

# Celebrating English Song

SOMMCD 0177

*Céleste Series*

Roderick Williams *baritone* Susie Allan *piano*

**George Butterworth**

- Six songs from *A Shropshire Lad* 14:00  
 [1] Loveliest of trees 2:49  
 [2] When I was one-and-twenty 1:20  
 [3] Look not in my eyes 2:05  
 [4] Think no more, lad 1:19  
 [5] The lads in their hundreds 2:22  
 [6] Is my team ploughing? 4:04

**John Ireland**

- [7] Great Things 2:14  
 [8] Sea Fever 2:25  
 [9] In Boyhood 1:53  
 [10] Youth's Spring Tribute 3:44

**Ian Venables**

- [11] A Kiss 4:20

**Ralph Vaughan Williams**

- from *The House of Life*  
 [12] Silent Noon 4:09

**Ivor Gurney**

- [13] Black Stichel 2:11  
 [14] Lights Out 3:45  
 [15] Captain Stratton's Fancy 2:42

**Ralph Vaughan Williams**

- from *Songs of Travel*  
 [16] The Vagabond 3:12

**Roger Quilter**

- [17] Weep you no more, sad fountains 2:05

**Peter Warlock**

- [18] Jillian of Berry 0:39

**E J Moeran**

- [19] The Pleasant Valley 1:25

**Ian Venables**

- [20] Flying Crooked 1:09

**Benjamin Britten**

- [21] The Salley Gardens 2:40  
 [22] The Ploughboy 2:00

**Gerald Finzi**

- Let us Garlands bring* 14:48  
 [23] Come away, Death 3:44  
 [24] Who is Silvia? 1:31  
 [25] Fear no more the heat o' the sun 5:06  
 [26] O Mistress Mine 1:55  
 [27] It was a lover and his lass 2:39

**Ivor Gurney**

- from *Five Elizabethan Songs*  
 [28] Sleep 3:11

Total playing time: 72:42

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# Celebrating English Song

Roderick  
Williams  
*baritone*

Susie  
Allan  
*piano*



A little over half a century ago, the Scottish-born musician Ronald Kinloch Anderson wrote: 'During the periods of her musical pre-eminence, English composers seem to have had a natural gift for song, as is indeed not surprising in a country which has produced some of the greatest lyric poets in world literature.'

Indeed. It is surely by no means surprising that, given this rich heritage, composers – not only from the British Isles – should have been inspired by the expressive power and variety of English poetry to want to set it to music. Such is the wealth and variety of the legacy of English literature, and of verse in particular, that composers whose inspiration is often that of the human voice are drawn again to the greatest English poets; we should, in an age increasingly taken up with the immediate and superficial, pause to consider, on the one hand, this heritage – relatively recent though it be – and, on the other, the on-going revivification of the genre of English art songs, such as is found in the work of living British composers.

It may be difficult for such composers to consider anew the nature of English song, over forty years since the death of the last great figure in that field, Benjamin Britten, but – as with the songs of Ian Venables – those of later generations can continue to demonstrate originality and sensitivity through their inspiration, free from the shadow of Britten's undoubted genius.

Perhaps, in considering the repertoire of the songs in this recital, it was always thus, although there have been external events which have impinged upon all forms of creativity – in reaction and in involvement – and, as almost all of the songs in our collection come from the first half of the twentieth-century, it was perhaps the experience of the Great War of 1914-18 that produced the most far-ranging and significant impact between art and life.

George Butterworth was born in London in 1885, but his family moved to York soon afterwards. Musically very gifted, he was encouraged by his mother, and early on became an avid collector of English folk-song. This not only brought him into contact with Ralph Vaughan Williams and other notable figures in the folk-song movement, but also coloured his original early compositions.

Butterworth had come across a book of poetry by AE Housman, 'A Shropshire Lad', which had been published in 1896 and which made a significant impact at the time. Many English composers went on to set poems from the collection, including Butterworth, who chose eleven poems which were published in two volumes, the first six comprising volume one. Although not specifically intended as a cycle, when heard in sequence – as here – they make a very satisfying set.

