



Recorded at Menhuin Hall, Surrey
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IESTYN MORRIS

ROMANCES

Rachmaninov Tchaikovsky Prokofiev Taneev
Gretchaninov Rimsky-Korsakov Medtner

NIGEL FOSTER piano

ROMANCES

LIFE AND DREAMS

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 1 | MORNING Op.4 No.2 Rachmaninov | 2'19 |
| 2 | THE LITTLE ISLAND Op.17 No.1 Taneev | 2'11 |
| 3 | LILACS Op.21 No.5 Rachmaninov | 2'08 |
| 4 | DREAM Op.104 No.7 Prokofiev | 2'52 |
| 5 | THE LITTLE ISLAND Op.14 No.2 Rachmaninov | 2'10 |
| 6 | SPRING WATERS Op.14 No.11 Rachmaninov | 2'24 |

LOVE

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 7 | LOVE'S FLAME Op.14 No.10 Rachmaninov | 2'35 |
| 8 | KATERINA Op.104 No.11 Prokofiev | 3'11 |
| 9 | MY SPOILT DARLING Op.42 No.4 Rimsky-Korsakov | 1'34 |
| 10 | A TEAR TREMBLES Op.6 No.4 Tchaikovsky | 3'33 |
| 11 | DO NOT BELIEVE, MY FRIEND Op.14 No.7 Rachmaninov | 1'52 |
| 12 | DOES THE DAY REIGN Op.47 No.6 Tchaikovsky | 3'35 |

LONGING

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 13 | THE CLOUDS SCATTER Op.42 No.3 Rimsky-Korsakov | 3'41 |
| 14 | BEYOND THE WOODS Op.104 No.8 Prokofiev | 1'21 |
| 15 | NONE BUT THE LONELY HEART Op.6 No.6 Tchaikovsky | 3'00 |
| 16 | MY BELOVED IS GONE Op.104 No.10 Prokofiev | 3'38 |
| 17 | WHY? Op.6 No.5 Tchaikovsky | 2'51 |

LOSS

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 18 | THE WORLD WOULD SEE THEE SMILE Op.14 No.6 Rachmaninov | 2'34 |
| 19 | THE ROSE Op.29 No.6 Medtner | 1'42 |
| 20 | INVOCATION Op.29 No.7 Medtner | 3'23 |
| 21 | AUS "WILHELM MEISTER" Op.15 No.2 Medtner | 2'09 |
| 22 | GLEICH UND GLEICH Op.15 No.11 Medtner | 1'41 |
| 23 | WANDRERS NACHTLIED I Op.15 No.1 Medtner | 2'32 |
| 24 | DEATH Op.15 No.2 Gretchaninov | 1'40 |
| 25 | TIS TIME! Op.14 No.12 Rachmaninov | 1'47 |

Total playing time: **62'27**

ESTYN MORRIS, countertenor

NIGEL FOSTER, piano

The Romances presented here, are borne out of intense national internal debate, between Western modernity and Eastern nationalism. It is a story of immense personalities, pioneers, revolutionaries, virtuoso pianists, lesser-known heroes and sumptuous revealing poetry that is as relevant today as it was over a century ago.

Thanks to the level of fame achieved by their ballets, symphonies and operas, a wide range of composers of Russian origin, who lived between the time of Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev have become household names, which has established them a permanent place in opera houses and concert halls throughout the world. However, often overlooked in the West, is the extraordinary contribution that composers in this period made to the world of song. They did nothing short of giving the Russian language a standing in the international musical landscape, by establishing a new canon of Art Song, the Romance.

Composers of Romances found, in this form, a way of expressing all aspects of the human condition, from torturous self-examination to effervescent, unbridled joy. Compositional styles vary greatly from the most intimate, minimalist vignettes, to lengthy, visceral eruditions that knock on the doors of opera. The Romance also offers a window into the soul, that sets it apart from Art Song traditions of other nations. It gives performers and audiences alike, the opportunity to experience a profound emotional connection, with a directness (sometimes alarmingly so, to Western sensibilities) that is completely devoid of self-consciousness, or indeed any hint of irony or artifice.

The isolation of a global pandemic presented an ideal time to explore the rich music and poetry of Romance; repertoire I am rarely asked to perform, but has

been a personal passion throughout my career. Although unusual for the countertenor, as with all Lieder, Mélodie or song from any other tradition, Romance is available to all. The universal themes of longing, loss, love and the celebration of life are so compelling, that this project is as much a showcase for the phenomenal depth of repertoire, as it is about presenting new interpretations with a different voice.

In the 19th century, composers beyond Europe's eastern borders were remarkably international and outward-looking in their exploration of source material. Literary giants, such as Pushkin and Tolstoy were of course celebrated, but composers also found the sentiments they wanted to express in the poetry of England, France, Germany, the Habsburg-Bohemian lands and Poland. This was largely driven by the rapid expansion of the railway network across Europe, which afforded the East mass access to art, writing and music, flowing in from the West. However it also led to a cultural crisis of identity.

Russia's international standing, politically, was greatly diminished, following years of a disastrous foreign policy of geographic expansion and, after widespread industrialisation, was also in debt. It was in desperate need of sweeping reform, which led to intense self-examination. This internal debate hinged on whether it would be better for Russia to simply become European (lest it be left behind), versus a growing nationalist voice that argued reform and progress should come from within and forge its own path, rather than imitate others.

