

# SHAKESPEARE INSPIRED

Michelle Breedt

Nina Schumann



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- 1 **02:47** **Shakespeare's Kingdom** Edward Elgar (1857-1934)
- 2 **03:00** **When daisies pied** Thomas Arne (1710-1778)
- 3 **01:51** **When daisies pied** Mervyn Horder (1910-1997)
- 4 **01:19** **When daffodils begin to peer op. 30/2** Roger Quilter (1877-1953)
- 5 **03:21** **Who is Sylvia?** Eric Coates (1886-1957)
- 6 **02:13** **Orpheus with his lute** Eric Coates (1886-1957)
- 7 **02:28** **I know a bank** Julius Harrison (1885-1953)
- 8 **01:22** **O mistress mine** Hubert Parry (1848-1918)
- 9 **02:29** **The poor soul sat sighing** Stuart Findlay
- 10 **02:28** **Willow, willow, willow** Hubert Parry (1848-1918)
- 11 **00:57** **Fancie** Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
- 12 **01:46** **Under the greenwood tree** William Walton (1902-1983)
- 13 **01:34** **Under the greenwood tree** Mervyn Horder (1910-1997)
- 14 **01:34** **Take, O take those lips away** Hubert Parry (1848-1918)
- 15 **01:42** **Take, O take those lips away op. 22/1** Edmund Rubbra (1901-1986)
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- 21 **02:15** **Homing** Teresa del Riego (1876-1968)
- 22 **01:26** **A Piper** Michael Dewar Head (1900-1976)
- 23 **03:48** **Twilight Fancies** Frederick Delius (1862-1934)
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- 25 **02:34** **Pleading op.48/1** Edward Elgar (1857-1934)
- 26 **01:00** **Hark! Hark! The Lark** Roger Quilter (1877-1953)
- 27 **04:26** **Silent noon** Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
- 28 **01:28** **Love's philosophy op. 3/1** Roger Quilter (1877-1953)



# SHAKESPEARE INSPIRED

Total Play time: **67:21**

*Recorded at:* Endler Hall, Stellenbosch University, South Africa, Nov 22 - 28, 2010

*Artists:* **Michelle Breedt** (mezzo-soprano), Nina Schumann (piano)

*Produced by:* Luis Magalhães

*Balance engineer:* Gerhard Roux

*Piano tuner:* W. Heuer Musikhaus

*Edited and Mixed by:* Gerhard Roux

*Assistants:* Leon van Zyl, Justin Versfeld

*Mastered by:* Tim Lengfeld

*Photography:* Flügel Creative Services, Anelia Loubser

*Graphic Design:* Glitz-design

**bösendorfer 280 concert piano**



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# SHAKESPEARE INSPIRED

**Michelle  
Breedt**

**Nina  
Schumann**

The well-known Rheingau Musik Festival invited me to sing a song recital in a series entitled 'On the Wings of Song Through Europe'. I was asked to represent England, as English is one of my mother tongues. Generally speaking, when one thinks of the art song in Europe, it is the German "Lied" that immediately springs to mind. This is due to the astonishing legacy left to us by composers such as Schubert, Brahms, Wolf, Schumann, and Richard Strauss, to name but a few. Alternatively, one thinks of the chansons of France, or of Spanish conzonetta. But the English art song? On the continent, this notion is quite a rarity. I was faced with quite a daunting task.

How did the rest of Europe see England? How did they hear England? Was there any musical common denominator? After all, European countries are so interlinked, historically, linguistically and culturally. What, then, is typically English, or, what does the rest of Europe think about England? Do they think in clichés - 'bad weather' being the most frequent (which, by the way, leads to some of the most gorgeous gardens and spectacular parks in the world)? Or is it the English rose, or the famous English cup of tea with scones and double thick cream? Perhaps. But the English art song? The art song is, in general, intimately connected to the vernacular. And what better exponent of the English language could there be than William Shakespeare? It is the genius of William Shakespeare, which still shines today, and whom we have to thank for a host of English words, to whom I have turned to for this recital. Shakespeare became my spiritus rectus. His works have been translated into every European language. Strangely enough, when I first thought of Shakespeare and song, the first example that came to mind was the German translation of Schubert's *Who is Sylvia?*. But that was beside the point. I wanted to know how British composers set his glorious words.

Nina Schumann was born into a musical family and received her early music tuition from Rona Rupert and Lamar Crowson.

Nina's first appearance with an orchestra was at the age of 15, and her talent captured the attention of the public when she won the Fifth National Music Competition for high school pupils in 1988. She went on to win the Oude Meester Music Prize (1989), the Forte Competition (1990), and during 1991 both the Wooltru Scholarship and the Adcock-Ingram Music Prize. She has over 140 concerto performances with orchestras in South Africa, Germany, Portugal, Scotland, Armenia and the U.S.A. to her credit, and some 40 concertos in her repertoire.