All of Butterworth's melodies, although evincing a strong 'folk-like' lyrical line, are original (evidence of the impact his folk-song collecting made on his own work); his orchestral rhapsody 'A Shropshire Lad' (1912) utilises the first song, 'Loveliest of Trees'; the most famous song of the six is 'Is My Team Ploughing?'

In 1914, when World War I broke out, Butterworth enlisted in the Army: a young infantry officer, he was killed by a lone sniper's bullet at the Somme. His body was never found and his name is engraved on the Thiepval Memorial; he had been awarded the Military Cross for his earlier exceptional bravery. The poet Housman, 25 years his senior, outlived Butterworth by twenty years.

John Ireland was six years older than Butterworth, but did not serve in the War; nor was he one of the composers who set poems from 'A Shropshire Lad' – but his extensive song output includes two song-cycles to Housman's poetry: 'The Land of Lost Content'

(1921) and 'We'll to the woods no more' (1928), from which latter cycle comes the third of the four Ireland songs in our collection, 'In Boyhood', the others being 'Great Things' (Ireland's first Hardy setting: the first of many), 'You this Spring Tribute?' and his most famous song, 'Sea Fever' which dates from just before the outbreak of the Great War.

Ireland may be better-known for his orchestral and solo piano music, as well as a comprehensive number of distinguished chamber works, but he wrote very many songs of a consistent quality – his 'Sea Fever' was the most requested of all broadcast songs, in a competition run by the BBC in the mid-1930s – so much so, that he could well be considered the most significant composer of English song before the rise of his pupil, Benjamin Britten.

Ian Venables is the youngest English composer represented here; born in Liverpool in 1955, he has lived in Worcester for the past thirty-one years, during which time he has emerged as arguably the finest English composer since Britten of art-songs, which form a major part of his distinguished output. Venables has pointed out that he would find it difficult to set a poem with which he was not in sympathy, and in this collection we hear two examples of his individual artistry: 'A Kiss', from Opus 15, dates from 1992 and is a setting of Thomas Hardy – his collection of 'Wessex Poems', which was published at the height of the Great War in 1917.

Venables has claimed that "what made this poem difficult to set was its prosody. Each eight-line stanza is subdivided into five lines, followed by three. This unusual verse structure, while being something of a challenge, did however give me the opportunity to develop an imaginative musical response". He added that the song is "perhaps stylistically the closest I get to Finzi – any aural references were not conscious ones. This was not an easy setting and it certainly had a long gestation period. However,

it taught me a great deal about how to set words and it unlocked the secret to composing art-songs."

By how much Venables succeeded can be gauged by his second song, 'Flying Crooked' (Opus 28 no 1), written in 1998 as the first of a pair to texts by Robert Graves and Edna St Vincent Millay. Graves's poem describes the haphazard flight patterns of the most ubiquitous of butterflies, the cabbage-white. Lasting just over a minute, its pointillistic and harmonically ambiguous piano writing contrasts the effortless diatonicism of the vocal line, creating a whimsical, if not irreverent setting. The poem was sent to the composer by Lady Bliss, to whom the song is dedicated and at whose home it received its first private performance.

Ralph Vaughan Williams's enormous output, in virtually every conceivable genre, contains many songs, individual as well as a number of song-cycles. Such is their quality that several have achieved independent acceptance outside the cycles in which they first appeared. One of the most famous is 'Silent Noon', the second song in the early (1904) cycle 'The House of Life' to sonnets by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. 'Silent Noon' was – intriguingly – published and performed separately before the cycle itself appeared.

Vaughan Williams's third cycle from this period, 'Songs of Travel' (1901-04), to words by Robert Louis Stevenson, has – correctly, one might feel – been likened to something of an English *Winterreise* ('the wanderer philosophically accepting what life brings to him', as Michael Kennedy observed); the cycle's opening song, 'The Vagabond' is undoubtedly the most popular and arguably the finest in the set.

There were few English families that were not closely affected by the Great War; we have mentioned the death of George Butterworth at the Somme, and another English

composer whose life was irredeemably affected by his war-time service was Ivor Gurney, born in Gloucester in 1890, who was wounded and later gassed and invalided out of the Army. His condition worsened over the succeeding twenty years and he died in a mental hospital on the outskirts of London on Boxing Day, 1937.