There was even a sense that the future of the Russian language itself was under threat: As with all educated classes, the Tzar and Tzarina would use French to converse even in private, which was quite literally the *Lingua Franca*, stripping the Russian language of its intellectual standing.

Whilst Mikhail Glinka has to be acknowledged as the grandfather of Russian Romance, arguably, few did more than Tchaikovsky to establish a place for the Russian language in the international forum of Art Song, hitherto dominated by French Mélodie and German Lieder.

Compositionally, Tchaikovsky was always considered a bit of an outsider; educated in the Western-oriented St. Petersburg conservatoire, he strove to write works that would transcend barriers and be accepted in the West, whilst maintaining a distinctive authentic voice. He was therefore initially considered too Western (European in style) to be accepted by a contemporary group of composers who were active in St. Petersburg known as 'The Five' or 'The Mighty Handful', who came together (outside and in reaction to the conservatoire) to forge a unique authentic style, rooted in Nationalism. **The clouds scatter** Op.42 No.3 and **My spoilt darling** Op.42 No.4 by Rimsky-Korsakov (of 'The Five'), with their expansive nostalgia and exotic folk melodies, are steeped in this philosophy. On the other hand, Tchaikovsky also found he was not always accepted in the West either, often being dismissed as lacking intellect; offering nothing more than "crude exoticism".

Ignoring his critics from East and West, and portraying great self-confidence in his early career, Tchaikovsky took on the challenge of championing the Russian

language head-on. In his Op.6 (1869), he published six songs giving Russian poets equal billing alongside German poetry of Hartmann, Heine and Goethe. However, he published these in translation. Members of 'The Five', Cui and Balakirev, tried to discredit this set of songs, but to no avail. **None but the lonely heart** Op.6 No.6 became an instant hit. Set in translation by Lev Mey from the original Goethe "Lied der Mignon" (Wilhelm Meister book 4 ch.11), its success made it hitherto difficult to sing these Op.6 songs on the concert platform in the original German, thus reinforcing Russian as an Art Song language. In the latter half of the C19th, the Romance would find its place in music salons across Europe, being promoted by famous singers such as Pauline Viardot; firmly establishing itself as a part of the international musical landscape.

Sergei Rachmaninov benefited from the scene in Moscow, where he lived near the conservatoire. As a composer he was influenced by both Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky; embracing both philosophies, which is plain to see in his Op.14. In **Love's Flame** Op.14 No.10, Rachmaninov seized upon a set of 'Oriental' poetry by Minsky (1880), something which would have favoured Rimsky-Korsakov's nationalistic sentiment; he skilfully builds up an atmosphere of 'nega' (erotic yearning) with an insistent pulse, from start to finish. He took pride in finding texts that had been set by no-one else, with only very notable exceptions: **Do not believe, my friend** Op.14 No.7, takes a popular lyric, by A.K. Tolstoy, that had already been set in a hauntingly plangent manner by Tchaikovsky in his Op.6. Rachmaninov responds to the self-assured, reasoned nature of the poem with an almost pig-headed, forthright statement. Its core

musical idea of the tide rushing back overflows into a concerto in miniature, which is a device he surely borrowed from Tchaikovsky's **Does the day reign** Op.47 No.6.

A.K. Tolstoy was an enduring source of texts in Tchaikovsky's output. Conducting a 12 year affair before marrying in 1851, much of his verse in this period was devoted to the philosophy of love and infidelity. Tchaikovsky's **A tear trembles** Op.6 No.4 takes two verses of Tolstoy's five verse poem. Whilst he claims to see a bigger picture of boundless love (of God, into which all will be embraced), what we see is her hurt, in the image of a jealous tear, and are left asking ourselves how convincing is this cold philosophy in the face of genuine human emotion.

What Rachmaninov knew of this lengthy affair is unknown, but he was struck by an intimate occasional verse from A.K. Tolstoy to his lover (published in a literary journal of 1858) and drew out its inescapably heart-breaking text in **The world would see thee smile** Op.14 No.7. Leaving the rising vocal line hanging, Rachmaninov's portrayal of unattainable resolution is perhaps an interpretation where she has left the mortal coil and will be forever out of reach.

Nature was also a great source of inspiration to Rachmaninov. In Moscow, after long months of winter, spring comes as a violent liberation. Meltwater from fields is not so much seen but rather heard. In **Spring Waters** Op.14 No.11, the word "schumjat" at the end of the second line, literally means 'to make noise' (in this sense 'proclaiming' the arrival of spring). Rachmaninov, famed for his exceptionally large hands, was known as one of the finest virtuoso pianists

of his age. His fiendishly difficult accompaniment trippingly depicts this moment of meltwater rushing under the surface ice and is a celebration of life; a moment which would traditionally be met by dancing in the streets, preferably barefoot.

The underlying mystery of **Morning** Op.4 No.2 is that no-one knows who the poet was. Sources actually cannot agree on whether M.L. Janov was in fact female (Maria Yanova). The fact that this song incorporates both the female image of the dawn "zarja" descending to Earth in the first half of the song, with the tentative chromatic rising phrase of the masculine day "Djen" in the second, only adds to this intrigue.

A decade later, Rachmaninov championed another female poet in **Lilacs** Op.21 No.5. Ekaterina Beketova wrote children's stories, lyrics about nature and produced translations from five languages. The images she depicts, on a walk in the cool of the morning, centre around a Russian superstition that it is good luck to find a five-petalled lilac bloom. With a touch of melancholy, Rachmaninov conjures the idea of a walk with masterful economy of writing, as the narrator goes in pursuit of "shchastje", which in Russian has the double meaning of 'good luck', as well as 'happiness'.

