

# Respighi Songs

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RESPIGHI SONGS

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

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Ian Bostridge, tenor  
Saskia Giorgini, piano

Total playing time: 67. 34



I first properly discovered Respighi during the very beginning of the 2020 Lockdown, when I was looking for some Italian songs to lift my heart.

What I found was so much more. Not only did I gain access to a treasure house of colourful and imaginative musical writing, but also to the most intimate area of the composer's mind. And what a mind! Eternally curious and eclectic, Ottorino Respighi, born in Bologna in 1879, spoke 11 languages fluidly.

His clever and always sensitive choice of poetry is a direct reflection of the breadth of his musical imagination. The resulting combination of music and words is as powerful as it can be — which is not at all obvious, and we often find less successful examples even by the greatest of composers.

A master in storytelling, Respighi's musical language is shaped around the poetic world created by the text in such a way that we have the feeling it was born as one whole. His ability to paint a complete scenography or set, complete in all its detail, in just a few bars is a rare one.

Working on Respighi's music has been so fulfilling for both of us, pianist and singer. It has also offered a different and wider perspective on life's happenings; one constant in this music is the longing for a past still so close — its vibrations still in the air — but at the same time inevitably gone.

During his life, Respighi, also a musicologist, turned his attention to Italian and foreign folk traditions. It seemed especially fitting to end the album with arrangements of Scottish and Italian Folk songs.

**-Saskia Giorgini**



## The Afternoon, Evening and Night of a Faun

The songs of Ottorino Respighi – a Modern Mythology.

The bountiful collection of songs recorded on this album might be approached in two ways. First of all, it can be read as a diary – of the artist and the civilization that he so effectively represents. These songs, written between circa 1905 and 1930, chart Respighi's personal and stylistic development as a composer. His widow Elsa, a singer whom he accompanied in more than 350 concerts, writes in *Ottorino Respighi. Dati biografici ordinati da Elsa Respighi* that her husband composed vocal music at every stage of his career. As a young man, he wrote songs to express the more introverted side of his personality. Songs allow us to glimpse the most intimate processes of a composer's workshop, as we learn from Respighi's legendary account of his most

celebrated song, 'Nebbie'. At a time of deep depression, he suddenly woke up with a craving to compose; and that same afternoon a friend presented him with a volume of poems by Ada Negri. He flicked through the volume, encountered 'Nebbie' and realized at once that her words fitted perfectly the music he had written in the morning.

The songs also tell us about Respighi's private life, such as his close, lifelong friendship with the mezzo-soprano Chiarina Fino Savio, an influential singer and frequent dedicatee of his songs, the 'sweet friend', the 'Dawn of my Sunset', as he calls her in connection with *Il tramonto*, who introduced him to the publisher Ricordi. She was a constant source of inspiration and advice, and when Respighi published a new set of songs in 1912, he paid her the compliment by saying that he had composed the songs for her while thinking of her and her voice – he had first been struck by the special timbre of her

instrument when he heard her perform *Aretusa* in 1911. Fino Savio returned the compliment by paying homage to Respighi in June 1936 (he had died two months earlier) in a recital at the conservatoire of her native Turin, where she performed his songs, accompanied by Franco Alfano, the man who had completed Puccini's *Turandot*.

Respighi's *Notturmo* for piano and his first songs were composed in his twenties, shortly after he had left the Bologna Conservatoire, where he had been a pupil of that staunch Wagnerian Giuseppe Martucci. It was in his native Bologna, described in 1902 by the *Musical Times* as the 'Musical Athens of Italy', that Respighi and his friends used to spend time with the Sicilian-born Francesco Bongiovanni, who published 'Nebbie' and other early works – to their mutual benefit. The five songs of *Deità Silvine*, which Respighi sent to Ricordi on 14 February 1917, were written after Respighi's move to Rome, the city

where he established himself as Professor of Composition and later Director of the conservatoire. He remained in Rome for the rest of his career and became, after *Fontane di Roma*, a celebrity. By the time he composed 'Le fontanelle' in April 1930, the now famous Roman symphonic trilogy had already been completed.

Respighi's willingness to address poetry which had not originally been designed for song composition – 'liriche' as opposed to the 19th century 'romanze' of the salon – gives us an idea of his literary tastes. A cultured man, he eventually assembled an extensive library, nurturing a passion which would grow into a self-confessed bibliomania. The poems he chose for his songs are a mirror of Italian culture during the first third of the 20th century, strongly influenced by Gabriele d'Annunzio. Poet, novelist, playwright and politician, d'Annunzio had Respighi's songs performed for him by his lover Luisa Baccara in Fiume, and on 22 April 1920 he authorized the

composer to 'publish with his music' five poems that included 'La naiade' and 'La sera'. Nine years earlier the composer had not felt confident enough to set a play by the same poet and declined the publisher's offer of a contract. Apart from 'O falce di luna calante' (1882), which attracted at least a dozen other composers, the nine d'Annunzio poems set by Respighi are mostly taken from the youthful but innovative collection *Poema paradisiaco* (1893) – poems that fluctuate between monologue and dialogue. Other authors set by Respighi include two celebrated poetesses, Ada Negri and Vittoria Aganoor Pompilj, the versatile and visionary Antonio Rubino, who was also a renowned illustrator, and the French symbolist poet Albert Samain, whom Gabriel Fauré had immortalized in 'Accompagnement', 'Arpège', 'Pleurs d'or' and 'Soir'. The success of Respighi's songs was partly due to his thoughtful and sophisticated word-setting and the evocative quality of the piano accompaniment.