In 1993 Ms Schumann won the SAMRO Overseas Scholarship Competition and was awarded the Jules Kramer and Harry Crossley Bursaries for Overseas Study by the University of Cape Town. She crowned these prizes by winning the sought-after SABC Music Prize as well as the Oude Meester National Chamber Music Competition. International prizes followed: she won the prizes for the Best South African Pianist in the 1993 UNISA International Piano Competition, Finalist and Special Prize Winner at the Shreveport Concerto Competition (1996) and Third Prize in the Casablanca International Piano Competition (1997). After completing her MMus at UCLA, Nina enrolled for the Doctorate of Music at the University of North Texas under the tutelage of Van Cliburn-winner, Vladimir Viardo. She received several academic prizes: Dean's Medal (UCT), Best Performer (UCLA), Best Performer (UNT), Best Pianist (UNT) and Best Doctoral Student (UNT). Following her appointment as Associate Professor and Head of Piano at the University of Stellenbosch in 1999, Nina transferred her Doctorate to UCT from which she graduated in 2005. In 2009 she was awarded the UCT Rector's Award for Excellence in recognition of contribution to the music field.

Solo-career and academic life aside, Nina has formed an internationally recognized duo with her husband, Luis Magalhaes. Their own record label, TwoPianists, has recently signed a distribution contract with Naxos, thereby ensuring immediate international market access for the South African artists they are committed to record.





NINA SCHUMANN

In this booklet you will find information on the history and development of the English art song, as well as on the curious hiatus that took place during its developmental history. But it is at the point of its renaissance toward the end of the nineteenth century where I found my greatest inspiration. And, to my great joy, Shakespeare's countrymen did not let me down. I discovered that they had, in their art songs, set a myriad of Shakespeare texts to music. It was especially rewarding to find the same text set by different composers, which led to fascinating comparisons. In the end it was possible to span a century of music: a century of the English art song, with an emphasis on English composers' settings of texts by William Shakespeare. However, I could not ignore some of the other beautiful and fascinating songs I discovered en route, and therefore, I have included some of my own personal favourites, from typical nymphs and shepherds subjects, by way of beautiful nature songs to the universal and much sung about theme of "love".

I would like to share with you some thoughts about the songs in this recital. And how could I not but begin with Edward Elgar's wonderful song, **When Shakespeare Came to London**. The text describes the entry of the young, then-unknown Shakespeare into the hustle and bustle of London, "carrying in his knapsack a scroll of quiet songs". We are prompted to reflect that nobody could foretell the "conquering power and great wealth" that William Shakespeare would leave for us all.

It was of utmost importance to me to stick as closely as possible to the dynamic markings cited by each and every composer in this selection. Where other than in the art song does the singer have the chance to showcase the contrasts, shadings, and colourings asked for?

This was made very clear to me in Elgar's song **Pleading**. Seemingly, a simple song at first glance; but Elgar was very specific as to the tempo of each phrase; notating where there were to be *accelerandos*, *fermatas*, and dynamic changes within that phrase. Simply by sticking to the composers intentions, the seemingly simple song is transformed into a striking, poignant statement.

The Shakespearean stage is set by Thomas Arne's well-known and much loved rendering of **When Daisies Pied**. The gay, lilting melody almost belies the underlying threat of the cuckoo's springtime message, intended for married ears. Arne's cuckoo is playfully echoed in the accompanying piano part, providing perhaps a subtle suggestion that all might not be so well. It is with the phrase "Oh word of fear, oh word of fear" that we can literally feel the heart of many a married person suddenly slide into their shoes as the melody leaps downwards. Arne ends his delightful composition within the confines of the musical style of his times. His last hint that all might not be so well is the trill we find on the "-ried" of "married", right at the end of the piece. Mervyn Horder was born 200 years after Arne, and his setting of the same text honours the older composer by quoting him directly in the phrase "Oh word of fear, oh word of fear". Doubtless, Horder was very well aware of the great tradition epitomised by Arne's setting. However, Horder's cuckoo seems to be more threatening. Listen carefully when the cuckoo calls; and note the strange harmonic change in the piano, followed by a silence. It is almost as if the hearer cannot believe his ears! Again, it is the cuckoo who has the last word in Horder's composition. The great question mark, the uncertainty, is what is most captivating about this setting. It begins unassumingly, but the unsettling power of this cuckoo's doubtful message is felt clearly. Horder's cuckoo does not find any closure at the end of his composition. Two centuries after Arne first set the text to music, the cuckoo's call still causes anguish and uncertainty in married ears.

