

Love's Old Sweet Songs

Donna Bennett *soprano*

Brian Finley *piano*



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Musical Treasures from Victoria Hall

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Love's Old Sweet Songs

Musical Treasures from the Grand Concert Hall
Victoria Hall, Cobourg

Donna Bennett *soprano*

Brian Finley *piano*

with Terance Tam *violin*

1. **On Wings of Song, Op. 34, No. 2** ^Δ 3:05
Felix Mendelssohn, arr. B. Finley • Heinrich Heine
2. **Love's Old Sweet Song** James Molloy • J. Clifton Bingham 3:13
3. **Ständchen** [Serenade] Franz Schubert • H. F. Ludwig Rellstab 4:08
4. **Moment musicale in F minor, D. 780, Op. 94, No. 3** [◇] 1:49
Franz Schubert
5. **"The sun, whose rays are all ablaze"** [Yum-Yum from The Mikado] William Gilbert • Arthur Sullivan 2:50
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Clara Schumann • Emanuel Geibel

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11. **Gypsy Love Song** ^Δ Victor Herbert, arr. B. Finley • Harry Smith 2:21
12. **Songs my mother taught me, Op. 55, No. 4** 2:54
Antonin Dvorak • Adolph Heyduk
English words by Natalia MacFarren
13. **Barcarolle** [◇] ["June" from The Seasons] Piotr I. Tchaikovsky 5:00
14. **Berceuse** Jules Massenet • Gustave Chouquet 3:20
15. **L'heure exquise** Reynaldo Hahn • Paul Verlaine 2:25
16. **An Eriskay Love Lilt** Marjorie Kennedy-Fraser • Kenneth Macleod 1:57
17. **I Love You Truly** ^Δ Carrie Jacobs-Bond, arr. B. Finley 1:55
18. **Melody in F** [◇] Anton Rubinstein 5:28
19. **Why, No One to Love?** Stephen Foster, arr. B. Finley 2:43
20. **Danny Boy** Old Irish Air arranged by Fred. E. Weatherly 3:20
words by Fred. E. Weatherly

[◇] piano solo ^Δ with violin obligato

Total time 63:49

From the intimacy of the Viennese “Schubertiad” to the magnificent grandeur of the Grand Concert at the Crystal Palace in London, England, the nineteenth century was one of incredible public music-making. Drawing room soirées grew into opulent elegant public concerts attended and applauded by such figures as Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The weekly Saturday Concerts held with full orchestra in the Crystal Palace continued without interruption from 1885 until 1907. These “Ballad Concerts” always included several solo songs, which were frequently accompanied on the piano. It was this repertoire which found an adoring public.

The Grand Concert Hall of Victoria Hall, Cobourg

Opened in 1860, the beautiful Grand Concert Hall of Victoria Hall in Cobourg, Ontario, Canada is one of the triumphs of Canadian architect Kivas Tully. This magnificent room boasts elegantly hand-painted “trompe d’oeuil” wall and ceiling frescos which create a breathtaking Victorian grandeur. Restored to its original form in 1983, Victoria Hall was the recipient of the National Award of Merit from Heritage Canada. The Grand Concert Hall is among the finest performance spaces, both aesthetically and acoustically, in Canada. It is the home of the *Brian Finley & Friends Concert Series*, and other cultural events, and is one of the very favourite venues of Donna Bennett and Brian Finley, who perform there together regularly.

The Music

1. On Wings of Song, Op. 34, No. 2

Felix Mendelssohn, arr. B. Finley/ Heinrich Heine

Felix Mendelssohn was a favourite of Queen Victoria, as well as being a highly successful impresario of grand soirées himself. *On Wings of Song* was part of a set of six songs composed by Mendelssohn in 1834 and dedicated to Julie Jeanrenaud.

I'll bear thee off, my dearest, upon the wings of my song,
Off to a spot that I know of, where Ganges rolls along.
For there in a beautiful garden, in moonlight still and clear,
The lotus flowers blossom, for you, their sister dear!