Respighi's songs can also be seen as a sophisticated cultural discourse, focussing on nature, myth and folk tradition. Many of his songs attempt to create a modern mythology of nature, where mystery lurks unseen to all but the sensitive listener. The aim is to restore the balance between man and nature in an age of astonishing technological progress. Nature is not seen through the cold perspective of the scientist's eyes but rather as a world of mystery, decipherable only by art – a world that mankind can approach by delving into dreams and visions, which awaken the senses and allow him to realize that he is a vital part of mother nature. This nostalgia for mythology and 'long dead gods' – which brings about a Dionysian experience, extends our perception of reality and sets creative energies free – is a reaction against the rampant spread of early 20th-century technology. As a consequence, reality often takes on a dreamy quality, a space where one might well encounter Roman fauns and Pan, symbols in ancient

times of Nature itself that with their 'joyful force' inhabited the wild woods that man cannot dominate. Such creatures dwell in a land that is situated between reality and dream.

Nature is often inhabited by the god Eros, as we see in 'I Fauni', where an excited accompaniment depicts the rampaging fauns. The presence of Eros can also be seen in the final line of 'Musica in horto' and in the fascinating 'Crepuscolo', the last of the *Deità Silvana* songs that depicts a landscape with Pan, against whom 'a softly singing nymph' once 'leant her breasts, provokingly'. But the most typical and impressive feature of this type of poetry is the way reality fades into darkness and silence, as happens in the elegant, Chopinesque piano *Nocturne*, which anticipates the songs that he composed a few years later, approximately between 1903 and 1905. Darkness in 'Notte' represents 'lost epiphanies'; and 'Le repos en Égypte' speaks of 'the mysterious desert

dreams'. Irrational experience begins when time ceases to exist. It is worth recalling that Debussy described the *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune* as a 'succession of scenes through which pass the desires and dreams of the **faun** in the heat of the afternoon'.

Stillness waiting for some sort of miracle is what characterizes many of Respighi's songs, such as 'Acqua', 'Crepuscolo', 'Au milieu du jardin', 'Notte' and 'Nebbie', where natural landscape and the time of day are conveyed by rich, evocative harmonies and some uncomfortable leaps in the vocal line. A placid, plain, D-flat Major *Lento tranquillo* walk conjures up the nocturnal atmosphere in 'Notte' (1912) in which the final four lines are intoned by the voice on a single note, and the final word ('piange' ('weeps')) is repeated across two bars to a *ppp* dynamic. The other Ada Negri song, 'Nebbie', describes a desolate Schubertian landscape complete with ravens in a 4/2 (!), F-sharp Minor *Lento*, as motionless piano chords,

proceeding slowly like Wagnerian giants, support the long ascending vocal line — a process that is reversed at the end of the song, as the dead lover's call resounds in unearthly fashion. The conductor Gianandrea Gavazzeni recalled that the song was regularly performed at family reunions, since every amateur had it in his repertoire. Nocturnal peace is the focus of 'Le repos en Égypte' which, through a remarkable unifying piano accompaniment, evokes a typical Oriental night in *fin-de-siècle* oriental taste, as the harmonies keep changing. 'O falce di luna calante' (1909), typical of d'Annunzio's moonlit poems, aims to express the 'harvest of dreams' rippling down in the moon's glow through a harmonic density reminiscent of Schumann ('Mondnacht') and Duparc. The accompaniment to 'La statua' (1920) is redolent of twilight, while 'La sera' (1920) is nothing less than a chromatic, Tristanesque ode to night — Respighi achieves a sepulchral effect by combining a rhythmic ostinato with spicy harmonies. 'La naiade'

(1920) exhibits a free declamatory style, a time signature that alternates between 5/4 and 7/4 and an unusually long postlude that depicts perhaps the gurgling of the urn mentioned in the poem. The song was written during a holiday at the 'Rosebush' cottage in Anacapri which was later owned by Graham Greene.

Respighi often displays a gift for impressionistic word-painting in his piano writing, influenced by Debussy and, in the central recitative-like section of 'Pioggia', by Wagner's *Tristan*. Like Claude Monet, Respighi was obsessed by water, as we hear in the atmospheric phenomena and the 'hiss of silver cymbals' at the core of 'Musica in horto', a song that is drenched in *art nouveau* atmosphere and imagination. Listening to 'Pioggia' (1909), one is reminded of Marcel Proust in *Le Côté de Guermantes*: 'The shivering poplars which suggest endless mysteries of evening', as 'a few drops of rain fall without noise on the water, ancient but still in its divine infancy

coloured always by the weather'. Another remarkable creature emerging from the landscape is the pre-Raphaelite figure in the languid slow waltz of 'Egle' (1917), a small miracle of word-painting, progressive harmony, wit and intimacy — reminiscent of similar waltzes by Debussy and Ravel.