Born in South Africa, Michelle Breedt is one of the leading mezzo sopranos of her generation. She began her career at the Opera Studio in Cologne, before she joined the Staatstheater Braunschweig where she performed a range of Mozartean and bel canto mezzo-soprano roles as well as non-standard repertoire such as Diana/Giove (La Calisto), Anna (Die sieben Todsünden), and Melisande in a production directed by Brigitte Fassbaender who also directed her first Octavian, Charlotte (Werther), Carmen, Brangaene and Didon in Les Troyens. The works of Berlioz feature strongly in her repertoire. Invitations from larger opera houses followed quickly and as a freelance singer Michelle Breedt has appeared regularly at the Semperoper Dresden, Staatstheater Hamburg and Deutsche Oper Berlin, as well as at the Paris Opéra and in Amsterdam, Lisbon, Ferrara and Modena, and in the Opera Houses in Tokyo and Hong Kong.

In 2000 she made her debut at the Bayreuth Festival as Magdalene (Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg) under Christian Thielemann, returning almost annually since then for Fricka and Brangaene. Appearances at the Salzburg and Bregenz Festival feature in her calendar. Since 2000 she has had a close association with the Vienna Staatsoper, singing Niklaus, Cherubino, Stephano (Roméo et Juliette), Octavian and Brangäne, and winning the Eberhard Wächter Medaille.

2006 saw the start of a close relationship with the Zurich Opera which began with the Composer in a new production of Ariadne auf Naxos, a role which she sings all over the world, followed by Brangaene and Oktavian.

Recitals and concerts feature large in Michelle Breedt's career. She is a regular visitor at the Schubertiade Festival in Austria, and has also appeared at the Wigmore Hall in London, the Carnegie Hall in New York, the Berliner Philharmonie and Schauspielhaus, and the Wiener Konzerthaus and Musikverein. She has worked with the leading conductors of the day, amongst others Gerd Albrecht, Christoph von Dohnányi, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Mariss Jansons, Seiji Ozawa, Peter Schneider, Jeffrey Tate, Christian Thielemann and Franz Welser-Möst.

Countless CDs and DVDs are available.



MICHELLE BREEDT





The next interesting double setting is of Desdemona's lament from Othello. Finley's setting, **The Poor Soul Sat Sighing**, has, for me, a Negro spiritual and almost jazzy feel about it. The onomatopoeic use of a glissando on the word "sighing", and the barless phrases that are left to float over the initial piano chord (which is held down and left to fade), complement the melody, which has an improvised feel about it. These free phrases lull us into a false sense of resignation when we reach the words "Willow, willow, willow" for the first time. We hear water simulated in the triplets of the piano accompaniment, and the energy of the fresh springs causes an eruption. The repetition of the words "Willow, willow, willow" is at a higher pitch, and more insistent, culminating with "Her salt tears fell from her and softened the stones". The song ends with a coda, and floats away musically to leave us feeling slightly suspended. Parry gives his setting the title **Willow, Willow, Willow**. This is a more conventional setting when compared with the barless version by Finley (note, especially, the first phrases). However, Parry does create great emotion with more commonly used musical tools. He expresses the sighing feeling with ascending and descending semitones, and we are once again aware of interrupted triplets in the piano accompaniment – hinting, perhaps, at a sigh or suppressed sob. Interestingly, here once again is illustrated the movement of the water in the fresh spring, in an energetic sixteenth-note figuration of thirds in the piano. Parry expressively sets "Willow, willow, willow" with ever-greater ascending and descending leaps. Parry also ends with a coda, atmospherically more forboding in the minor key.

A greater stylistic juxtaposition could hardly be found than that of William Walton and Mervyn Horder's settings of **Under the Greenwood Tree**. Walton uses a modal style, evoking in the musical ear and imagination an image of bygone days, reminiscent of Shakespeare

## Hark! Hark! the Lark

*William Shakespeare*

Hark! Hark! the Lark at heav'n's gate sings  
And Phoebus 'gins arise,  
His steeds to water at those springs  
On chaliced flowers that lies:

And winking Marybuds begin  
To ope their golden eyes;  
With everything that pretty is  
My lady sweet: arise

## Silent noon

*Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882)*

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass, -  
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms:  
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms  
'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.  
All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,  
Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge,  
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-hedge.  
Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly  
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky: -  
So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above.  
Oh! Clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,  
This close-companioned inarticulate hour  
When twofold silence was the song of love.