Whether his instability was caused by his army experiences is unlikely, for he had exhibited bipolarity before the War, though his Army life would have certainly exacerbated the condition. Yet it is remarkable that Gurney went on to write not only more than 300 songs, but also very many poems, only a few of which he set to music himself.

Most of Gurney's songs, therefore, are settings of other poets, as are the four included in our recital ('Sleep' concludes the programme). The other three display something of Gurney's extraordinary range of expression – not for him a semi-permanent mood of despairing uncertainty, as 'Captain Stratton's Fancy' demonstrates with admirable clarity. 'Lights Out' is one of the subtlest of songs: the phrase could refer – and most probably did – to the orders those on active service had not to give their position away to the enemy as dusk fell (although the text is not specific); but the juxtaposition of such an order with the onset of encroaching sleep as the mind drifts to friends, lovers and family far away is a masterpiece of word setting combined with what has been well described as the intensity of Gurney's music.

Roger Quilter (1877-1953) came from an earlier generation than Gurney, yet he, too, suffered from mental problems much later in life – his seemingly constant ill-health rendering him unsuitable for military service. His family (he was one of five sons) was extremely wealthy and his musical inclinations were encouraged by his mother, to the point where he enrolled at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt-am-Main to

study (as did several other English composers, who became known as the 'Frankfurt Group'). Quilter's 'Weep You No More, Sad Fountains' is a particularly fine setting of an anonymous melancholy Elizabethan ballad – as haunting a song as any in our collection.

Peter Warlock's *Jillian of Berry* (1926) is the shortest song in our collection – a delightful miniature, setting a humorous two-stanza poem quoted by Francis Beaumont in his comedy *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1610) – probably not an original poem by Beaumont, more likely a popular verse known to his Jacobean audience. Warlock's fondness for beer doubtless led him to this text; the folk-like vocal line is juxtaposed with more urban accompaniment and the song is dedicated to Warlock's drinking-partner Basil Trier.

Another of Warlock's drinking partners was Ernest John Moeran (1894-1950), who shared a home with Warlock in Eynsford, Kent, in the 1920s – but their frequent drinking bouts often prevented Moeran from composing. He had been a pupil of John Ireland at the Royal College of Music, and also collected folk-songs in England as well as in Ireland (the birthplace of Moeran's father). *The Pleasant Valley* is the fourth of seven songs to texts by the Irish writer James Joyce (whose poems are curiously entitled *Chamber Music*) composed in 1926, and is one of Moeran's most distinguished songs.

Another of Ireland's pupils at the RCM was Benjamin Britten (as is well known, Britten had also studied with Frank Bridge privately), who – in the decade after leaving the College in 1933 – became one of the most important of young British composers, a reputation that increased significantly following his wartime return from the United States, to where he had travelled with his partner Peter Pears in 1939. During those

years in America, the pull of England became too strong to resist, and it was in 1940 that Britten composed *The Salley Gardens* to a poem by another Irish literary giant, William Butler Yeats – perhaps as a tribute, for Yeats had died not long before. It is interesting to note that other composers – including Ireland himself, Ivor Gurney and Rebecca Clarke – also set *The Salley Gardens*. Britten's setting has a greater folk-like atmosphere, not so unusual when we consider his various volumes of Folk-Song settings with which he was much pre-occupied in the 1940s after his return from the USA, and from which we have *The Ploughboy*, included in the third volume. Actually, the tune is by William Shield, from his opera *The Farmer* (1821) – the popular 'hit' of the day.

As our recital draws to an end with Ivor Gurney's *Sleep*, we have the seventh of nine song-cycles by Gerald Finzi (1901-1956), *Let Us Garlands Bring*, composed between 1929 and 1942, and published as his Opus 18. As with our opening composer, George Butterworth, Finzi had been born in London but his family also moved to Yorkshire when he was a child. Finzi's personal character was somewhat withdrawn, a characteristic occasionally noted in his music – yet his work could reveal strong feelings. He was not a prolific composer, his relatively early death robbing English music of his great gifts, and in this cycle – settings of songs from plays by Shakespeare – we encounter one of Finzi's very finest works. It is dedicated to Vaughan Williams, a staunch friend, being premiered on RVW's 70th birthday (October 12, 1942) in London. The title of the cycle comes from the last line of *Who is Sylvia?* Kinloch Anderson's comment – 'a natural gift for song' – is as appropriate and insightful when applied to Finzi's masterpiece as to every one of the songs in our collection of English composers who were so clearly inspired by their country's greatest lyric poets.