The violets whisper together, and peak at the stars from their dell,
And there to each other the roses, their sweet-scented fairy-tales tell.
The dainty gazelles will listen, and cautiously explore,
While aye is heard in the distance the sacred river's roar.

And there we shall lie together, there by the palmy streams,
In love and peace forever, and dream our happy dreams.

2. Love's Old Sweet Song James Molloy • J. Clifton Bingham

A favourite since its composition in 1884, *Love's Old Sweet Song* captures the delicate balance between sincerity and sentimentality of the Victorian ballad. Known from great concert halls to campfires, this song still retains its charm and popularity.

Once in the dear dead days beyond recall,
When on the world, the mists began to fall,
Out of the dreams that rose in happy throng,
Low to our hearts, Love sung an old sweet song;
And in the dusk, where fell the firelight gleam,
Softly it rose itself into our dream.

Just a song at twilight, when the lights are low,
And the flick'ring shadows softly come and go,
Though the heart be weary, sad the day and long,
Still to us at twilight, comes Love's old sweet song!

3. **Ständchen** [Serenade] Franz Schubert • H. F. Ludwig Rellstab
From Schubert's great collection of songs *Schwanengesang*, which was published posthumously, **Ständchen** remains one of the most popular of the composer's entire output. The song is a setting of one of twelve poems of Ludwig Rellstab set by Schubert, and it clearly establishes the tone for the century of romantic ballads which were to follow.

Leise flehen meine Lieder durch die Nacht zu dir;
In den stillen Hain hernieder, Liebchen, komm zu mir!

Flüsternd schlanke Wipfel rauschen in des Mondes Licht;
Des Verräters feindlich Lauschen fürchte, Holde, nicht.

Hörst die Nachtigallen schlagen? ach! sie flehen dich,
Mit der Töne süßen Klagen flehen sie für mich.

Sie verstehn des Busens Sehnen, kennen Liebesschmerz,
Rühren mit den Silbertönen jedes weiche Herz.

Lass auch dir die Brust bewegen, Liebchen, höre mich!
Bebend harr' ich dir entgegen! Komm, beglücke mich!

*Softly, my songs float through the night, to you;
Descend to the still grove, my love, to me!*

*Slender tree tops whisper and rustle in the moonlight;
You need not be frightened, beloved, of betrayal!*

*Do you hear the nightingales sing? Ah! They implore you
With their sweet lament, to show favour to me.*

*They understand the heart's yearning, and the pain of love;
With their silvery tones, they touch every tender heart.*

*Let your heart be so moved, dearest, hear me!
Trembling, I await your answer; come, make me happy!*

4. **Moment musicale** in F minor, D. 780, Op. 94, No. 3 Franz Schubert
A delicate miniature Impromptu, the **Moment musicale** in F minor is a charming gem for solo piano.

5. "The sun, whose rays are all ablaze" [Yum-Yum from *The Mikado*]
William Gilbert & Arthur Sullivan)

The autumn of 1869 saw the first collaboration between Gilbert and Sullivan, the team that would come to stand for the clearest manifestation of Victorian England, especially in the field of operetta. From the vast output of these two famous Victorian music-makers comes this charming little "bon-bon" from *The Mikado*. Like most of the authors' other work, it is as simple and complex as the age itself.

The sun, whose rays are all ablaze with ever-living glory,
Does not deny His majesty He scorns to tell a story!
He don't exclaim "I blush for shame, so kindly be indulgent;"
But, fierce and bold, in fiery gold, He glories all effulgent.
I mean to rule the earth, as he the sky,
We really know our worth, the sun and I!

Observe his flame, that placid dame, the moon's Celestial Highness;
There's not a trace upon her face of diffidence or shyness:
She borrows light that, through the night, mankind may all acclaim her!
And truth to tell, she lights up well, so I for one, don't blame her.
Ah, pray make no mistake, we are not shy;
We're very wide awake, the moon and I!

6. **Du bist wie eine Blume** [You are like a Flower]

Robert Schumann • Heinrich Heine

With its noble sentiment and chivalrous purity, Schumann's **Du bist wie ein Blume** hauntingly reflects the fairy-tale love between Robert and Clara Schumann.

