once was in play
By that briny green;
Yes, notes alway
Warm, real, and keen,

What his back years bring -
A phantom of his own figuring.

Of this vision of his they might say more:
Not only there
Does he see this sight,
But everywhere
In his brain - day, night,
As if on the air
It were drawn rose bright -
Yea, far from that shore
Does he carry this vision of heretofore:

A ghost-girl-rider. And though, toil-tried,
He withers daily,
Time touches her not,
But she still rides gaily
In his rapt thought
On that shagged and shaly
Atlantic spot,
And as when first eyed
Draws rein and sings to the swing of the tide.

5 So I have fared

Simple was I and was young;
Kept no gallant tryst, I;
Even from good words held my tongue,
Quoniam Tu fecisti!

Through my youth I stirred me not,
High adventure missed I,
Left the shining shrines unsought;
Yet - *me deduxisti!*

At my start by Helicon
Love-lore little wist I,
Worldly less; but footed on;
Why? *Me suscepisti!*

When I failed at fervid rhymes,
"Shall", I said, "persist I?"
"Dies" (I would add at times)
"*Meos possuisti!*"

So I have fared through many suns;
Sadly little grist I
Bring my mill, or any one's,
Domine, Tu scisti!

And at dead of night I call;
"Though to prophets list I,
Which hath understood at all?
Yea: Quem elegisti?"

6 Rollicum-Rorum

When Lawyers strive to heal a breach
And Parsons practise what they preach:
Then Boney he'll come pouncing down,
And march his men on London town!
Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lorum,
Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lay!

When Justices hold equal scales,
And Rogues are only found in jails;
Then Boney he'll come pouncing down,
And march his men on London town!
Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lorum,
Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lay!

When Rich Men find their wealth a curse,
And fill therewith the Poor Man's purse;
Then Boney he'll come pouncing down,
And march his men on London town!
Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lorum,
Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lay!

When Husbands with their Wives agree,

And Maids won't wed from modesty;
Then Boney he'll come pouncing down,
And march his men on London town!
Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lorum,
Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lay!

7 To Lizbie Browne

Dear Lizbie Browne,
Where are you now?
In sun, in rain? -
Or is your brow
Past joy, past pain,
Dear Lizbie Browne?

Sweet Lizbie Browne,
How you could smile,
How you could sing! -
How archly wile
In glance-giving,
Sweet Lizbie Browne!

And, Lizbie Browne,
Who else had fair
Bay-red as yours,
Or flesh so fair
Bred out of doors,
Sweet Lizbie Browne?

When, Lizbie Browne,
You had just begun
To be endeared
By stealth to one,
You disappeared
My Lizbie Browne!

Ay, Lizbie Browne,
So swift your life,
And mine so slow,

You were a wife
Ere I could show
Love, Lizbie Browne.

Still, Lizbie Browne,
You won, they said,
The best of men
When you were wed
Where went you then,
O Lizbie Browne?

Dear Lizbie Browne,
I should have thought,
"Girls ripen fast,"
And coaxed and caught
You ere you passed,
Dear Lizbie Browne!

But, Lizbie Browne,
I let you slip;
Shaped not a sign;
Touched never your lip
With lip of mine,
Lost Lizbie Browne!

So, Lizbie Browne,
When on a day
Men speak of me
As not, you'll say,
"And who was he?" -
Yes, Lizbie Browne.

8 The Clock of the Years

And the Spirit said,
"I can make the clock of the years go backward,
But am loth to stop it where you will."
And I cried, "Agreed
To that. Proceed:

It's better than dead!"

He answered, "Peace;"

And called her up - as last before me;

Then younger, younger she grew, to the year

I first had known

Her woman-grown,

And I cried, "Cease! -

"Thus far is good -

It is enough - let her stay thus always!"

But alas for me - He shook his head:

No stop was there;

And she waned child-fair,

And to babyhood.

Still less in mien

To my great sorrow became she slowly,

And smalled till she was nought at all

In his checkless griff;

And it was as if

She had never been.

"Better", I plained,

"She were dead as before! The memory of her

Had lived in me; but it cannot now!"

And coldly his voice:

"It was your choice

To mar the ordained."

9 In a churchyard

"It is sad that so many of worth,

Still in the flesh," sighed the yew,

"Misjudge their lot whom kindly earth

Secludes from view.

"They ride their diurnal round

Each day-span's sum of hours

In peerless ease, without jolt or bound

Or ache like ours.

"If the living could but hear

What is heard by my roots as they creep

Round the restful flock, and the things said there,

No one would weep."

"Now set among the wise,"

They say: "Enlarged in scope,

That no God trumpet us to rise

We truly hope."