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## GEORGE BUTTERWORTH (1885-1916)

### **Six Songs from *A Shropshire Lad***

*poems by A.E. Housman (1859-1936)*

#### **1 Loveliest of Trees**

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now  
Is hung with bloom along the bough,  
And stands about the woodland ride  
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,  
Twenty will not come again,  
And take from seventy springs a score,  
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom  
Fifty springs are little room,  
About the woodlands I will go  
To see the cherry hung with snow.

#### **2 When I was one-and-twenty**

When I was one-and-twenty  
I heard a wise man say,  
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas  
But not your heart away;  
Give pearls away and rubies  
But keep your fancy free."  
But I was one-and-twenty,  
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty  
I heard him say again,  
"The heart out of the bosom  
Was never given in vain;  
'Tis paid with sighs a plenty  
And sold for endless rue."  
And I am two-and-twenty,  
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

**3 Look not in my eyes**

Look not in my eyes, for fear  
Thy mirror true the sight I see,  
And there you find your face too clear  
And love it and be lost like me.

One the long nights through must lie  
Spent in star-defeated sighs,  
But why should you as well as I  
Perish? gaze not in my eyes.

**4 Think no more, lad**

Think no more, lad; laugh, be jolly:  
Why should men make haste to die?  
Empty heads and tongues a-talking  
Make the rough road easy walking,  
And the feather pate of folly  
Bears the falling sky.

A Grecian lad, as I hear tell,  
One that many loved in vain,  
Looked into a forest well  
And never looked away again.

There, when the turf in springtime flowers,  
With downward eye and gazes sad,  
Stands amid the glancing showers  
A jonquil, not a Grecian lad

Oh, 'tis jesting, dancing, drinking  
Spins the heavy world around.  
If young hearts were not so clever,  
Oh, they would be young for ever:  
Think no more; 'tis only thinking  
Lays lads underground.

**5 The Lads in their Hundreds**

The lads in their hundreds to Ludlow come in for the fair,  
There's men from the barn and the forge and the mill and the fold,  
The lads for the girls and the lads for the liquor are there,  
And there with the rest are the lads that will never be old.

There's chaps from the town and the field and the till and the cart,  
And many to count are the stalwart, and many the brave,  
And many the handsome of face and the handsome of heart,  
And few that will carry their looks or their truth to the grave.

I wish one could know them, I wish there were tokens to tell  
The fortunate fellows that now you can never discern;  
And then one could talk with them friendly and wish them farewell  
And watch them depart on the way that they will not return.

But now you may stare as you like and there's nothing to scan;  
And brushing your elbow unguessed at and not to be told  
They carry back bright to the coiner the mintage of man,  
The lads that will die in their glory and never be old.

**6 Is my team ploughing**

"Is my team ploughing,  
That I was used to drive  
And hear the harness jingle  
When I was man alive?"

Ay, the horses trample,  
The harness jingles now;  
No change though you lie under  
The land you used to plough.

"Is football playing  
Along the river-shore,  
With lads to chase the leather,  
Now I stand up no more?"

Ay, the ball is flying,  
The lads play heart and soul;  
The goal stands up, the keeper  
Stands up to keep the goal.

"Is my girl happy,  
That I thought hard to leave,  
And has she tired of weeping  
As she lies down at eve?"

Ay, she lies down lightly,  
She lies not down to weep:  
Your girl is well contented.  
Be still, my lad, and sleep.

"Is my friend hearty,  
Now I am thin and pine,  
And has he found to sleep in  
A better bed than mine?"

Yes, lad, I lie easy,  
I lie as lads would choose;  
I cheer a dead man's sweetheart,  
Never ask me whose.

**JOHN IRELAND (1879-1962)**

**7 Great Things**

Sweet cyder is a great thing,  
A great thing to me,  
Spinning down to Weymouth town  
By Ridgway thirstily,

And maid and mistress summoning  
Who tend the hostelry:  
O cyder is a great thing,  
A great thing to me!