Du bist wie eine Blume so hold und schön und rein;
Ich schau dich an, und Wehmut schleicht mir ins Herz hinein.

Mir ist, als ob ich die Hände aufs Haupt dir legen sollt,
betend, dass Gott dich erhalte so rein und schön und hold.

*You are like a flower, so sweet and lovely and pure.
I gaze upon you and melancholy steals into my heart.*

*It seems to me that I should lay my hands upon your head,
Praying that God will always keep you so pure and lovely and sweet.*

7. **Der Mond kommt still gegangen** [The Moon Comes Quietly]

Clara Schumann • Emanuel Geibel

Particularly poignant when considering Clara's deep sadness at the premature and painful death of her beloved Robert at the age of 46, *The Moon Comes Quietly* also reflects a parallel with the early death of Queen Victoria's husband Albert.

Der mond kommt still gegangen mit seinem gold'nen Schein,
da schläft in holdem Prangen die müde Erde ein.
Und auf den Lüften schwanken aus manchem treuen Sinn
viel tausend Liebesgedanken über die Schläfer hin.

Und drunten im Tale, da funkeln die Fenster von Liebchens Haus;
Ich aber blicke im Dunkeln still in die Welt hinaus.

*The moon comes quietly with its golden glow;
In its lovely shimmer, the tired earth sleeps.*

*And floating on the air, from many a true heart,
Waft thousands of loving thoughts over the sleepers.*

*And below in the valley, flickers the lit window of my beloved;
But I look out into the still darkness of the world.*

8. **Beautiful Dreamer** Stephen Foster, arr. B. Finley

Although early publishers claimed that Beautiful Dreamer was composed by Stephen Foster on his deathbed, it was actually written six months before the composer's death in 1864. An apparent decline in the quality of the composer's work led to this claim in an effort to boost sales. The song was destined to become a classic, as were several of the 175 he composed, many of which depict the struggles of the southern United States.

Beautiful dreamer, wake unto me! Starlight and dewdrops are waiting for thee.
Sounds of the rude world heard in the day lull'd by the moonlight have all passed away.

Beautiful dreamer, Prince of my song! List while I woo thee with sweet melody!
Gone are the cares of life's busy throng, beautiful dreamer awake unto me!
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!

9. **Consolation #3 in D Flat** Franz Liszt

Liszt was known for his magical performances, especially in the intimacy of a musical soirée. **The Consolation #3 in D Flat** reminds us of the infinite beauty and colour of sound capable only by the true virtuoso pianist. This thoroughly wonderful, gentle confession of love leads one to ponder what the "First Prize" could possibly be if this is only the "Consolation!"

10. **Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral** J. R. Shannon, arr. B. Finley

In an effort to encourage the growth of the English song, many Victorian composers cultivated “nationalistic” songs, especially from Scotland and Ireland. **Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral** is, as the song itself states, an Irish lullaby, known to us in the twentieth century thanks to Bing Crosby and the film “The Bells of St. Mary’s.”

Over in Killarney, many years ago,
My mother sang a song to me in tones so sweet and low,
Just a simple little ditty, in her good old Irish way,
And I’d give the world if she could sing that song to me this day.

Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, hush, now don’t you cry!
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, that’s an Irish lullaby!

Oft in dreams I wonder to that cot again,
I feel her arms a-hugging me as when she held me then,
And I hear her voice a-humming to me as in days of yore,
When she used to rock me fast asleep outside the cabin door.

Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, hush, now don’t you cry!
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, that’s an Irish lullaby!

11. **Gypsy Love Song** Victor Herbert, arr. B. Finley • Harry Smith

Born in Dublin in 1859, Victor Herbert began his musical career as a cellist, and composer for cello. After several years as a conductor, he concentrated on composing operas and operettas. **Gypsy Love Song** comes from *The Fortune Teller* written in 1898.