Beside the intertwining themes of nature and myth, the songs on this album also reveal Respighi's huge interest in folk tradition. 'La stornellatrice' (1906) is a folksong from Central Italy with a fresh melodic appeal and a recitative-like rhythmic freedom. The merry A-flat Major 'Noël ancien' is characterized by a driving 9/8 energy and frequent optimistic octave leaps. The 4 *Scottish Songs* (1924) open with the energetic 'When the kye come hame', a song that conveys the happiness of pastoral Scotland, while the typical, syncopated Scotch snap enlivens 'Within a mile of Edinburgh', as the light and witty piano accompaniment relieves some of the melancholy mood. Equally witty is

the accompaniment to 'My heart's in the Highlands' which contrasts with the voice's noble melody. The set closes with 'The Piper of Dundee', whose brisk prelude and accompaniment has a faint whiff of Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* songs.

Returning to Italy, we are welcomed by the strongly coloured melody of 'Canzone sarda' (1928), gently counterpointed by the bird calls in the piano. The Abruzzi song 'Le funtanelle' (1930) exudes merriment and joyful nonsense and culminates in the toast: 'Long live love!' Another folk-like song, 'Bella porta di rubini' from *Cinque canti all'antica* (1906), is a plain and simple setting in crystal-clear tonal F Major; its carefree lightness matches nicely the vivid images in the poem. Respighi and his generation exhibited a huge interest in Italian poetry and music from the Middle Ages to the 18th century — something that is evident in his symphonic works.

**Raffaele Mellace**





## Lyrics

### Deità Silvane

(texts by Antonio Rubino)

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#### I. I fauni

S'odono al monte i saltellanti rivi  
murmureggiare per le forre astruse:  
s'odono al bosco gemer cornamuse  
con garrito di pifferi giulivi.  
E i fauni in corsa per dumeti e clivi,  
erti le corna sulle fronti ottuse,  
bevono per lor nari camuse  
filtri sottili e zefiri lascivi.  
E, mentre in fondo al gran coro alberato  
piange d'amore per la vita bella  
la sampogna dell'arcade pastore,  
contenta e paurosa dell'agguato  
fugge ogni ninfa più che fiera snella,  
ardendo in bocca come ardente fiore.

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#### I. The Fauns

We hear the tumbling brooks on the  
mountain,  
gurgling through hidden ravines:  
in the wood we hear the bagpipe sound  
with the skirl of joyous pipes.  
And the running fauns through thickets and  
slopes,  
horns erect on broad foreheads,  
drink through their snub noses  
subtle filters and lascivious zephyrs.  
And, while below the great treed choir  
it cries of love for the beautiful life:  
the bagpipe of the Arcadian shepherd.  
Happy and fearful of the ambush,  
each nymph flees, more nimble than proud,  
her mouth burning like an ardent flower.

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#### II. Musica in horto

Uno squillo di cròtali clangenti  
rompe in ritmo il silenzio dei roseti  
mentre in fondo agli aulenti orti segreti  
gorgheggia un flauto liquidi lamenti.  
La melodia con tintinnio d'argenti  
par che a vicenda s'attristi e s'allieti,  
ora luce di tremanti inquieti,  
or diffondendo lunghe ombre dolenti:  
cròtali arguti canne variotocche!,  
Una gioia di cantici inespressi  
per voi par che dai chiusi orti rampolli,  
in sommo dei rosai, che cingon molli  
ghirlande al cuor degli intimi recessi,  
s'apron le rose come molli bocche.

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#### II. Music in the garden

A sound of clashing crotales  
rhythmically breaks the silence of the rose  
gardens  
while deep in the fragrant secret gardens  
a flute murmurs liquid laments.  
The melody with silver tinkling  
seems by turns to sadden and to lighten  
now the light of restless trembling  
now spreading long doleful shadows:  
spirited crotales, many-aired reeds!  
A joy of unvoiced hymns  
for you, it seems that from the closed  
gardens shoots  
atop the rose gardens, enveloping soft  
garlands in the heart of their innermost  
recesses,  
the roses open like tender mouths.