Rachmaninov was also not to shy away from political ideology. Senyon Nadson was the son of a baptised Jew and a Russian Orthodox mother, whose poetry appealed to the radical intelligentsia of the turbulent 1880s, which saw the rapid spread of Marxist ideas, the rise of revolutionary populism as well as increased persecution of jews. Despite dying tragically young, Nadson's poetry became a

bestseller in his lifetime. Rachmaninov seized upon a set of fragments of text, feverishly written in the two years before the poet's death. The central tone in **Tis Time!** Op.14 No.12, is predominantly one of suffering and struggle. It calls for a 'Prophet' to show the way – an ironic sentiment in the light of history, but its sincerity is a call to arms and hence it is unsurprising that this song was largely forgotten in Soviet Russia.

Now we come to some lesser-known composers, who deserve far more recognition. Sergei Taneev was a former tutor (and distant relative) of Rachmaninov, so it can be assumed they had intimate knowledge of each other's work. In a direct comparison, we can see two settings of the same poem: In the early 1890s Konstantin Balmont translated Percy Bysshe Shelley's 'The Isle', describing this example of English romanticism as a "tender cameo". To Shelley's descriptive imagery, Balmont added a slumbering final line which imbues the whole poem with a more emotive, dreamlike quality. Rachmaninov published his setting almost immediately as **The Little Island** Op.14 No.2, and it endures as the more famous treatment of the text. Taneev, however, waited a further ten years to publish his Op.17 No.1 and it can be argued that the former tutor is more successful at invoking this dreamy closing mood with a meditative, gently rippling final passage from the line "here no storm rages".

Another former pupil of Taneev in Moscow was Alexander Gretchaninov. He moved to St Petersburg in 1890, so also studied orchestration and composition with Rimsky-Korsakov, who recognised his prodigious talent and

supported him financially. They remained firm friends and Rimsky-Korsakov's work heavily informed that of his pupil; he even conducted several premieres of Gretchaninov's symphonies. Only achieving international recognition for his instrumental writing, he was a formidable and popular writer of song (his settings of *Baudelaire* are particularly worth exploring). In the late 1890s he began producing serious works for the Orthodox Church in the form of large choral settings of the liturgy, bringing a more serious note to his secular works. Op.15 consists of just two songs – a traditional folk song ("Evening Bells") and the emphatic setting of P. Kovalevsky's **Death** Op.15 No.2, which is as uncompromising as it sounds!

Taneev also taught Nicolai Medtner, convincing him to dispense with a performing career as a concert pianist, in favour of composition. Not sharing Tchaikovsky's need to set texts in translation, Medtner spent much of his early career dedicating whole opuses to German poets. For this reason, the three examples from Op.15 (settings of Goethe) are the only songs not to be sung in Russian. With the world heading inexorably towards the horror of WWI, however, he turned to Pushkin for Op.29. **The Rose** (No.6) uses the imagery of flowers to deal with the passing years and the extraordinary **Invocation** (No.7) summons unnatural forces to call to a lover beyond the grave.

In the first half of the 20th, interest in exploration of folk song was universal. In 1944 Sergei Prokofiev published Op.104 (a set of twelve Russian folk songs), which deserves to be far better known. Unlike the universal nature of folk song in most cultures, Russian folk song has the interesting quality of being specific to gender. Folk song sung by men (who would be called up to go to war or had

to leave home to make a living) tend to be full of nostalgia and longing for home. On the other hand, folk songs sung by women, tend to complain about how hard life is or sing longingly for their loved one (who is invariably far away). All the songs in Op.104 are arrangements of folk songs traditionally sung by women, but with kind permission from the composer's grandson, texts have been altered where necessary, so that the voice is grammatically from a male viewpoint. It is the first time these songs have been recorded with this interpretation. Mostly this treatment has little effect on the overall sentiment of the song, however, sometimes, such as in the instance of **Katerina** (No.11), the suggestion that the eponymous heroine should leave her cares behind and go for a walk with this male companion, takes on an invigorating new meaning!

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1 **MORNING** Op.4 No.2 (M.L. Janov) Rachmaninov

"I love you"

Whispered the Dawn to the Day

And, having embraced, the sky blushed at
its confession,

And the sun's rays, having illuminated
all Nature,

With a smile sent her ardent kisses.

And Day, as if not believing in

The fulfilment of its most precious dreams,

Descended to Earth, and with a smile
wiped away

Rows of glistening diamond tears.

"Ich liebe dich"

Flüsterte die Morgenröte zum Tag

Und, nachdem der Himmel den Tag umarmt hatte,
brachte sein Geständnis ihn zum erröten,

Und die Sonne schickte mit einem Lächeln
ihre Strahlen,

Wie inbrünstige Küsse, die Natur zu erleuchten.

Und der Tag, als würde er nicht an die Erfüllung

Seiner kostbarsten Träume glauben,

Stieg zur Erde herab und wischte mit
einem Lächeln

Die Reihen glitzernder Diamantränen weg.

2 **THE LITTLE ISLAND** Op.17 No.1 Taneev /

5 Op.14 No.2 (K. Balmont after P.B. Shelley) Rachmaninov

From the sea, peeks out the little island,

Its green slopes

Decorated in thick grassy wreathes,

With violets and anemones.