Slumber on, my little gypsy sweetheart,
Dream of the field and the grove.
Can you hear me, hear me in that dreamland,
Where your fancies rove?

Slumber on, my little gypsy sweetheart,
Wild little woodland dove,
Can you hear the song that tells you
All my heart’s true love?

12. **Songs my mother taught me**, Op. 55, No. 4 Antonin Dvorák • Adolph Heyduk
English words by Natalia MacFarren

Known as a “nationalist composer,” Dvorák was able to capture a sentimental feeling which has always been appreciated well beyond his own country’s borders. **Songs my mother taught me** was composed in 1880, and published in a collection of seven songs under the title *Gypsy Songs*.

Songs my mother taught me in the days long vanished,
Seldom from her eyelids were the teardrops banished.

Now I teach my children each melodious measure,
Oft the tears are flowing, oft they flow from my memory’s treasure.

13. **Barcarolle** [“June” from *The Seasons*] Piotr I. Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky was not famous for his piano music, especially compared to his fellow countrymen of the same era. However, his **First Piano Concerto** (1874) caused a huge sensation, as well as receiving various sharp criticisms. It remains among the finest works in the genre. Tchaikovsky entered a period of depression after this great effort, but he somehow managed to fulfill a commitment to compose twelve pieces for monthly publication in a Russian musical journal. The result was *The Seasons*. The June Barcarolle is from this colourful collection of descriptive pieces.

14. *Berceuse* Jules Massenet • Gustave Chouquet

Famous for his beautiful operas, Jules Massenet also composed various songs for solo voice and piano. Add a profound intimacy to the sensuous music usually associated with this composer, and the result is magical, as in this gentle lullaby.

Enfant rose, fleur éclose,
Fleur éclose au soleil de mes vingt ans:
Ton sourire que j'admire,
Ton sourire est plus frais qu'un jour de printemps!
Ton sourire est plus frais, est plus frais qu'un jour de printemps!
Dors...

De ta mère, pour me, plaire,
Montre moi les yeux, les yeux si doux!
Ma fillette joliette, ma fillette, endors toi sur mes genoux!
Endors toi...
Endors toi...

Dieu te donne, ma mignonne,
Dieu te donne un bonheur fait de longs jours!
Dors ma fille, si gentille, dors en paix, mon bel ange,
Endors-toi mes amours!...
Dors!...
Dors!...

*Rosebud baby, flower budding,
Blooming in the sunshine of my twenty years:
Your smile which I so admire,
Your smile is as fresh as a day in Spring!
Your smile is as fresh, as fresh as a day in Spring!
Sleep...*

*For your mother, for me, please!
Show to me your eyes so soft!
My pretty little girl, little girl, go to sleep here on my knees!
Go to sleep...
Go to sleep...*

*God will give you, my sweet one,
God will give you a happy long life!
Sleep my daughter, so kind, sleep in peace, my beautiful angel,
Sleep my own love!
Sleep!...
Sleep!...*

15. *L'heure exquise* Reynaldo Hahn • Paul Verlaine

Born in Caracas, Venezuela in 1875, the French composer Reynaldo Hahn devoted his life to conducting (especially Mozart operas) and composition. By the end of his life, he was the director of the Paris Opéra. Today, he is remembered primarily for his many beautiful songs for voice and piano, including this absolute jewel of breathtaking, yet controlled, intimacy.

La lune est blanche luit dans les bois,
De chaque branche part une voix
Sous la ramée,
O bien-aimée!
L'étang reflète, profond miroir,
La silhouette du saule noir
Où le vent pleure...
Rêvons, c'est l'heure!
Un vaste et tendre apaisement
Semble descendre du firmament
Que l'astre irise...
C'est l'heure exquise!