The dance it is a great thing,  
A great thing to me,  
With candles lit and partners fit  
For night-long revelry;

And going home when day-dawning  
Peeps pale upon the lea:  
O dancing is a great thing,  
A great thing to me!

Love is, yea, a great thing,  
A great thing to me,  
When, having drawn across the lawn  
In darkness silently,

A figure flits like one a-wing  
Out from the nearest tree:  
O love is, yes, a great thing,  
A great thing to me!

Will these be always great things,  
Great things to me? . . .  
Let it befall that One will call,  
"Soul, I have need of thee":

What then? Joy-jauunts, impassioned flings,  
Love, and its ecstasy,  
Will always have been great things,  
Great things to me!

*Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)*

**8 Sea Fever**

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,  
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;  
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,  
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide  
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;  
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,  
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,  
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;  
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,  
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

*John Masefield (1878-1967)*

**9 In Boyhood**

When I would muse in boyhood  
The wild green woods among,  
And nurse resolves and fancies  
Because the world was young,  
It was not foes to conquer,  
Nor sweethearts to be kind,  
But it was friends to die for  
That I would seek and find.

I sought them and I found them,  
The sure, the straight, the brave,  
The hearts I lost my own to,  
The souls I could not save.  
They braced their belts around them,  
They crossed in ships the sea,  
They sought and found six feet of ground,  
And there they died for me.

*A E Housman (1859-1936)*

## 10 Youth's Spring-Tribute

On this sweet bank your head thrice sweet and dear  
I lay, and spread your hair on either side,  
And see the newborn wood flowers bashful-eyed  
Look through the golden tresses here and there.  
On these debatable borders of the year  
Spring's foot half falters; scarce she yet may know  
The leafless blackthorn-blossom from the snow;  
And through her bowers the wind's way still is clear.

But April's sun strikes down the glades to-day;  
So shut your eyes upturned, and feel my kiss  
Creep, as the Spring now thrills through every spray,  
Up your warm throat to your warm lips: for this  
Is even the hour of Love's sworn suitservice,  
With whom cold hearts are counted castaway.

*Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1898)*

## IAN VENABLES (b.1955)

## 11 A Kiss

By a wall the stranger now calls his,  
Was born of old a particular kiss,  
Without forethought in its genesis;  
Which in a trice took wing on the air.  
And where that spot is nothing shows:  
There ivy calmly grows,  
And no one knows  
What a birth was there!

That kiss is gone where none can tell –  
Not even those who felt its spell:  
It cannot have died; that know we well.  
Somewhere it pursues its flight,  
One of a long procession of sounds  
Travelling aethereal rounds  
Far from earth's bounds  
In the infinite.

*Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)*

12 **Silent Noon**

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.

*from House of Life, Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1852)*

13 **Black Stichel**

As I was lying on Black Stichel  
 The wind was blowing from the South;  
 And I was thinking of the laughers  
 Of my love's mouth.

As I was lying on Black Stichel  
 The wind was blowing from the West;  
 And I was thinking of the quiet  
 Of my love's breast.

As I was lying on Black Stichel  
 The wind was blowing from the North;  
 And I was thinking of the countries  
 Black with wrath.

As I was lying on Black Stichel  
 The wind was blowing from the East;  
 And I could think no more for pity  
 Of man and beast.

*Wilfred Gibson (1878-1962)*

14 **Lights Out**

I have come to the borders of sleep,  
 The unfathomable deep  
 Forest where all must lose  
 Their way, however straight,  
 Or winding, soon or late;  
 They cannot choose.

Here love ends,  
 Despair, ambition ends;  
 All pleasure and all trouble,  
 Although most sweet or bitter,  
 Here ends in sleep that is sweeter  
 Than tasks most noble.

There is not any book  
 Or face of dearest look  
 That I would not turn from now  
 To go into the unknown  
 I must enter, and leave, alone,  
 I know not how.