III.	<b>Egle</b>	3	III.	<b>Aegle</b>
<p>Frondeggia il bosco d'uberi verzure, volgendo i rii zaffiro e margherita: Per gli archi verdi un'anima romita cinge pallidi fuochi a ridde oscure e in te ristretta con le mani pure come le pure fonti della vita, di sole e d'ombre mobili vestita tu danzi, Egle, con languide misure. E a te candida e bionda tra le ninfe, d'ilari ambagi descrivendo il verde sotto i segreti ombracoli del verde, ove la più inquieta ombra s'attrista, perle squillanti e liquido ametista volge la gioia roca delle linfe.</p>		<p>The wood grows leafy and fruitful, the brooks reflecting daisy and sapphire: Through the green arches a hermit soul circles pale fires in hidden whirls and in you slight with pure hands like the pure sources of life, dressed in sun and fluid shadows you dance, Aegle, languidly. And to you, fair, bright among the nymphs in merry winding movements sketching the green below the secret shadows of the green, where the most restless shadow saddens, bright pearls and liquid amethyst flows the rough joy of the lymphs.</p>		
IV.	<b>Acqua</b>	4	IV.	<b>Water</b>
<p>Acqua, e tu ancora sul tuo flauto lene intonami un tuo canto vario lungo, di cui le note abbian l'odor del fungo,</p>		<p>Water, and still you on your soft flute, sing your long and varied song to me, whose notes have the scent of mushroom,</p>		

del musco e dell'esiguo capelvenere,  
sì che... per tutte le sottili vene,  
onde irrighi la fresca solitudine,  
il tuo riscintillio rida e subludii  
al gemmar delle musiche serene.  
Acqua, e, lung'h'essi i calami volubili  
movendo in gioco le cerulee dita,  
avvicenda più lunghe ombre alle luci,  
tu che con modi labili deduci  
sulla mia fronte intenta e sulla vita  
del verde fuggitive ombre di nubi.

of moss and of the slight maidenhair fern,  
ah that... through all your slender veins,  
which bathe the fresh solitude,  
your tinkling laughs and ripples  
at the flowering of the serene music.  
Water, and along them the fickle reeds  
playfully moving their Cerulean fingers,  
brings closer longer shadows to the lights,  
you who with frail ways perceive  
on my absorbed forehead and on life  
fleeting green shadows of clouds.

V.	<b>Crepuscolo</b>	5	V.	<b>Twilight</b>
<p>Nell'orto abbandonato ora l'edace muschio contende all'ellere i recessi, e tra il coro snelletto dei cipressi s'addorme in grembo dell'antica pace Pan. Sul vasto marmoreo torace, che i convolvoli infiorano d'amplessi, un tempo forse con canti sommessi piegò una ninfa il bel torso procace. Deità della terra, forza lieta!, troppo pensiero è nella tua vecchiezza;</p>		<p>In the abandoned garden now the devouring moss contends the recesses with the ivy, and between the slender choir of cypresses slumbers in the womb of the ancient peace of Pan. On the vast marble bust, that the convolvuli decorate with embraces, once, perhaps, with softened songs a nymph bent her beautiful pert bust. goddess of the earth, happy strength!</p>		

per sempre inaridita è la tua fonte.  
Muore il giorno, e per l'alta ombra inquieta  
trema e s'attrista un canto d'allegrezza:  
lunghe ombre azzurre scendono dal monte.

## 6 Liriche, P90

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I. **O falce di luna**  
(text by Gabriele d'Annunzio)

O falce di luna calante  
che brilli su l'acque deserte,  
o falce d'argento, qual mèsse di sogni  
ondeggia a 'l tuo mite chiarore qua giù!

Aneliti brevi di foglie  
di fiori di flutti da 'l bosco  
esalano a 'l mare: non canto, non grido,  
non suono pe 'l vasto silenzio va.

Too much thought is in your old age;  
for ever barren is your spring.  
The day dies, and for the long restless  
shadow  
a song of merriness trembles and is  
saddened:  
long azure shadows descend from the  
mountain.

---

I. **O crescent of a waning moon**

O crescent of a waning moon  
you that shine on the deserted waters,  
o silver crescent, what harvest of dreams  
wavers  
in your pale glow down here!

Short breaths of leaves  
of flowers, ripples from the woods  
go forth to the sea, no song, no cry  
no sound goes through the vast silence.

Oppresso d'amor, di piacere,  
il popol de' vivi s'addorme.  
O falce calante, qual mèsse di sogni  
ondeggia a 'l tuo mite chiarore qua giù!

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III. **Au milieu du jardin**  
(text by Jean Moréas)

Au milieu du jardin la fleur que je désire  
s'entr' ouvre en ce moment,  
et la brise tout bas sous les tilleuls soupire  
dans un frissonnement.

Errant entre ses bords, sur le gravier encore  
l' eau brillante bruit,  
mais le rayon du jour, hélas! qui s' évapore  
va céder à la nuit.

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VI. **Pioggia**  
(text by Vittoria Aganoor Pompilj)

Piovea: per le finestre spalancate  
a quella tregua di ostinati odori  
saliano dal giardin fresche folate

Oppressed by love, by pleasure,  
the whole world is fast asleep.  
O waning crescent, what harvest of dreams  
wavers in your pale glow down here!

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III. **At the centre of the garden**

At the centre of the garden, the flower I  
desire is just opening,  
and the faint breeze among the linden  
trees ighs and shivers.

At the garden edge, still on the gravel,  
the bright water murmurs and meanders,  
but the day's light, alas, already fading,  
will give way to night.