*The pale moon glistens through the wood,
From each branch comes a voice
Beneath the canopy,
O, dearly beloved!
The deep mirror of the pond reflects
The silhouette of a dark willow
Where the breeze cries
Arise! It is the hour!
A vast and tender calmness
Seems to descend from the heavens
Filled with the glow of the evening star.
It is the exquisite hour!*

16. An Eriskay Love Lilt (Marjorie Kennedy-Fraser / Kenneth Macleod)

Daughter of the great Scottish singer David Kennedy, Marjorie Kennedy-Fraser was born in Perth, and along with her father and ten brothers and sisters, participated regularly in what became known as family oriented "Scottish Entertainments." She was known as a singer and a folksong collector and editor, especially of music of the islands of the Outer Hebrides. In this, she has been compared to Cecil Sharp who popularized the folk music of Somerset.

Bheir mi oro bhan o
Bheir mi oro bhan I
Bheir mi oru o ho
Sad am I without thee.

When I'm lonely, dear white heart,
Black the night or wild the sea,
By love's light my foot finds
The old pathway to thee.

Bheir mi oro bhan o
Bheir mi oro bhan I

Bheir mi oru o ho
Sad am I without thee.

Thou art the music of my heart,
Harp of joy, oh cruit mo chridh,
Moon of guidance by night,
Strength and light thou art to me.

Bheir mi oro bhan o
Bheir mi oro bhan I
Bheir mi oru o ho
Sad am I without thee.

17. I Love You Truly Carrie Jacobs-Bond, arr. B. Finley

Once a popular favourite at wedding ceremonies, this charming little piece from 1906 was perhaps the most famous of the many songs of the American composer Carrie Jacobs-Bond (1862-1946). It has become one of those songs which seems is almost universally familiar, yet rarely performed. In spite of its long rest in the piano bench, it still retains its irresistible charm!

I love you truly, truly, dear,
Life with its sorrow, life with its tear,
Fades into dreams when I feel you are near,
For I love you truly, truly, dear.

Ah! Love, 'tis something to feel your kind hand,
Ah! Yes, 'tis something by your side to stand;
Gone is the sorrow, gone doubt and fear,
For you love me truly, truly dear.

18. Melody in F Anton Rubinstein

The Melody in F is one of the few works still familiar to us from the amazing output of the Russian composer and virtuoso pianist, Anton Rubinstein whose work includes twenty operas, six symphonies, five piano concertos, piano solos, chamber music and over 100 songs. Encouraged by Liszt, he gained fame as a piano virtuoso. He is best remembered today for the founding of the Conservatory of Music in St. Petersburg, and for refusing to accept the dedication of Tchaikovsky's **First Piano Concerto**, doubting in the work's merit.

19. Why, No One to Love? Stephen Foster, arr. B. Finley

One of the loveliest of Foster's songs, although perhaps not the best-known, *Why, No One to Love?* was actually composed as an "answer" to the rather mournful ballad *No One to Love* by Ellen Clementine and M. H. Frank. Although he is perhaps better known for his rather "self-pitying" songs, this warm, sunny piece shows that his latter years were not always as despairing as is generally thought.

No one to love in this beautiful world,
Full of warm hearts and bright gleaming eyes?
Where is the lone heart that nothing can find
That is lovely beneath the blue skies?

No one to love! No one to love!
Why, no one to love?
What have you done in this beautiful world,
That you're sighing of no one to love?

Many a fair one that dwells on the earth
Who would greet you with kind words of cheer.
Many who gladly would join in your pleasure
Or share in your grief with a tear.

No one to love! No one to love!
Why, no one to love?
Where have you roamed in this beautiful world,
That you're sighing of no one to love?

20. Danny Boy Old Irish Air arranged by Fred. E. Weatherly
words by Fred. E. Weatherly

A beautiful song, Danny Boy tells of an Irish mother's farewell to her youngest son as he follows in the footsteps of his two older brothers who have gone off to fight in the clan wars. She knows that he, like his brothers, will very likely not return. (This version by Fred. E. Weatherly was published in 1913.)

Oh, Danny Boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling
From glen to glen and down the mountain side,
The summer's gone, and all the roses falling,
It's you, it's you must go and I must bide.
But come ye back when summer's in the meadow,
Or when the valley's hushed and white with snow,
And I'll be here in sunshine or in shadow,
O Danny Boy, Oh, Danny Boy, I love you so!