*Edward Thomas (1878-1917)*

**15 Captain Stratton's Fancy**

Oh some are fond of red wine, and some are fond of white,  
And some are all for dancing by the pale moonlight:  
But rum alone's the tippie, and the heart's delight  
Of the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are for the lily, and some are for the rose,  
But I am for the sugar-cane that in Jamaica grows;  
For it's that that makes the bonny drink to warm my copper nose,  
Says the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are sad and wretched folk that go in silken suits,  
And there's a mort of wicked rogues that live in good reputes;  
So I'm for drinking honestly, and dying in my boots,  
Like an old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

*John Masefield (1878-1967)*

**RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)**

**16 The Vagabond**

Give to me the life I love,  
Let the lave go by me,  
Give the jolly heaven above,  
And the byway nigh me.  
Bed in the bush with stars to see,  
Bread I dip in the river –  
There's the life for a man like me,  
There's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o'er me;  
Give the face of earth around,  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me;  
All I seek, the heaven above,  
And the road below me.

Or let autumn fall on me  
Where afield I linger,  
Silencing the bird on tree,  
Biting the blue finger.  
White as meal the frosty field –  
Warm the fireside haven –  
Not to autumn will I yield,  
Not to winter even!

Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o'er me;  
Give the face of earth around,  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I ask not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me;  
All I ask, the heaven above,  
And the road below me.

*from Songs of Travel,  
Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)*

**ROGER QUILTER (1877-1953)**

**17 Weep you no more**

Weep you no more, sad fountains;  
What need you flow so fast?  
Look how the snowy mountains  
Heaven's sun doth gently waste!  
But my Sun's heavenly eyes  
View not your weeping,  
That now lies sleeping,  
Softly now softly lies  
Sleeping.

Sleep is a reconciling,  
A rest that peace begets;  
Doth not the sun rise smiling  
When fair at even he sets?  
Rest you, then, rest, sad eyes!  
Melt not in weeping,  
While she lies sleeping,  
Softly now softly lies  
Sleeping.

*from Seven Elizabethan Lyrics, Op 12, poet Anon*

**PETER WARLOCK (1894-1930)**

**18 Jillian of Berry**

For Jillian of Berry she lives on a hill,  
And she hath good beer and ale to sell,  
And of good fellows she thinks no ill,  
And thither we will go now, now, now,  
And thither we will go now.

And when you have made a little say,  
You need not ask what is to pay,  
But kiss your hostess and go your way,  
And thither we will go now, now, now,  
And thither we will go now.

*Anon or by Francis Beaumont (1564-1616), quoted by John Fletcher (1579-1625)*

**E J MOERAN (1894-1950)**

**19 The Pleasant Valley**

O cool is the valley now  
And there, love, will we go  
For many a choir is singing now  
Where Love did sometime go.  
And hear you not the thrushes calling,  
Calling us away?  
O cool and pleasant is the valley  
And there, love, will we stay.

*James Joyce (1882-1941)*

**IAN VENABLES (b.1955)**

**20 Flying Crooked**

The butterfly, the cabbage white,  
(His honest idiocy of flight)  
Will never now, it is too late,  
Master the art of flying straight,  
Yet has – who knows so well as I? –  
A just sense of how not to fly:  
He lurches here and here by guess  
And God and hope and hopelessness.  
Even the aerobatic swift  
Has not his flying-crooked gift.

*Robert Graves (1895-1985)*

21 **The Salley Gardens**

Down by the salley gardens  
 my love and I did meet;  
 She passed the salley gardens  
 with little snow-white feet.  
 She bid me take love easy,  
 as the leaves grow on the tree;  
 But I, being young and foolish,  
 with her would not agree.

In a field by the river  
 my love and I did stand,  
 And on my leaning shoulder  
 she laid her snow-white hand.  
 She bid me take life easy,  
 as the grass grows on the weirs;  
 But I was young and foolish,  
 and now am full of tears.

*W B Yeats (1865-1939)*

22 **The Ploughboy**

A flaxen-headed cowboy, as simple as may be,  
 And next a merry plough boy, I whistled o'er the lea;  
 But now a saucy footman, I strut in worsted lace,  
 And soon I'll be a butler, and whey my jolly face.  
 When steward I'm promoted I'll snip the tradesmen's bill,  
 My master's coffers empty, my pockets for to fill.  
 When lolling in my charlot so great a man I'll be,  
 So great a man, so great a man, so great a man I'll be,  
 You'll forget the little plough boy who whistled o'er the lea.