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VI. **Rain**

It rained: through the wide-open windows,  
to the respite of the persistent fragrances,  
there wafted from the garden cool gusts

d'erbe risorte e di risorti fiori

S'acchettava il tumulto dei colori  
sotto il vel delle goccioline implorate;  
e intorno ai pioppi ai frassini agli allori  
beveano ingorde le zolle assetate.

Esser pianta, esser foglia, esser stelo  
e nell'angoscia dell'ardor (pensavo)  
così largo ristoro aver dal cielo!

Sul davanzal protesa io gli arboscelli,  
I fiori, l'erbe guardavo guardavo  
E mi battea la pioggia sui capelli.

## 6 Liriche, P97

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I. **Notte**  
(text by Ada Negri)

Sul giardino fantastico  
profumato di rosa  
la carezza de l'ombra  
posa.

of revived grass and revived flowers.

The tumult of colours calmed down  
beneath the veil of the longed-for droplets;  
and around the poplars, the ashes and the  
laurels  
the thirsty clods of earth drank greedily.

Oh, to be a plant! To be a leaf, to be a stem,  
And in the anguish of passion (I reflected)  
To receive such great renewal from the sky!

Leaning out over the windowsill I watched  
the bushes, the flowers, the grass,  
While the rain beat down on my hair.

---

I. **Night**

On the fantastic garden  
perfumed by rose  
the caress of a shadow -  
rests.

Pure ha un pensiero e un palpito  
la quiete suprema,  
l'aria come per brivido  
trema.

La luttuosa tenebra  
una storia di morte  
racconta alle cardenie  
smorte?

Forse perché una pioggia  
di soavi rugiade  
entro i socchiusi petali  
cade,

Su l'ascolte miserie  
e su l'ebbrezze perdute,  
sui muti sogni e l'ansie  
mute.

Su le fugaci gioie  
che il disinganno infrange  
la notte le sue lacrime  
piange...

Nevertheless having a thought and a pulse  
supreme quiet,  
the air, as if shivering -  
trembles.

Does the mournful darkness  
a story of death  
tell to the gardenias -  
so pale?

Maybe it's because a torrent  
of delicate dewdrops  
into half-closed petals -  
falls,

On concealed troubles  
and on once intoxicating losses,  
on voiceless dreams and anxieties -  
mute.

Over the fleeting joys  
that disappointment smashes  
night, her tears -  
weeps...

### III. Le repos en Égypte

(text by Albert Victor Samain)

La nuit est bleue et chaude, et le calme infini...  
Roulé dans son manteau, le front sur une pierre,  
Joseph dort, le cœur pur, ayant fait sa prière,  
et l'âne à ses pieds est comme un humble ami.

Entre les pieds du Sphinx appuyée à demi,  
la Vierge pâle et douce, a fermé la paupière;  
et, dans l'ombre, une étrange et suave lumière  
sort du petit Jésus dans ses bras endormi.

Autour d'eux le désert songe mystérieux;  
et tout est si tranquille à cette heure, en ces  
lieux  
Qu'on entendrait l'enfant respirer sous ses voiles.

Nul souffle... La fumée immobile du feu  
Monte ainsi qu'un long fil se perd dans l'air  
bleu...  
Et le Sphinx éternel atteste les étoiles.

### III. The repose in Egypt

The night is blue and warm, and the calm  
boundless ...  
Wrapped in his cloak, his brow against a rock,  
Joseph, having prayed, sleeps with a pure heart,  
and the ass lies at his feet like a humble friend.

Half-leaning against the Sphinx's feet,  
the Virgin, gentle and pale, has closed her eyes;  
and, in the shade, a soft and strange light  
issues from little Jesus asleep in her arms.

Surrounding them, the mysterious desert  
dreams;  
and all is so peaceful here at this hour  
that you could hear the child breathe beneath  
her veils.

Not a breath ... the fire's motionless smoke  
rises like a long thread into the blue air ...  
and the eternal Sphinx calls heaven to witness.

### IV. Noël ancien

(anonymous)

Noël nouvelet,  
Noël chantons ici,  
dévotes gens,  
crions à Dieu merci,  
chantons Noël pour le Roi nouvelet.

Quand m'éveillai,  
ayant assez dormi,  
j'ouvris les yeux,  
vis un arbre fleuri,  
dont il sortait un bouton vermeillet.

Quand je le vis,  
mon cœur fut réjoui  
car grand' beauté  
resplendissait en lui,  
comme soleil levant au matinet.

D'un angelet  
après les chants ouïs  
qu'aux pasteurs disait:  
"Partez d'ici, en Bethléem trouverez l'agnelet.",

### IV. Ancient Christmas

A new Christmas,  
let us sing Noël here,  
devout people,  
let us cry thanks to God,  
let us sing Noël for the new little King.

When I awoke,  
having slept my fill,  
I opened my eyes  
and saw a flowering tree  
with a bright red bud.

When I saw it,  
my heart rejoiced,  
for it gleamed  
with great beauty,  
like morning sunrise.