Above there are warm sheets of clouds,

Around it are gentle waves.

The trees are sad, like dreams,

Like statues they are silent.

Here the breeze barely blows,

Thunderstorms do not come this way,

And on the serene little island

All is dormant; falls asleep.

Aus dem Meer ragt die kleine Insel,

Ihre grünen Hänge sind geschmückt

Mit dicken Kränzen aus Gras,

Mit Veilchen und Anemonen.

Über ihr ziehen warme Wolkenschichten vorüber,

Um sie herum schäumen sanft die Wellen.

Die Bäume sind traurig, wie Träume,

Wie Statuen schweigen sie.

Hier weht kaum ein Wind,

Kein Gewitter schlägt hier nieder,

Und auf der ruhigen kleinen Insel

Schlummert alles und schläft.

3 **LILACS** Op.21 No.5 (E. Beketova) Rachmaninov

In the morning, at dawn,
Through dew-clad grass,
I shall walk in the morning's freshness;
And to the fragrant shade,
Where lilacs cluster,
I shall go to find my happiness...

In this life one happiness alone
Am I destined to find,
And that happiness in lilacs lives;
On the green stalks,
On the fragrant clusters
My poor happiness blossoms...

Morgens, im Morgengrauen, werde ich
Durch taubedecktes Gras
In der Morgenröte wandeln;
Und ich gehe zum duftenden Schatten,
Wo Fliederzweige ranken,
Um dort mein Glück zu finden...

In diesem Leben bin ich dazu bestimmt
ein einziges Glück zu finden,
Und dieses Glück lebt im Flieder;
Auf den grünen Stielen,
In den duftenden Blüten
erblüht mein kleines Glück...

4 **DREAM** Op.104 No.9 (folksong) Prokofiev

My sweet dream, happy dream,
Oh, dreaming slumber return to me!
My dear, make me happy,
Remember me for once!

My friend has gone far away,
Oh, truly I am forgotten!
No letter to me is written
And no token sent!

My sweet dream,
Happy dream!

Mein süßer Traum, mein glücklicher Traum,
Oh, traumhafter Schummer kehre zu mir zurück!
Meine Liebste, mach mich glücklich,
Erinnere dich einmal noch an mich!

Meine Freundin ist weit weggegangen,
Oh, wahrlich, ich bin vergessen!
Keinen Brief hat sie geschrieben,
Kein Zeichen der Liebe geschickt!

Mein süßer Traum,
Glücklicher Traum!

6 **SPRING WATERS** Op.14 No.11 (F. Tyutchev) Rachmaninov

The fields are still covered with snow,
But the streams are already in a spring-like mood...
Running they are waking up the
sleepy banks,
Running and glistening and crying out...

They proclaim loudly to every corner:
"Spring is coming, Spring is coming!
We are the messengers of the new Spring,
She sends us in advance.

Spring comes, Spring comes,
And the quiet warm May days
Bustle happily behind her, shimmering
In an ever-dancing circle!..."

Die Felder sind noch mit Schnee bedeckt,
Aber die Bäche sind schon in Frühlingslaune...
Fließend wecken sie die schlafenden
Ufer auf,
Fließend und glitzernd und rufend...

Sie rufen laut in alle Richtungen:
„Der Frühling kommt, der Frühling kommt!
Wir sind die Boten des neuen Frühlings,
Er sendet uns voraus.

Der Frühling kommt, der Frühling kommt,
Und die ruhigen warmen Maitage
Jagen ihm fröhlich hinterher, gleißend
Im ewig tanzenden Kreis!..."

7 **LOVE'S FLAME** Op.14 No.10 (N. Minsky) Rachmaninov

In my soul love is rising,
Like the sun in radiant beauty,
And it creates songs in harmony,
Like fragrant flowers.

In my soul your cold glance
Has that sun ardently ignited.
Ah, if only I with that burning sun
could ignite your cold gaze.

In meiner Seele geht die Liebe auf,
Wie die Sonne in strahlender Schönheit,
Und sie erschafft Lieder in Harmonien,
Die duftenden Blumen gleichen.

Dein kalter Blick hat in meiner Seele
Diese Sonne glühend entzündet.
Ach, wenn ich nur mit dieser brennenden Sonne
Deinen kalten Blick entzünden könnte.

8 **KATERINA** Op.104 No.4 (folksong) Prokofiev

I sat until dusk,
It's a fairly short day,
It's time to go.
Oh, time to go to his house,
Is it not time to blow a kiss,
To a good man?

Don't forget me
Katerinushka, oh!
"I will only forget you,
When I must leave behind my
virgin life."

Katerina, Oh Katerina!

Given away so young, yes
On the wrong side.
Not as an equal [he was much older],
Not for fairness.
Sit yourself down
Katya, yes by me,
Let's go for a walk

A little child, yes.
Look for the child, Oh!
Do not cry, don't you cry,
Katyusha, don't you cry,
My dear darling.
Katerina, oh, Katerina!

Don't you cry, Katyusha!

Ich saß bis zur Abenddämmerung,
Es ist ein kurzer Tag,
Es ist Zeit zu gehen.
Es ist Zeit zu seinem Haus zu gehen,
Ist es nicht Zeit einem guten Mann
Einen Kuss zuzuwerfen?

Vergiss mich nicht,
Katerinuschka, ach!
"Ich werde dich nur vergessen wenn
Ich mein jungfräuliches Leben hinter mir
lassen muss."

Katerina, ach, Katerina!