But when ye come, and all the flow'rs are dying,
And I am dead, as dead I well may be,
Ye'll come and find the place where I am lying,
And kneel and say an Ave there for me;
And I shall hear, though soft you tread above me,
And all my grave will warmer, sweeter be,
For you will bend and tell me that you love me,
And I shall sleep in peace until you come to me!

Donna Bennett and Brian Finley

Donna Bennett and Brian Finley show what can happen when two of Canada's finest talents decide to unite. The result is a musical marriage of magnificent appeal. Active as concert artists, Donna and Brian charm audiences with a vast repertoire of opera, art song, and Broadway classics as well as works for solo piano and original music, all presented with mastery and a refreshing wit. Irresistibly fresh, the result is always an uplifting performance of the highest calibre.

Born in rural Ontario to musical parents, Donna fell under the spell of opera while on one of her weekly two-hour trips to Toronto for singing lessons. Originally from Montreal, Brian grew up in a number of cities including Los Angeles, Nairobi and Calgary. Creative in many areas, he earned an ARCT from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto at the age of 17, and then headed for the Faculty of Music at U of T where he earned both Bachelor and Master degrees in piano Performance and where he met Donna.

Over the next eight years, Donna studied internationally in New York, Munich, and later, at the Opera School of the Royal College of Music in London. She performed at several European opera venues including festivals in London, Edinburgh, Montepulciano, Neuburg, Berlin and Munich. Hailed by the London Daily Telegraph as "a talent to watch out for" she became known for her sparkling stage presence as well as her

beautifully clear voice. She was actually proposed to by Leonard Bernstein following her portrayal of Dede in the British premiere of the composer's opera *A Quiet Place*. She also became a favourite of the German composer Hans Werner Henze, who invited her to perform his opera *The English Cat* several times in various parts of Europe under his own direction.

Brian meanwhile, actively pursued the international piano competition circuit traveling to Cincinnati, Washington, Lisbon, Vienna and Montreal. As well as receiving several awards and accolades, he was one of three Canadians invited to compete in the Eighth International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow which led to exposure on Soviet television. After Donna and Brian were married in 1985, they moved to London where Brian worked with the great Schnabel student, Maria Curcio. While Donna sang opera, Brian enjoyed successful appearances at St. Giles's (at the Barbican Centre), St. James's, Piccadilly, at Wigmore Hall, and with such orchestras as the Dallas Symphony. In 1989 he won the Gina Bachauer Award.

In 1989, Donna was invited to Vienna to sing the role of Christine in the Viennese production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*. Before accepting the contract, she discovered she was pregnant, so the couple returned to Canada and instead, celebrated the joyous birth of their first son Benjamin. Soon afterward, Donna and Brian released their second CD entitled **Lullabies for Benjamin** on the Marquis Classics label (81155 2/4). Since that time, Donna and Brian have maintained a continually growing career performing together across Canada. Donna has sung with Opera Atelier, the Canadian Opera Company. Both have appeared with several country's orchestras. Together, they have been heard on CBC from the Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto, as well as on KING-FM from the Olympic Music Festival in Washington, and on other radio and television networks. In addition to his concerto work, Brian composes and is the Artistic Director of the Concert Series entitled *Brian Finley & Friends* on which Donna is a frequent and favourite guest artist.

Terance Tam *violin*

Canadian violinist Terence Tam is known to audiences in the U.S., Canada, England, France, Germany and Japan where he has appeared as soloist and chamber musician. He is a prizewinner of several national and international competitions including the CBC Radio Competition (1983), the Rameau International (1991), the Montreal Symphony Orchestra Violin Competition (1990) and the National Canadian Music Competitions (1990). In addition to his solo performing, he appears frequently with the Emperor Quartet. With Diplomas from the Royal Conservatory of Toronto (with a double major in piano and violin), and the Peabody Institute in Philadelphia, Terence holds a Bachelor of Science Degree (with High Distinction) from U of T. Currently, he leads a busy "double-life" as a professional violinist and a Medical Doctor.

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