I then heard  
an angel singing  
to the shepherds, saying:  
'Set out from here, in Bethlehem you shall find



En Bethléem  
Marie et Joseph  
vis, l'âne et le bœuf  
près de l'Enfant au lit:  
La crèche était au lieu d'un bercelet.

L'étoile y vis  
qui dans la nuit éclaircit,  
qui d'Orient  
d'où son éclat jaillit  
en Bethléem les trois Rois amenait.

L'un portait l'or  
et l'autre offrait la myrrhe,  
et l'autre encens qu'il faisait bon sentir:  
Du Paradis semblait le jardinier!

the lamb.'

In Bethlehem  
I saw Mary and Joseph,  
the ass and the ox  
near the sleeping Child:  
The manger served as a crib.

I saw the star  
illuminating the night,  
the star which from the Orient  
with its bright light  
led the three Kings to Bethlehem.

One was bearing gold,  
and the other offered myrrh,  
and the other fragrant incense:  
The garden resembled Paradise!

## Nebbie, P 64

(text by Ada Negri)

Soffro, lontan lontano  
Le nebbie sonnolente  
Salgono dal tacente  
Piano.

Alto gracchiando, i corvi,  
Fidati all'ali nere,  
Traversan le brughiere  
Torvi.

Dell'aere ai morsi crudi  
Gli addolorati tronchi  
Offron, pregando, i bronchi nudi.  
Come ho freddo!

Son sola;  
Pel grigio ciel sospinto  
Un gemito destinato  
Vola;

E mi ripete: Vieni;  
È buia la vallata.

## Mists

I suffer. Far, far away  
the sleeping mists  
rise from the silent  
plain.

Shrilling cawing, the crows,  
trusting their black wings  
cross the heath  
grimly.

To the raw weathering of the air  
the sorrowful tree trunks  
offer, praying, their bare branches,  
How cold am I!

I am alone;  
driven through the gray sky  
a wail of extinction  
flies;

And repeats to me: come,  
the valley is dark.

O triste, o disamata  
Vieni! Vieni!

Oh sad, oh unloved one,  
Come! Come!

---

### La statua, P122

(text by Gabriele d'Annunzio)

Chi scenderà dall'alta scala ai cigni aspettanti?  
Protendono silenti i lunghi colli, ad ora ad ora;  
e intenti riguatano dai neri occhi ferigni.  
Chiusa l'acqua nel cerchio dei macigni  
    muscosi  
ride ai bianchi solchi lenti.  
Una statua memore d'assenti numi,  
grandessa fa i cipressi insigni.  
Qual mistero dal gesto d'una grande statua  
    solitaria  
In un giardino silenzioso al vespero si espande!  
Manca il Sole, ma il giorno ancor chino sui  
    monti,  
Sfoggia l'ultime ghirlande.  
E il cielo è più lontano e più divino.

---

### The Statue

Who'll step down the high stair to the swans  
    who wait?  
They stretch up silently their tall necks, ever  
    and anon,  
and intently, glower through wild eyes of  
    blackened bronze.  
The waters within the circle of stone  
swathed in mosses mock the wan rills' spread.  
A statue, a remembrance of long-dead  
gods, amid the old cypresses stands alone.  
What mystery from the gesture of a great  
statue standing alone in a wildwood mid spring  
silently sprawls as the hour grows late!  
The sun is gone; but the Day — still bending  
over the mountains,  
loosens a last flower from her plait.  
And the sky seems now a higher and holier  
thing.

### 4 Liriche, P125

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#### II. La naiade

(text by Gabriele d'Annunzio)

Pullula ne l'opaco bosco e lene  
tremula e si dilata in suoi leggeri  
cerchi l'acqua; ed or vela i suoi misteri,  
ora per tutte le sue chiare vene  
ha un brivido scoprendo all'imo arene  
nuziali ove ancor restano intieri  
i vestigi dei corpi che in piaceri  
d'amor commisti riguardò Selene.

Morta è Selene; morte son le Argire;  
i talami, deserti; nel sovrano  
silenzio de la notte l'acqua tace;  
ma pur sembrami a quando a quando udire  
il gorgoglio di un'urna che una mano  
invisibile affonda in quella pace.

14

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#### II. The Naiad

The water crawls through the opaque forest  
and gently trembles and expands in its light  
circles; and now it veils its mysteries,  
now through all of its clear veins  
passes a shiver, unearthing the low  
wedding arenas where still rest intact  
the vestiges of bodies which in co-mingled  
pleasures of love regarded Selene.

Selene is dead; the naiads are dead;  
the bridal beds, deserted; in the sovereign  
silence of the night the water falls silent;  
but truly it seems now and then I hear  
the gurgling of an urn which an invisible  
hand submerges within that peace.