Viel zu jung weg gegeben, ja
Aus den falschen Gründen.
Nicht an einen Ihresgleichen [er war viel älter],
Nicht verdient.
Setz dich zu mir, ja
Katja, zu meiner Seite,
Lass uns spazieren gehen.

Ein kleines Kind, ja.
Such' nach dem kleinen Kind, ach!
Weine nicht, weine nicht
Katjuscha, weine nicht
Mein lieber Schatz.
Katerina, oh, Katerina!

Weine nicht, Katjuscha!

9 **MY SPOILT DARLING** Op.42 No.4 (L. Mey after A. Mickiewicz) Rimsky-Korsakov

My little carousel, with all the fun,
It'll be like a bird, a silver bell,
As a bird starts to twitter, chirp and cheep,
Inside I also start to cheep
and chirp,
Such that I can't breathe for fear of breaking
The Harmony of sweet virgin words,
And swear that all days and all my life
I am ready
To listen and listen and listen!

When laughter lights up her eyes
And her cheeks begin to glow warmer,
When in smiling, through red lips,
like pearls in coral, shine her teeth,
Oh, in this moment I am brave again
I look into her eyes and I wait
for a kiss,
And I don't want to listen anymore,
All I do is kiss, kiss, kiss!

10 **A TEAR TREMBLES** Op.6 No.4 (A.K. Tolstoy) Tchaikovsky

A tear trembles in your
jealous gaze...
Oh, don't be sad, you are still everything to me!
But I can only love in boundless freedom,
My love is a wide as the ocean,
It cannot be contained, No!
It cannot fit into the shores of life.

Mein kleines Karussell, mit all dem Spaß,
Wie ein Vogel, ein silbernes Glöckchen,
Wie ein Vogel zu zirpen und zwitschern beginnt,
Fange auch ich an innerlich zu zwitschern
und zirpen,
So dass ich nicht atmen kann, ohne die Harmonie
süßer jungfräulicher Worte zu brechen,
Ich schwöre, alle Tage und mein ganzes
Leben lang
bereit zu sein, zu lauschen, lauschen und lauschen!
Wenn Lachen ihre Augen zum Leuchten bringt
Und ihre Wangen zu glühen beginnen,
Wenn beim Lächeln durch rote Lippen,
Ihre Zähne glänzen, wie Perlen in den Korallen,
Oh, in diesem Moment bin ich wieder mutig
Ich schaue ihr in die Augen und warte
auf einen Kuss,
Und ich will nicht mehr lauschen,
Alles was ich tue, ist küssen, küssen, küssen!

Eine Träne glänzt in deinem
eifersüchtigen Blick...
Oh, sei nicht traurig, ich lieb' Dich noch über Alles.
Aber ich kann nur in grenzenloser Freiheit lieben,
Meine Liebe ist so groß wie das Meer.
Sie kann nicht zurückgehalten werden, Nein!
Sie passt nicht in den Strand des Lebens.

Oh, don't be sad, my dearest, life's
troubles will
not endure Just wait, the captivity
is not long.

Soon into one great love all of us will flow,
Soon into one love as wide as the ocean,
Which does not reside, No!
Which does not fit within Earthly shores.

11 **DO NOT BELIEVE, MY FRIEND!** Op.14 No.7 (A.K. Tolstoy) Rachmaninov

Do not believe me my friend, when in a fit
of passion

I say that I love you no more,
At low tide do not believe in the treachery
of the sea,
It will return to the shores with love.

I am already longing, full of my
former passion,

My freedom I shall give to you once more,
My ardent passion is already rushing back
to you like a wave

From afar coming back to its
favourite shore!

12 **DOES THE DAY REIGN** Op.47 No.6 (A.N. Apukhtin) Tchaikovsky

Whether day reigns or the stillness of night,
Whether in dreams or in the daily struggle,
Everywhere I go, my life is fulfilled
With the same fatal thought:
Only of you!

Oh, sei nicht traurig, meine Liebste,
die Mühen des

Lebens werden nicht andauern, warte
nur, die Fesseln halten nicht lang.

Bald fließen wir alle in eine große Liebe,
Bald, in eine Liebe, so groß wie das Meer,
Die hier nicht innewohnt, Nein!
Die nicht in irdische Strände passt.

Glaube mir nicht meine Freundin, wenn ich
in einem

Ausbruch von Leidenschaft sage, dass ich Dich
nicht mehr liebe,
Bei Ebbe glaube nicht an den Verrat des Meeres,
Es wird voll Liebe an den Strand zurückkehren.

Schon packt mich Sehnsucht, voll
alter Leidenschaft,

Meine Freiheit gebe ich Dir wieder,
Meine glühende Leidenschaft rauscht
zurück zu Dir, wie eine Welle

Aus der Ferne zurück rauscht zu ihrem
geliebten Strand!

Ob der Tag herrscht oder die Stille der Nacht,
Ob in Träumen, oder im täglichen Kampf,
Wohin ich auch gehe, mein Leben ist erfüllt,
Mit dem gleichen fatalen Gedanken:
Stets nur an Dich!

With it, I am not afraid of the ghost of
the past,

My heart wakes again and resounds
with love...

Faith, dreams, and oaths of devotion,
All that my soul holds dear and sacred,
All comes from you!

Whether my days pass in joy or
in sadness,

Whether my time is cut short and my life
is destroyed,

All I know is that until the
very grave,

All my thoughts, feelings, songs and strength,
All are for you!