I listened to his strange tale

In the mood that stillness brings,

And I grew to accept as the day wore pale

That view of things.

10 Proud Songsters

The thrushes sing as the sun is going,

And the finches whistle in ones and pairs,

And as it gets dark loud nightingales

In bushes

Pipe, as they can when April wears,

As if all Time were theirs.

These are brand-new birds of twelve-months'
growing,

Which a year ago, or less than twain,

No finches were, nor nightingales,

Nor thrushes,

But only particles of grain,

And earth, and air, and rain.

To a Poet, Op. 13a

11 To a poet a thousand years hence

James Elroy Flecker (1884-1915)

I who am dead a thousand years,
And wrote this sweet archaic song,
Send you my words for messengers
The way I shall not pass along.

I care not if you bridge the seas,
Or ride secure the cruel sky,
Or build consummate palaces
Of metal or of masonry.

But have you wine and music still,
And statues and bright-eyed love,
And foolish thoughts of good and ill,
And prayers to them who sit above?

How shall we conquer? Like a wind
That falls at eve our fancies blow,
And old Maeonides the blind
said it three thousand years ago.

O friend unseen, unborn, unknown,
Student of our sweet English tongue,
Read out my words at night, alone:
I was a poet, I was young.

Since I can never see your face,
And never shake you by the hand,
I send my soul through time and space
To greet you. You will understand.

12 On parent knees

Sir William Jones (1746-1794)

On parent knees, a naked new-born child,
Weeping thou sat'st, while all around thee smil'd:
So live, that sinking to thy life's last sleep,
Calm thou may'st smile,
while all around thee weep.

13 Intrada

*Thomas Traherne (1637?-1674) ,
based on Centuries of Meditation I:1.2.3.*

An empty book is like an Infant's Soul, in which
anything may be written; it is capable of all things
but containeth nothing. I have a mind to fill this
with profitable wonders, and with those things
which shall shew my Love. Things strange yet
common, most high, yet plain: infinitely profitable,
but not esteemed;
Truths you love, but know not.

14 The birthnight

Walter de la Mare (1873-1956)

Dearest, it was night
That in its darkness rocked Orion's stars;
Along the willows, and the cedar boughs
Laid their white hands in stealthy peace across
The starry silence of their antique moss:
No sound save rushing air
Cold, yet all sweet with Spring,
And in thy mother's arms, couched weeping there,
Thou lovely thing.

15 June on Castle Hill

Frank Lawrence Lucas (1894-1967)

On its grassy brow
Not a tower now,
Not a stone:
Not a trumpet-call
Not a hushed foot-fall
Alone
Wild parsley waves its white flags far unfurled
Above a warless world

Earth sleeps in peace:
Yet without cease
The sky Throbs angrily
As the laden bee
Sails by,
And, with a secret sting, that sullen hum
Whispers of wars to come.

16 Ode on the rejection of St Cecilia

George Barker (1913-1991)

Rise, underground sleepers, rise from the grave
Under a broken hearted sky
And hear the swansinging nightmare grieve
For this deserted anniversary
Where horned a heart sobs in the wilderness
By the thunderbolt of the day.

Echoing footstep in the ruins of midnight
Knock like a clock in a catacomb
Through the toothless house and the derelict skull
Where once Cecilia shook her veils,
Echo and mourn. Footstepping word, attend her
Here, where, in echoes, she prevails.

Sleep, wormeaten weepers. Silence is her altar.
To the drum of the head, muffled
In a black time, the sigh is a hecatomb.
Tender Cecilia silence. Now, silence is tender
As never a voice was. Here, dumb-
Struck she mourns in long-abandoned grandeur.

Oh stop the calling killer in the skull
Like beasts we turn towards!
For was the caterwauling siren beautiful
Chanting war-long until her bed was full
Of the uxorious dead?
Let the great moaners of the Seven Seas
Let only the seas mourn,
With the shipwrecked harp of creation
on their knees
Till Cecilia turns to a stone.

By Footpath and Stile, Op. 2

Texts by Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

17 Paying calls

I went by footpath and by stile
Beyond where bustle ends,
Strayed here a mile and there a mile
And called upon some friends.

On certain ones I had not seen
For years past did I call,
And then on others who had been
The oldest friends of all.

It was the time of midsummer
When they had used to roam;
But now, though tempting was the air,
I found them all at home.

I spoke to one and other of them
By mound and stone and tree
Of things we had done ere days were dim,
But they spoke not to me.

18 Where the picnic was

Where we made the fire,
In the summer time,
Of branch and briar
On the hill to the sea
I slowly climb
Through winter mire,
And scan and trace
The forsaken place
Quite readily.