## Love's philosophy

*Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)*

The fountains mingle with the river  
And the rivers with the ocean,  
The winds of Heaven mix for ever  
With a sweet emotion.

Nothing in the world is single,  
All things by a law divine,  
In one another's being mingle -  
Why not I with thine?

See, the mountains kiss high Heaven,  
And the waves clasp one another;  
No sister flower would be forgiven  
If it disdain'd its brother;  
And the sunlight clasps the earth,  
And the moonbeams kiss the sea -  
What are all these kissings worth,  
If thou kiss not me?

## When we two parted

*Lord Byron (1788-1824)*

When we two parted  
In silence and tears,  
Half broken-hearted,  
To sever for years,  
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,  
Colder thy kiss;  
Truly that hour foretold  
Sorrow to this!

The dew of the morning  
Sunk chill on my brow:  
If felt like the warning  
Of what I feel now.  
Thy vows are all broken,  
And light is thy fame:  
I hear thy name spoken  
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,  
A knell to mine ear;  
A shudder comes o'er me -  
Why wert thou so dear?  
They know not I knew thee  
Who knew thee too well:  
Long, long shall I rue thee  
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met:  
In silence I grieve  
That thy heart could forget,  
Thy spirit deceive.  
If I should meet thee  
After long years,  
How should I greet thee? -  
With silence and tears.

## Pleading

*Arthur Leslie Salmon*

Will you come homeward from the hills of Dreamland,  
Home in the dusk a,nd speak to me again?  
Tell me the stories that I am forgetting,  
Quicken my hopes, and recompense my pain?

Will you come homeward from the hills of Dreamland?  
I have grown weary, though I wait you yet;  
Watching the fallen leaf, the faith grown fainter,  
The memory smoulder'd to a dull regret.

Shall the remembrance die in dim forgetting -  
All the fond light that glorified my way?  
Will you come homeward from the hills of Dreamland,  
Home in the dusk, and turn my night to day?

himself. Horder, uses the rhythm of a tango. Although Walton's composition is delightful, I find Horder's to be the most arresting: probably because of the "laid back" subtlety of the tango, imploring you to rush in and join the invitation which is extended with "Come hither, come hither". And one is really led to believe that nothing can harm you under this greenwood tree – even winter and rough weather.

The last double setting is that of **Oh take those lips away**, by Hubert Parry and Edmund Rubbra. In Parry's finely sculpted song, one feels a direct and intense emotional involvement with the character. This is largely due to Parry's use of triplets and semitone movement to intensify the text (for example, in the first phrase, "Oh take those lips away that so sweetly were forsworn"). The composition culminates with the phrase, "Seals of love", but dies down with "but seals in vain". There is a rather Brahmsian ending to Parry's song (as a matter of fact, I feel there is a certain Brahmsian influence to the entire song). Edmund Rubbra draws us into an impressionistic world, where we hear harmonies and sounds which instantly bring the sound-world of Debussy to mind. For me, the character here seems to be in a more pensive mood, reflecting, distanced, and not so directly emotionally involved as portrayed by Hubert Parry. The piano plays a large part in Rubbra's setting, the harmonies giving us a glimpse of the character's emotional state, representing the desolation that is felt with the discovery that the seals of love have been sealed in vain. With a piano epilogue, we are left to ponder.

The predominance of Shakespearean text settings in the first half is drawn to a close by the wonderful **It was a Lover and his Lass** by Geoffrey Bush. Bush captures the joyful spring setting and its almost tangible excitement. Helping to achieve this is the variance of the meter from 3/4 to 4/4 to 5/4, resulting in an alternatively jolting and lilting feeling.

But it is the cunning use of the 5/4 rhythm that is really very ingenious. As one would naturally tend toward the more homogeneous 6/4 feeling, we always seem to ‘miss a beat’ when faced with 5/4. We look for something that is missing. It is this quality that gives this setting a sense of excitement. One can almost feel the heart palpitations of the young lovers. A wonderful touch at the end of this song is the dissonant scale that rushes up the piano. Is it a dissonance of exciting tension? Or, is it bittersweet, implying that all is not so harmonious in spring? Surely it reflects the transience of young love.

After hearing the doleful laments of the Shepherd, we find the sheep returning home in Greece, in Michael Head’s setting of Ledwith’s **The Homecoming of the Sheep**. Head creates a vast, expansive, silent late afternoon atmosphere by explicit use of very soft dynamics, dissonant harmonies, and an especially apt motive in the piano, creating an impression of endless space. There is a sense of the distance experienced by someone standing far away, watching the sheep and seeing the rising of the moon. The night theme is continued in Cecil Armstrong Gibbs’s setting of **Silver**, where we have access to a night world that is illuminated by a silver moon. This is a most extraordinarily atmospheric song, requiring the softest dynamics as if we, the listeners, are too afraid to disturb the moon as it transcends the sky. The smooth glide of the moon through the evening canopy is created by the slow hanging chords forming the accompaniment, which has an hypnotic effect.