13 **THE CLOUDS SCATTER** Op.42 No.3 (A. Pushkin) Rimsky-Korsakov

The floating chain of clouds is thinning.
Oh wistful evening star!

Your light has turned the fading valleys,
And slumbering bay and black
cliffs - silver.

I love your dim light in the
infinite heavens;

It has awoken long dormant thoughts
within me:

I remember your familiar light ascending
Over a peaceful land, where all is
dear to me,

Where elegant poplar trees rise up in the valley,

Mit diesem flieht die Angst vor dem Geist
der Vergangenheit,

Mein Herz erwacht wieder und in ihm hallt die
Stimme der Liebe wider...

Glaube, Träume, und Treueschwüre,
Alles, was meiner Seele lieb und heilig ist,
Alles kommt von Dir!

Ob meine Tage in Freude oder in
Traurigkeit vergehen,

Ob meine Zeit kurz ist und mein
Leben zerstört,

Eines weiss ich nur, dass doch stets bis
zum Grabe,

Alle meine Gedanken, Gefühle, Lieder und Kräfte,
Alle stets nur für Dich sind!

Die schwebende Wolkenkette wird dünner.
Oh wehmütiger Abendstern!

Dein Licht hat die verblassenden Täler,
Die schlummernde Bucht und die
schwarzen Klippen silbern gefärbt.

Ich liebe dein schwaches Licht im
unendlichen Himmel;

Es hat Gedanken geweckt, die lang schon
in mir schlummerten:

Ich erinnere mich, wie dein vertrautes Licht sich
Über friedlichem Land ausbreitet, wo mir
alles lieb ist,

Wo elegante Pappeln im Tal emporragen,

Where the tender myrtle and dark
cypress sleep,
And the noontide waves resound so sweetly.
There in the mountains long ago,
wholly contented
I passed my time in idleness by the sea,
When night's shadow descended on
the cabins...
And a young maiden through the
darkness searched for you
And exclaimed to her friends that you were hers.

14 **BEYOND THE WOODS** Op.104 No.8 (folksong) Prokofiev

How beyond the woods, the forest line,
Beyond the steep birch-lined banks
The valley was wide,
Deep, Oh, so deep and wide!
The shepherd had chased the cattle away,
Scattered away far from the valley,
Where Mashunya waits,
Her darling will be here soon.
"Oh, soon, soon I'll see you;
Aren't you coming to me, my darling?"

15 **NONE BUT THE LONELY HEART** Op.6 No.6 (L.A. Mey after J.W. von Goethe) Tchaikovsky

No, only one who knows longing
To meet once again
Understands how tormented I am
And how I suffer.

Wo die zarte Myrte und die dunkle
Zypresse schlafen,
Und die Wellen des Mittags so süß widerklingen.
Dort in den Bergen verbrachte ich vor
langer Zeit völlig
zufrieden mein Dasein im Müßiggang am Meer,
Als sich der Schatten der Nacht auf die
Hütten senkte...
Und ein junges Mädchen Dich in der
Dunkelheit suchte
Und ihren Freunden zurief, dass Du ihr gehörst.

Wie weit das Tal war, jenseits des Waldes,
Der Waldgrenze, jenseits der steilen
Von Birken gesäumten Böschung,
Tief, oh, so tief und weit!
Der Hirte hatte das Vieh weggejagt,
Weit weggetrieben von dem Tal,
Wo Mashunya wartet,
Ihr Liebbling wird bald hier sein.
„Oh, bald, bald werde ich Dich sehen;
Kommst Du nicht zu mir, mein Liebbling?“

Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt
Weiß, was ich leide!
Allein und abgetrennt
Von aller Freude

I look to the heavens... I find no strength,
The eye fades...
Oh, the one who me loved
And knew – so far away!

My heart burns... only he who knows longing
To meet once again
Understands how tormented I am
And how I suffer.

16 **MY BELOVED IS GONE** Op.104 No.7 (folksong) Prokofiev

Oh, Nowhere do I see my beloved,
Oh, not in the valley,
No, not in puddles.
Not in the valley,
Not in puddles.
Oh! I have seen a beauty...
She is at a neighbour's house.

Oh, because it's morning
Yes, well I guess,
Oh, my dear beloved
Journeys far away.
Oh gone far away.
Ah! My darling I am with you,
Our love doesn't die,
She cried for me.

Seh' ich ans Firmament
Nach jener Seite.
Ach, die mich liebt und kennt,
Ist in der Weite.

Es schwindelt mir, es brennt
Mein Eingeweide.
Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt
Weiß, was ich leide!

Oh, Nirgendwo sehe ich meine Geliebte,
Oh, nicht im Tal,
Nein, nicht in den Pfützen.
Nicht im Tal,
Nicht in den Pfützen.
Oh! Eine schöne Frau sah ich...
Zu Besuch im Nachbarhaus.

Oh, weil es Morgen ist
Ja, nun, denke ich,
Oh, reist meine liebe
Geliebte in die Ferne.
Oh, sie ist weit weg gegangen.
Ach! Mein Schatz ich bin bei Dir,
Unsere Liebe stirbt nicht,
Sie weinte um mich.