---

III. **La sera**  
(text by Gabriele d'Annunzio)

Rimanete, vi prego, rimanete qui.  
Non vi alzate!  
Avete voi bisogno di luce?  
No.  
Fate che questo sogno duri ancora.  
Vi prego: rimanete!  
Ci ferirebbe forse, come un dardo, la luce.  
Tropo lungo è stato il giorno: oh, troppo.  
Ed io già penso al suo ritorno con orrore.  
La luce è come un dardo!  
Anche voi non l'amate; è vero?  
Gli occhi vostri, nel giorno, sono stanchi.  
Pare quasi che non possiate sollevare le  
palpebre,  
su quei dolorosi occhi;  
e nulla, veramente, nulla è più triste  
de l'ombra che le ciglia immote  
fanno talvolta a sommo de le gote  
quando la bocca non sorride più.

---

15  
III. **The Evening**

Stay, I beg you, stay here.  
Do not get up!  
Do you need light?  
No.  
Let this dream last still.  
I beg you: stay!  
Like a dagger, the light may wound us.  
The day has been too long: oh, much too  
long.  
And already I think of its return with fear.  
Light is like a dagger!  
You also do not love it, true?  
During the day your eyes are tired.  
It almost seems that you cannot lift the lids  
above your sorrowful eyes;  
and nothing, truly, nothing is sadder  
than the shadow which your motionless  
eyelashes  
Sometimes make on the summit of your  
cheeks  
When your mouth no longer smiles.

---

5 Canti all'antica, P71

IV. **Bella porta di rubini**  
(text by Alberto Donini)

Bella porta di rubini  
ch'apri il varco ai dolci accenti,  
se nei risi peregrini  
scopri perle rilucenti,  
tu d'amor dolce aura spiri,  
refrigerio a miei martiri.

Vezzasetta e fresca rosa,  
umidetto e dolce labbro,  
ch'hai la manna rugiadosa  
sul bellissimo cinabro,  
non parlar ma ridi e taci:  
sien gli accenti i nostri baci.

Occhietti amati che m'incendete,  
perché spietati omai più siete?  
Splendan sereni, di gioia pieni,  
vostri splendori, fiamme di cori.

Bocca vermiglia ch'hai per confini,

---

17  
IV. **Beautiful door of rubies**

Beautiful door of rubies,  
which open the way to sweet accents.  
If in your fleeting laughs  
you show shining pearls  
you breathe the aura of gentle love  
relief for my martyrdom.

Charming, fresh rose  
moist, soft lip  
who have the dewy manna  
on the lovely cinabar  
do not speak but laugh, be silent;  
let our kisses be our speech.

Eyes which are loved, which set me afire,  
because you are cruel, or you are never more  
let them shine, serene, full of joy  
your splendours, flames from the hearts.

Or you are never more, vermillion mouth

o meraviglia, perle e rubini,  
quando ridente, quando clemente,  
dirai: "Ben mio ardo anch'io!"?

---

### Stornellatrice, P69

(text by Carlo Zangarini)

Che mi giova cantar: "Fior di betulla:  
Vorrei tu fossi il sole ed io la stella,  
E andar pel cielo e non pensare a nulla!"  
Quando poi l'eco mi risponde: nulla?

Che mi vale cantar: "Fiore dei fiori:  
Tu sei l'amore mio d'oggi e di ieri:  
Tu sei l'amore mio che mai non muori!"  
Quando poi l'eco mi risponde: muori?

that you have as a border, oh wonder,  
pearls and rubies,  
when you laugh, when you are merciful,  
you will say: "well, my love, I burn too."

---

### Balladeer

What use is it to sing: "O, flower of the  
silver birch:  
I wish you were the sun and I a star.  
Wandering through the heavens, thinking  
of nothing."  
If then the echo replies to me: nothing?

What is it worth to me to sing: "Flower of  
all flowers:  
You are my love for both today and  
yesterday:  
You are my love who will never die!"  
If the echo replies to me: die?

### 4 Scottish Songs, P143

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#### I. When the kye come hame

Come all ye jolly shepherds,  
that whistle through the glen,  
I'll tell you of a secret  
that courtiers dinna ken;  
what is the greatest bliss  
that the tongue o' man can name ?  
'tis to woo a bonnie lassie,  
when the kye come hame.

When the kye come hame,  
when the kye come hame,  
'tween the gloamin and the mirk  
when the kye come hame.

'Tis not beneath the burgonet,  
nor yet beneath the crown,  
'tis not on couch of velvet,  
nor yet on bed of down;  
'tis beneath the spreading birch,  
in the dell without a name,  
wi' a bonnie, bonnie lassie,

when the kye come hame.

Then the eyes shine sae brightly,  
the hale soul to beguile,  
there's love in ev'ry whisper  
and joy in every smile;  
O! wha would choose a crown,  
wi' its perils and its hame?  
And miss a bonnie lassie,  
when the kye come hame.

See yonder pawky shepherd  
that lingers on the hill,  
his yowes are in the fauld,  
and his lambs are lying still ;  
but he downa gang to rest,  
for his heart is in a flame,  
to meet his bonnie lassie,  
when the kye come hame.

Awa' wi' fame and fortune  
what comfort can they gi'e?  
And a' the arts that prey  
upon man's life and libertie!  
Gi'e me the highest joy

that the heart o' man can frame,  
my bonnie, bonnie lassie,  
when the kye come hame !