A piper’s joyful playing draws us out of our sleepy nocturnal world in Michael Head’s **A Piper**. The infectious gaiety is a signal for everybody to forget their woes and cares, if just for a moment. With the words “Dancing back to the Age of Gold”, one can hear the famous “Tristan chord” in the right hand of the piano. Is this a homage to Wagner, with Head implying that this was the musical Age of Gold? (Of course, the Age of Gold was also

Are contented with a thought  
Through an idle fancy wrought:  
O let my joys have some abiding!

## Homing

*Arthur Leslie Salmon (1865 - ?)*

All things come home at eventide,  
Like birds that weary of their roaming.  
And I would hasten to thy side,  
Homing.  
O dearest I have wandered far,  
From daybreak to the twilight gloaming;  
I come back with the evening star,  
Homing.  
Thou art my hunger and my need.  
The goal and solace of my roaming.  
Be thou my haven when I speed,  
Homing!  
All things come home at eventide,  
Like birds that weary of their roaming.  
And I would hasten to thy side,  
Homing!

## A Piper

*Seumas O'Sullivan (1879-1958)*

A piper in the streets today  
Set up, and tuned, and started to play,

And away, away, away on the tide  
Of his music we started; on every side  
Doors and windows were opened wide,  
And men left down their work and came,  
And women with petticoats coloured like flame.  
And little bare feet that were blue with cold,  
Went dancing, back to the age of gold,  
And all the world went gay, went gay,  
For half an hour in the streets today.

## Twilight Fancies

*F.S. Copeland after Bjornstjerne Bjornson (1832-1910)*

The Princess looked forth from her turreted keep,  
The lute of a herd-boy rang up from the steep.  
‘Oh, cease from thy playing, and haunt me no more,  
Nor fetter my fancy that freely would soar,  
When the sun goes down.

The Princess looked forth from her turreted keep,  
But mute was the strain that had called from the steep.  
‘Oh, why art thou silent, beguile me once more,  
Give wings to my fancy that freely would soar,  
When the sun goes down.

The Princess looked forth from her turreted keep,  
The voice of the lute spoke again from the steep.  
She wept in the twilight and bitterly sighed:  
‘What is it I long for? God help me’ she cried  
And the sun went down.



And it was lost in other three!

Adieu, Love, adieu, Love, untrue Love,  
Untrue Love, untrue Love, adieu, Love,  
Your mind is light, soon lost, soon lost for new love.

### The homecoming of the sheep

*Francis Ledwidge (1887-1917)*

The sheep are coming home in Greece,  
Hark, the bells on every hill!  
Flock by flock and fleece by fleece,  
Wandering wide a little piece  
Thro' the evening red and still,  
Stopping where the pathways cease,  
Cropping with a hurried will.

Thro' the cotton bushes low  
Merry boys with shouldered crooks  
Close them in a single row,  
Shout among them as they go  
With one bell-ring o'er the brooks.  
Such delight you never know  
Reading it from gilded books.  
Before the early stars are bright  
Cormorants and seagulls call,  
And the moon comes large and white  
Filling with a lovely light -  
The ferny curtained waterfall.  
Then sleep wraps every bell up tight  
And the climbing moon grows small.

### Silver

*Walter de la Mare (1873-1956)*

Slowly, silently, now the moon  
Walks the night in her silver shoon;  
This way, and that, she peers and sees  
Silver fruit upon silver trees;  
One by one the casements catch  
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;  
Couched in his kennel, like a log,  
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;  
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep  
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;  
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,  
With silver claws, and a silver eye;  
And moveless fish in the water gleam,  
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

### Sleep

*John Fletcher (1579-1625)*

Come, Sleep, and with thy sweet deceiving  
Lock me in delight awhile;  
Let some pleasing dream beguile  
All my fancies; that from thence  
I may feel an influence  
All my powers of care bereaving!

Though but a shadow, but a sliding,  
Let me know some little joy!  
We that suffer long annoy

the time of Elizabeth I, and the playwright she so greatly supported, William Shakespeare.)  
In Delius' **Twilight Fancies**, it is again the Tristan chord we hear before the first words,  
"The Princess looked forth". Perhaps a forewarning of unhappy and unrequited love that  
lies ahead. Great Sehnsucht is associated with the Tristan chord, and the Princess is left  
broken-hearted and weeping, yearning for love.