- 17 **WHY?** Op.6 No.6 (L.A Mey after H. Heine) Tchaikovsky
- | | |
|--|---|
| Why in spring is a solitary
Rose so pale? | Warum sind denn die Rosen so blaß?
O sprich mein Lieb warum? |
| Why in the green grass
Is the blue violet so silent? | Warum sind denn im grünen Gras
Die blauen Veilchen so stumm? |
| Why sounds it so sad
The gentle birdsong, rushing into the sky? | Warum singt denn mit so kläglichem Laut,
Die Lerche in der Luft? |
| Why does the dew hang
Like a deathly shroud on the meadow? | Warum steigt denn aus dem Balsamkraut
Verwelkter Blütenduft? |
| Why is the Sun in the morning sky
Cold and dull like winter? | Warum scheint denn die Sonn' auf die Au,
So kalt und verdrießlich herab? |
| Why is the Earth dank
And gloomy as a tomb? | Warum ist denn die Erde so grau,
Und öde wie ein Grab? |
| Why am I so sad
And more so day after day? | Warum bin ich selbst so krank und so trüb?
Mein liebes Liebchen sprich |
| Why, Oh tell me quickly,
Did you forget me? | O sprich mein herzallerliebstes Lieb,
Warum verliebest du mich? |
- 18 **THE WORLD WOULD SEE THEE SMILE** Op.14 No.6 (A.K. Tolstoy) Rachmaninov
- | | |
|---|---|
| You are so loved by all; your calm gaze
Makes everyone happier and reconciled
with life, | Du wirst von allen so geliebt; dein ruhiger Blick
Macht jeden glücklicher und versöhnt mit
dem Leben, |
| But you are sad, in you is some
hidden torment, | Aber du bist traurig, in Dir ist eine
verborgene Qual, |
| It resounds within your soul – some judgement;
Why is your tender glance always
so timid, | Sie hallt in deiner Seele wider – wie ein Urteil;
Warum ist dein zärtlicher Blick immer
so schüchtern |

And your eyes in sadness cry
for forgiveness,
As if the sun's light, and spring flowers,
And shade at noon, and rustling in
oak groves,
And even the air that you breathe,
All seem to you undeserved

Und warum schreien deine Augen traurig
nach Vergebung,
Als ob das Licht der Sonne, die Frühlingsblumen,
Die Schatten des Mittags, das Rauschen
in Eichenhainen,
Und sogar die Luft die du atmest,
Alles dir unverdient scheint?

19 **THE ROSE** Op.29 No.6 (S. Pushkin) Medtner

Where is the Rose,
My friend?
Withered was the Rose,
Child of the Dawn.
Do not say:
How withered is my youth!
Do not say:
There's joy in life!
Say instead to the flowers:
I'm sorry!
And to the Lily
Turn your head.

Wo ist die Rose,
Mein Freund?
Welk war die Rose,
Kind der Morgenröte.
O, sage nicht:
Wie verwelkt ist meine Jugend!
Und sage nicht:
Es gibt Freude im Leben!
Stattdessen sprich zu den Blumen:
Es tut mir leid!
Und leise wende
Deinen Kopf zu der Lilie.

20 **INVOCATION** Op.29 No.7 (S. Pushkin) Medtner

Oh, if it's true, that at night,
When living souls in their beds lie
at rest,
And fallen beams of lunar light
Creep onto gravestones,
Oh, if it's true, that
until dawn

Oh, wenn es wahr ist, dass in der Nacht,
Wenn die lebendigen Seelen ruhend im
Bett liegen,
Und des Mondlichts herabfallende Strahlen
Über Grabsteine schleichen,
Oh, wenn es wahr ist, dass bis
zum Morgengrauen

The silent graves are emptied, -
I call to the shadows, I call to Leyla:
Come to me, my friend, this way, come!

Appear beloved shadow and rise,
As you were before we parted,
Pale and cold as a winter's day,
Contorted by the final agony.
Come as a distant star,
As a soft sound or scent,
Or as a terrible ghostly
 revenant,
I care not: This way, come!

I call you not to reproach,
Nor vengefully curse them whose words
Killed my friend,
Nor do I call to spy on the rites of
 the grave,
Not to reprove, but because sometimes
The pain of missing you makes me writhe
 like prey,
I want to tell you how much I love you,
That I am yours completely. This way, come!

21 **AUS "WILHELM MEISTER"** Op.15 No.2 (J.W. von Goethe) Medtner

From door to door will I creep,
Quiet and humbly standing I implore:
A pious hand will offer up alms
And onwards I go to the next door.

Die stillen Gräber leer stehen, -
Rufe ich in die Schatten, rufe ich nach Leila:
Komm zu mir, meine Freundin, komm zu mir!

Erscheine geliebter Schatten und erhebe Dich,
Wie du warst, bevor wir uns trennten,
Blass und kalt wie ein Wintertag,
Verzerrt von letzter Qual.
Komm verwandelt in einen fernen Stern,
Einen sanften Klang oder Duft,
Oder in eine schreckliche
 gespenstische Erscheinung,
Es ist mir gleich: Komm zu mir!

Nach Dir rufe ich, ohne Vorwürfe,
Verfluche auch nicht rachsüchtig die,
Deren Worte meine Freundin getötet haben,
Auch rufe ich nicht, um die Riten des Grabes
 zu erfahren,
Noch um zu klagen, doch manchmal plagt
 mich die
Sehnsucht nach Dir.
Will Dir nur sagen, wie sehr ich Dich liebe,
Dass ganz der Deine ich bin. Komm zu mir!

An die Türen will ich schleichen,
Still und sittsam will ich stehn:
Fromme Hand wird Nahrung reichen;
Und ich werde weiter gehn.