Now a cold wind blows,
And the grass is gray,
But the spot still shows
As a burnt circle — aye,
And stick-ends, charred,
Still strew the sward
Whereon I stand,
Last relic of the band
Who came that day!

Yes, I am here
Just as last year,
And the sea breathes brine
From its strange straight line
Up hither, the same
As when we four came.
— But two have wandered far
From this grassy rise
Into urban roar
Where no picnics are,
And one — has shut her eyes
For evermore

19 The oxen

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
“Now they are all on their knees,”
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
“Come; see the oxen kneel

“In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,”
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

20 The master and the leaves

We are budding, Master, budding,
We of your favourite tree;
March drought and April flooding
Arouse us merrily,
Our stemlets newly studding;
And yet you do not see!

We are fully woven for summer
In stuff of limpest green,
The twitterer and the hummer
Here rest of nights, unseen,
While like a long-roll drummer
The nightjar thrills the green.

We are turning yellow, Master,
And next we are turning red,

And faster then and faster
Shall seek our rooty bed,
All wasted in disaster!
But you lift not your head.

"I mark your early going,
And that you'll soon be clay,
I have seen your summer showing
As in my youthful day;
But why I seem unknowing
Is too sunk in to say!"

21 Voices from things growing in a churchyard

These flowers are I, poor Fanny Hurd,
Sir or Madam,
A little girl here sepultured.
Once I flit-fluttered like a bird
Above the grass, as now I wave
In daisy shapes above my grave,
All day cheerily,
All night eerily!

- I am one Bachelor Bowring, "Gent,"
Sir or Madam;
In shingled oak my bones were pent;
Hence more than a hundred years I spent
In my feat of change from a coffin-thrall
To a dancer in green as leaves on a wall.
All day cheerily,
All night eerily!

- I, these berries of juice and gloss,
Sir or Madam,
Am clean forgotten as Thomas Voss;
Thin-urned, I have burrowed away from the moss
That covers my sod, and have entered this yew,
And turned to clusters ruddy of view,
All day cheerily,

All night eerily!

- The Lady Gertrude, proud, high-bred,
Sir or Madam,
Am I—this laurel that shades your head;
Into its veins I have stilly sped,
And made them of me; and my leaves now shine,
As did my satins superfine,
All day cheerily,
All night eerily!

- I, who as innocent withwind climb,
Sir or Madam.
Am one Eve Greensleeves, in olden time
Kissed by men from many a clime,
Beneath sun, stars, in blaze, in breeze,
As now by glowworms and by bees,
All day cheerily,
All night eerily!

- I'm old Squire Audeley Grey, who grew,
Sir or Madam,
Aweary of life, and in scorn withdrew;
Till anon I clambered up anew
As ivy-green, when my ache was stayed,
And in that attire I have longtime gayed
All day cheerily,
All night eerily!

- And so they breathe, these masks, to each
Sir or Madam
Who lingers there, and their lively speech
Affords an interpreter much to teach,
As their murmurous accents seem to come
Thence hitheraround in a radiant hum,
All day cheerily,
All night eerily!

22 Exeunt omnes

Everybody else, then, going,
And I still left where the fair was?...
Much have I seen of neighbour loungers
Making a lusty showing,
Each now past all knowing.

There is an air of blankness
In the street and the littered spaces;
Thoroughfare, steeple, bridge and highway
Wizen themselves to lankness;
Kennels dribble dankness.

Folk all fade. And whither,
As I wait alone where the fair was?
Into the clammy and numbing night-fog
Whence they entered hither.
Soon one more goes thither!

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Gerald Finzi made an unrivalled contribution to British twentieth-century song-writing, especially in his settings of Thomas Hardy, his favourite poet. This second volume of Finzi songs includes two Hardy collections, the early *By Footpath and Stile*, for baritone and string quartet, and the mature setting *Earth and Air and Rain*, both of which share the poet's preoccupation with death and the transience of life. Composed during the early 1930s, *Earth and Air and Rain* includes two of Finzi's best-known songs, *Rollicum-Rorum* and *To Lizbie Browne*, a touching poem of regret for what might have been. Volume 1 is available on Naxos 8.557644.

Gerald
FINZI
(1901–1956)

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| [1-10] | Earth and Air and Rain, Op. 15 | 31:39 |
| [11-16] | To a Poet, Op. 13a | 17:02 |
| [17-22] | By Footpath and Stile, Op. 2 | 23:14 |

Roderick Williams, Baritone
Iain Burnside, Piano ([1-16]) • Sacconi Quartet ([17-22])

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