The next two songs, **When We Two Parted**, and Elgar's **Pleading**, remain for a while in  
the inner world of the pain and regret that accompany love gone wrong. However, we are  
soon drawn back to vibrant life by the larks with their promise of a new day and new love.  
In Vaughan Williams's **Silent Noon**, we hear one of the most beloved English art songs. For  
me, this one of the most beautiful settings, an example of a perfect marriage between text  
and music. Ingeniously, Vaughan Williams uses a syncopated rhythm with a slow tempo  
and repetitive motive to create a beautiful yet languid and lazy feeling, robbing from  
one beat and suspending the next for a while. Vaughan Williams uses this musical effect  
perfectly with the words "Oh clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower", as the one note  
value is curtailed and the next one lurches forward, giving the feeling of holding onto, and  
not wanting to let go. At the end of the song, we are bid farewell with a beautiful cadence  
– it is hard to think of a more perfect homage to love.



Who doth ambition shun  
And loves to live i'the'sun  
Seeking the food he eats  
And pleased with what he gets,  
Come hither, come hither come hither;  
Here shall he see no enemy  
But winter and rough weather.

### **Take, O, take those lips away**

*William Shakespeare*  
*Measure for Measure (Act 4, Scene 1)*

Take, O, take those lips away,  
That so sweetly were forsworn,  
And those eyes, the break of day,  
Lights that do mislead the morn:  
But my kisses bring again, bring again,  
Seals of love, but sealed in vain, sealed in vain.

### **It was a lover and his lass**

*William Shakespeare*  
*As You Like It (Act 5, Scene 4)*

It was a lover and his lass,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
That o'er the green cornfield did pass,  
In the spring-time, the only pretty ring-time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:  
Sweet lovers love the spring.  
Between the acres of the rye,

With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
These pretty country folks would lie,  
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:  
Sweet lovers love the spring.

And therefore take the present time,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
For love is crownèd with the prime  
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:  
Sweet lovers love the spring.

### **The Faithless Shepherdess**

*Anonymous*

While that the sun with his beams hot  
Scorchèd the fruits in vale and mountain,  
Philon, the shepherd, late forgot,  
Sitting beside a crystal fountain,  
In shadow of a green oak tree,  
Upon his pipe this song play'd he:  
Adieu, Love, adieu, Love, untrue Love,  
Untrue Love, untrue Love, adieu, Love!  
Your mind is light, soon lost, soon lost for new love.

So long as I was in your sight  
I was your heart, your soul, and treasure;  
And evermore you sobb'd and sigh'd  
Burning in flames beyond all measure:  
Three days endured your love to me,

## O mistress mine

William Shakespeare

*Twelfth Night (Act 2, Scene 3)*

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?  
O stay and hear; your true love's coming,  
That can sing both high and low;  
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;  
Journeys end in lovers' meeting  
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter,  
Present mirth hath present laughter.  
What's to come is still unsure.  
In delay there lies no plenty,  
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,  
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

## The poor soul sat sighing / Willow, willow, willow

William Shakespeare

*Othello (Act 4, Scene 3)*

The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,  
Sing all a green willow...  
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,  
Sing willow, willow, willow,

The fresh streams ran by her, and murmured her moans,  
Sing willow, willow, willow...

Her salt tears fell from her and softened the stones,  
Sing willow, willow, willow...  
Sing all a green willow must be my garland.

## Fancy

William Shakespeare

*The Merchant of Venice (Act 3, Scene 2)*

Tell me where is Fancy bred.  
Or in the heart, or in the head?  
How begot, how nourishèd?  
Reply, reply!

It is engendered in the eyes,  
With gazing fed: And fancy dies  
In the cradle where it lies.  
Let us all ring fancy's knell:  
I'll begin it - Ding, dong, bell.

## Under the greenwood tree

William Shakespeare

*As You Like It (Act 2, Scene 5)*

Under the greenwood tree  
Who loves to lie with me,  
And turn his merry note  
Unto the sweet bird's throat,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither:  
Here shall he see no enemy  
But winter and rough weather.

## INCLUSIVE MUSIC WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMAS

"I'll sing you a song now," said Pandarus in Shakespeare's tragicomedy *Troilus and Cressida*; while later, the Trojan jester exclaims: "Come, give me an instrument". By that time not only Pandarus's fellow actors, but also the audience, knew that music was in the air! Music was not in any way unusual, as it had always played an important part in Shakespeare's work (although possibly not as clearly announced as in this instance). Trumpeting proclaimed important persons of elevated rank, dances and marches punctuate Shakespeare's sublime texts, and various songs were introduced to satisfy a great variety of other functions. There were songs, for example, to put someone to sleep; songs that indicated magical transformations; songs to describe a character's disposition; and others for enhancing a scene's atmosphere. In short, music was not merely used for amusement and distraction, but had very definite purposes within the totality of a play.