Each one will deem themselves happy,
When my image passes by;
Each one will shed a tear,
But for what, I know not why.

22 **GLEICH UND GLEICH** Op.15 No.11 (J.W. von Goethe) Medtner

A spring bulb
From the ground
Had sprouted early
In a lovely flower;
There came a bee
Who daintily sipped: -
They must both
Be made for each other!

Jeder wird sich glücklich scheinen,
Wenn mein Bild vor ihm erscheint;
Eine Träne wird er weinen,
Und ich weiß nicht was er weint.

Ein Blumenglößchen
Vom Boden hervor
War früh gesprosset
In lieblichem Flor;
Da kam ein Biöchen
Und naschte fein: -
Die müssen wohl beide
Für einander sein.

23 **WANDRERS NACHTLIED** Op.15 No.1 (J.W. von Goethe) Medtner

You who are from heaven sent,
You quieten all suffering and pain,
He who is doubly wretched,
You doubly refresh again,
Oh! I am by this journey made weary!
For what is all this pain and joy?
Sweet peace,
Come; Oh come to my breast!

Der du von dem Himmel bist,
Alles Leid und Schmerzen stillest,
Den, der doppelt elend ist,
Doppelt mit Erquickung füllest,
Ach! ich bin des Treibens müde!
Was soll all' der Schmerz und Lust?
Süßer Friede,
Komm; ach komm in meine Brust!

24 **DEATH** Op.15 No.2 (P. Kovalevsky) Gretchaninov

Everything in life is false; Death is the
only truth,

The indomitable truth!

All things lie, forget,
and fade,

Death will not; Unflinching she will find us

Abandoned, grieving, at our last,

Like an insect, invisible to our eyes.

She won't forget, she will come,
to caress,

To embrace and love us forever,

And the bridal pair with wreaths be crowned

And the fairy tale is over!

Alles im Leben ist falsch; Tod ist die
einzige Wahrheit,

Die unbezwingbare Wahrheit!

Alle Dinge des Lebens sind vergessen
und vergehen,

Der Tod nicht; Unerschütterlich findet er uns

Verlassen, trauernd, letztendlich,

Wie ein Insekt, für das Auge unsichtbar.

Er wird nicht vergessen, er wird kommen,
uns zu lieblosen,

Zu umarmen und für immer zu lieben,

Und das Brautpaar wird mit einem Kranz gekrönt

Und das Märchen nimmt ein Ende!

25 **'TIS TIME!** Op.14 No.12 (S. Nadson) Rachmaninov

Time! Appear, prophet! With all my sorrow,

With all the power of love, I call to you!

Look how decrepit we are, see how tired,

How helpless we are in the
torturous struggle!

Now – or never!... consciousness dies,

Shame vanishes, decency sleeps.

No glimpse,

Only wretchedness raises its voice...

Zeit! Erscheine, Prophet! Bei all meinem Kummer,

Mit aller Macht der Liebe rufe ich nach dir!

Schau, wie hilflos wir sind, sieh, wie müde,

Wie hilflos sind wir in dem
qualvollen Kampf!

Jetzt – oder nie!... Bewusstsein stirbt,

Schmach verschwindet, Anstand schläft.

Kein flüchtiger Blick,

Nur das Elend erhebt seine Stimme...



Iestyn Morris was born in London and after reading Mechanical Engineering at the University of Bristol, went on to study Early Music (MMus) and then Opera at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with Andrew Watts. Making his ROH Covent Garden debut in 2015 in the title role of *Peter Pan* for Welsh National Opera, he was awarded a nomination for 'Best Male in an opera production' in the Wales Theatre Awards 2016. He became a Britten-Pears Young Artist early in 2003, was the 2005 winner of the Tracey Chadwell Award for contemporary song and the 2006 winner of the Patricia Routledge National English Song Competition.

Having worked with internationally renowned pianist and Russian coach Lada Valesova since 2004, singing Romance repertoire has become a private passion for Iestyn; crediting it with being most responsible for developing his voice into a versatile operatic instrument.

As a principal artist, opera engagements include appearances at English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Scottish Opera, Basel, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, Karlsruhe, Nationale Reisopera and Netherlands Opera, in repertoire ranging from early C17th to present day; he has several world premieres to his name.

In concert, Iestyn has performed at some of the world's most highly respected venues in Europe, from The Royal Festival Hall and Queen Elizabeth Halls in the UK's capital to Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and various cities in France, Spain and Poland.

Nigel Foster was born in London and studied piano at the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where his teachers were Roger Vignoles, Graham Johnson and Iain Burnside. At both the Academy and the Guildhall he won every prize and award available for piano accompaniment. In 2015 Nigel was appointed a Steinway Artist.

He was rehearsal pianist for Sir Georg Solti towards the end of Solti's career. Although he has worked with other instrumentalists (notably violinist Madeleine Mitchell), it is for his work with singers that Foster is best known; he has performed and recorded with singers including Roderick Williams, Nicky Spence, Sarah Walker, Yvonne Kenny, Philip Langridge and Stephen Varcoe.

Nigel is the founder & artistic director of the London Song Festival, which is noted for its innovative themed concerts, and which provides a showcase for young singers and pianists. His international performing career has taken him all over Europe, Asia, New Zealand and the Americas (USA, Canada, Colombia) & broadcast on BBC Radio 3, Classic FM & on French, Welsh & Greek TV. He has given masterclasses and led workshops in the song repertoire at summer courses and music programmes across Europe and the USA.