---

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## II. Within a mile of Edinburgh

'Twas within a mile o' Edinburgh town,  
in the rosy time of the year;  
sweet flowers bloom'd and the grass was  
down,  
and each shepherd woo'd his dear -  
Bonnie Jockie, blythe and gay,  
kiss'd young Jenny making hay;  
the lassie blush'd and frowning cried,  
"Na, na, it winna do;  
I canna, canna, winna, winna, mauna  
buckle to!"

Jockie was a wag, that never wad wed,  
though lang he had follow'd the lass,  
contented she earned and ate her brown  
bread,  
and merrily turned up the grass.  
Bonnie Jockie, blythe and free,

won her heart right merrily;  
yet still she blush'd and frowning cried,  
"Na, na, it winna do; I canna, canna,  
winna, winna, mauna buckle to!"

But when he vow'd he wad make her his  
bride,  
though his flocks and herds were not few,  
she gie'd him her hand and a kiss beside,  
and vow'd she'd forever be true.  
Bonnie Jockie, blythe and free,  
won her heart right merrily;  
at kirk she no more frowning cried,  
"Na, na, it winna do; I canna, canna,  
winna, winna, mauna buckle to!"

---

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## III. My heart's in the Highlands

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not  
here;  
my heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the  
deer;  
a-chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,  
my heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the north  
the birthplace of valour, the country of worth;  
wherever I wander, wherever I rove,  
the hills of the Highlands forever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high covered wi'  
snow  
farewell to the straths and green valleys below  
farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods  
farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not  
here  
my heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the  
deer;  
a-chasing the wild deer and following the roe,  
my heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

---

22

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## IV. The Piper of Dundee

The piper came to our town,  
to our town, to our town  
the piper came to our town  
and he play'd bonnilie.

He play'd a spring, the laird to please  
a spring brent new frae yont the seas;  
and then he gae his bags a wheeze,  
and play'd anither key.

And wasna he a roguie, a roguie, a roguie,  
and wasna he a roguie, the piper o' Dundee?

He play'd "The Welcome owre the Main,"  
and "Ye'se be fou and I'se be fain,"  
and "Auld Stuart's back again"  
wi' muckle mirth and glee.  
He play'd "The Kirk", he play'd "The Queen"  
"The Mulin Dhu" and "Chevalier"  
and "Lang away, but welcome here"  
sae sweet, sae bonnilie.  
And wasna he a roguie, a roguie, a roguie,  
and wasna he a roguie, the piper o' Dundee?

It's some gat swords and some gat nane  
and some were dancing mad their lane,  
and mony a vow o' weir was ta'en  
that night at Amulrie.  
There was Tullibardine, and Burleigh,  
and Struan, Keith, and Ogilvie,  
And brave Carnegie, wha' but he,



The piper o' Dundee.  
And wasna he a roguy, a roguy, a roguy,  
And wasna he a roguy, the piper o' Dundee?

---

**Canzone sarda, P155**

(anonymous)

Din t'o monte su spiccu  
canta so rossignolo,  
su cori miu è piticcu,  
ci capistui solu  
lu cori miu è piticcu.

---

**Sardinian song**

On the high mountain  
the nightingale sings  
my heart is pitiful,  
he only understands  
that my heart is pitiful.

---

**Le fontanelle (Canzone dell'Abruzzo),  
P164**

(anonymous)

Tutte le fontanelle se so sèccàte,  
pover' amor mi'! More de sete.  
Trommalari, lirà, llari llalera.  
Trommalari, lirà, vviva ll'Amor!

---

**The Fountains**

All the fountains have dried out,  
my poor love! More thirst for us.  
Trommalari, lirà, llari llalera.  
Hurray, hurray, hurray for love!

Amore, mi te' sète.  
Dov'è lle l'acqua che mi sî purtate?  
Trommalari, lirà, llari llalera.  
Trommalari, lirà, vviva ll'Amor!

T'ajje purtate 'na giarre di crète,  
'nghe ddu catene d'ore 'ngatenate.  
Trommalari, lirà, llari llalera.  
Trommalari, lirà, vviva ll'Amor!

My love, you are.  
Where's the water I need?  
Trommalari, lirà, llari llalera.  
Hurray, hurray, hurray for love!

You've been purged of a bunch of clay,  
In two chains of chained gold.  
Trommalari, lyra, llari llalera.  
Hurray, hurray, hurray for love!

## Acknowledgements

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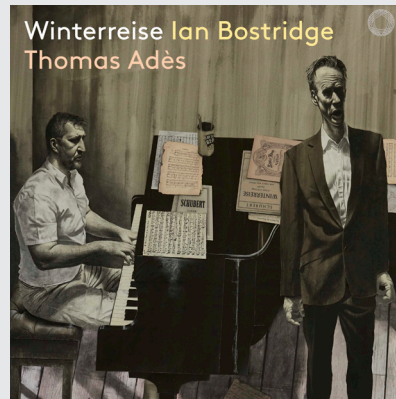
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