It is not clear which compositions and musical texts Shakespeare had originally used in his stage works, but undoubtedly he wrote his prose with music in mind. This surely explains why, even after Shakespeare's death in 1616, generations of composers have been drawn to the poetic texts of the great English dramatist to create music of infinite variety. Henry Purcell's semi-opera *The Fairy Queen* is one of the best-known examples. Mendelssohn's instrumental work *A Midsummer Night's Dream* constitutes another. Then there are at least a full 270 operas and 100 operettas and musicals based on Shakespeare's dramatic works, including masterpieces such as Verdi's *Othello*, *Falstaff* and *Macbeth*, Wagner's *Liebesverbot*, and Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.



Furthermore, composers from all nationalities have celebrated Shakespeare's texts in songs (lieder). Haydn, Schubert, Schumann and Brahms; Chausson, Poulenc and Sibelius – all of them took the texts of songs that were sung on the stage in Shakespeare's time and tried, by means of musical rendition, to express their perfectly phrased moods and emotions, often relating to nature or love.

## EXCLUSIVE MUSIC "ANGLIA NON CANTAT"

The particular historical development of music in the British Isles dictated the congenially uneven musical performances over time. Henry Purcell's death in 1695 was followed by an almost two century long lull in musical activity. This is not to say that there was no music-making or concerts. Rather, what was played or sung was mostly from the feathered pens of Italy or Germany. Musical compositions of high artistic intent were imported ware. In 1888, the composer Arthur Sullivan went as far as to remark that "[we, the British,] were satisfied to buy music while we were creating churches, steam engines, railway lines, cotton gins, constitutions, leagues against toll on wheat and party commissions."

This impression of a musical diaspora imported into England lasted into the twentieth century, in spite of the fact that things had long before changed. As late as 1904, the German author Oskar Schmitz published a book with the title *The country without music: Social problems in England*. (Ten years later, at the commencement of the First World War, this book proved a very popular tool for igniting polemics.) In many Western art music

The white sheet bleaching on the hedge,  
With hey the sweet birds how they sing!  
Doth set my pugging tooth on edge;  
For a quart of ale is a dish for a King.

The lark that tirra - lirra chants,  
With hey the thrush and the jay,  
Are summer songs for me and my aunts,  
While we lie tumbling in the hay.

### Who is Silvia?

*William Shakespeare*  
*The Two gentlemen of Verona (Act 4, Scene 2)*

Who is Silvia? What is she,  
That all our swains commend her?  
Holy, fair and wise is she;  
Thee heaven such grace did lend her,  
That she might admirèd be.

Is she kind as she is fair?  
For beauty lives with kindness;  
Love doth to her eyes repair,  
To help him of his blindness,  
And, being helped inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing,  
That Silvia is excelling;  
She excels each mortal thing  
Upon the dull earth dwelling;  
To her let us garlands bring.

### Orpheus with his lute

*William Shakespeare*  
*Henry VIII (Act 3, Scene 1)*

Orpheus with his lute made trees,  
And the mountain tops that freeze,  
Bow themselves when he did sing.  
To his music plants and flowers  
Ever sprung as sun and showers  
There had made a lasting spring.

Everything that heard him play,  
Even the billows of the sea,  
Hung their heads, and then lay by.  
In sweet music is such art,  
Killing care and grief of heart  
Fall asleep, or hearing, die.

### I know a bank

*William Shakespeare*  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream (Act 2, Scene 1)*

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows.  
Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,  
With sweet musk roses, and with eglantine:

There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,  
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight;  
And there the snake throws her enamelled skin,  
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in.

The composer may have amended slightly the original text which is printed below.

### Shakespeare's Kingdom

*Alfred Noyes (1880-1958)*

When Shakespeare came to London  
He met no shouting throngs;  
He carried in his knapsack  
A scroll of quiet songs.

No proud heraldic trumpet  
Acclaimed him on his way:  
Their court and camp have perished;  
The songs live on for ay.

Nobody saw or heard them,  
But all around him there,  
Spirits of light and music  
Went treading the April air.

He passed like any pedlar,  
Yet he had wealth untold.  
The galleons of th' Armada  
Could not contain his gold.

The kings rode on to darkness.  
In England's conquering hour,  
Unseen arrived her splendor;  
Unknown her conquering power.

### When daisies pied

*William Shakespeare (1564-1616)*

*Love's Labour's Lost (Act 5, Scene 2)*

When daisies pied and violets blue,  
And lady smocks all silver white,  
And crocus buds of yellow hue,  
Do paint the meadows with delight.

The cuckoo then on every tree,  
Mocks married men, for thus sings he:  
Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo  
O word of fear, unpleasing to a married ear.

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,  
And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks,  
And turtles tread, and rooks and daws,  
And maidens bleach their summer frocks.

### When daffodils begin to peer

*William Shakespeare*

*The Winter's Tales (Act 4, Scene 2)*

When daffodils begin to peer,  
With hey the doxy over the dale,  
Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year;  
For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.

history lectures, the winged words “Anglia non cantat” are still stressed, and recently the English conductor Sir Colin Davies summed the situation up as follows: “British composers never had it easy.”

One of the few to counter this view of a music-less, or rather composer-less, England of the 18th century was Thomas Arne, borne during 1710 in London. His contemporaries described him as a “bad-tempered genius with a partly dismissive, partly explosive temperament”, and as “strange and an outsider.” But his musical competence could not be denied. He was easily on an equal footing with the twenty-five year older Händel, in terms of both stage compositions and symphonies, organ concertos, and songs – the latter proving very popular. Even to this day, Thomas Arne could well be one of the most performed composers from the 18th century. One of his works is, after all, Rule Britannia!, which to many a foreigner is associated with English festive occasions, particularly those involving the Royal Navy.

## AN ENGLISH MUSICAL RENAISSANCE

Let's jump ahead to the late nineteenth century. Only in the 1880s, when nationalistic awareness was growing, did the musical tide turn. Inspired by an awakening self-consciousness, English composers began to establish a new, vibrant musical tradition. A prime example is the afore-mentioned Arthur Sullivan, who together with his librettist William Gilbert, imported the operetta into the cultural life of the island.

This generation of composers, responsible for the revival of the British musical scene, includes the composer, lyricist, teacher and historian Hubert Parry. Born into a prominent family, Parry gravitated towards Eton and Oxford. He was a keen sailing man, which resulted in the nickname 'Captain Parry'. The fact that his parents expected their son to follow a career as a painter, and certainly not that of a musician, is an indication of the low esteem that music had at that time. Even Edward Elgar, when going on a journey, desisted from taking his violin case with him to avoid social stigmatisation.

Both Parry and Elgar introduced a new direction to English music, away from Victorian strictness and towards a freer engagement with musical material. There was also a greater propensity for experimentation, and a certain lightness to their style. (Admittedly, this was partly inspired by developments on the Continent, which still provided great attraction and influence.) Elgar's works, however, were not initially well-received in all quarters. For instance, the première of his magnum opus, *The Dream of Gerontius*, was at first a complete failure at home, despite achieving success on the Continent. However, he soon came to be considered the central figure of English musical life, being described as the "Grand-seigneur of English music". And, like Thomas Arne a good 150 years before, he bestowed upon England an unofficial national anthem, in the form of the theme to the *Pomp and Circumstance March*.

A true English musical renaissance had been prompted by Parry and Elgar. This is especially apparent with Parry, who as a lecturer at the Royal College of Music. By virtue of this position, he attracted talented students, many of whom later went on to become teachers themselves. One example (sampled from those composers in our programme) is Ralph Vaughan Williams, who studied under Parry and would go on to teach Cecil

Armstrong Gibbs. Vaughan Williams was also keen to study with Elgar, but was not accepted. However, as with Elgar, Vaughan Williams was soon acclaimed as a great composer of the English nation. And while Elgar's roots were in the music of the German high romantic period, Vaughan Williams endeavoured to give his work a true English stamp through the integration of traditional English folk songs.

Amongst the first composers who elevated England to the level of a musically independent nation during the late 1900s is to be found Frederick Delius. Despite his prominence as an English composer, Delius never really considered himself an authentic Englishman. He was born in Bradford, Yorkshire, but was of German ancestry; he studied in Leipzig and lived from 1888 onwards mainly in France. His antennae were therefore even more sensitive to the finest nuances of the Continental artistic intellect. The sentiments and ways of thinking of the last days of the 19th century are expressed in Delius's music: his work fluctuates between the elegant, the lyrical, and the morbid.

Included in the present program are composers who cover a good century of music history (with the exception of the 18th century Thomas Arne). They represent a wide range of styles, from the light and entertaining songs of Eric Coates to the more complex works of Benjamin Britten. In contrast to the breaking of tonal boundaries and the development of diverse new compositional techniques during the 20th century in Europe, the English composers tended stick to the tonal system – perhaps with a view to ensuring wide public accessibility and acceptance of their music.