I'll buy votes at elections, and when I've made the pelf,  
 I'll stand poll for the parliament, and then vote in myself.  
 Whatever's good for me, sir, I never will oppose:  
 When all my ayes are sold off, why then I'll sell my noes.  
 I'll joke, harangue and paragraph, with speeches charm the ear,  
 And when I'm tired on my legs, then I'll sit down a peer.  
 In court or city honour so great a man I'll be,  
 So great a man, so great a man, so great a man I'll be,  
 You'll forget the little plough boy who whistled o'er the lea.

*Traditional*

GERALD FINZI (1901-1956)

**Let us Garlands Bring**, opus 18

*poems by William Shakespeare (1564-1616)*

**23 Come away, come away, death**

Come away, come away, death,  
And in sad cypress let me be laid;  
Fly away, fly away, breath;  
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.  
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,  
    O prepare it!  
    My part of death, no one so true  
    Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,  
On my black coffin let there be strown;  
Not a friend, not a friend greet  
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:  
A thousand, thousand sighs to save,  
    Lay me, O where  
    Sad true lover never find my grave,  
    To weep there!

*Twelfth Night, Act II, scene 4*

**24 Who is Silvia?**

Who is Silvia? what is she,  
That all our swains commend her?  
Holy, fair and wise is she;  
The heavens such grace did lend her,  
That she might admiréd 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

*Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act IV, scene 2*

**25 Fear no more the heat o' the sun**

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,  
Nor the furious winter's rages;  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages;  
Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great;  
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke:  
Care no more to clothe and eat;  
To thee the reed is as the oak:  
The sceptre, learning, physic, must  
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,  
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;  
Fear not slander, censure rash;  
Thou hast finished joy and moan;  
All lovers young, all lovers must  
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!  
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!  
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!  
Nothing ill come near thee!  
Quiet consummation have;  
And renownéd be thy grave!

*Cymbeline, Act IV, scene 2*

**26 O mistress mine, where are you roaming?**

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 sweetening;  
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,  
Ev'ry 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.

*Twelfth Night, Act II, scene 3*

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

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 spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a 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 spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding;  
Sweet lovers love the spring.

This carol they began that hour,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
How that a life was but a flower  
In spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a 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 crownéd with the prime  
In spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding;  
Sweet lovers love the spring.

*As You Like It, Act V, scene 3*

**IVOR GURNEY (1890-1937)**

**28 Sleep**

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.

Tho' but a shadow, but a sliding,  
Let me know some little joy.  
We, that suffer long annoy,  
Are contented with a thought  
Thro' an idle fancy wrought:  
O let my joys have some abiding.

*John Fletcher (1579-1625),  
from The Woman Hater, published 1607*

# Roderick Williams

Roderick Williams encompasses a wide repertoire, from baroque to contemporary music, in the opera house, on the concert platform and in recital.

He enjoys relationships with all the major UK opera houses. He has also sung world premieres of operas by, among others, David Sawer, Sally Beamish, Michael van der Aa, Robert Saxton and Alexander Knaifel.

Roderick Williams has sung concert repertoire with all the BBC orchestras, and many other ensembles including the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Philharmonia, London Sinfonietta, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hallé, Britten Sinfonia, Bournemouth Symphony and Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Abroad he has worked with the Berlin Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Russian National Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome and Bach Collegium Japan amongst others. His many festival appearances include the BBC Proms (including the Last Night in 2014), Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Aldeburgh and Melbourne.

Recent opera engagements include Oronte in Charpentier's *Medée*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan Tutte* and Pollux in *Castor and Pollux* for English National Opera, Toby Kramer in Van der Aa's *Sunken Garden* in the Netherlands, Lyon and London, Van der Aa's *After Life* at Melbourne State Theatre, Sharpless in *Madam Butterfly* for the Nederlandse Reisopera, the title roles of *Eugene Onegin* for Garsington Opera and *Billy Budd* for Opera North. Recent and future concert engagements include concerts with the Rias Kammerchor, Seoul Philharmonic, Gabrieli Consort, London Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony, Music of the Baroque Chicago, Virginia Arts Festival, BBC Proms, Melbourne Symphony

Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment as well as many recitals and concerts in the UK and worldwide.

He is also an accomplished recital artist who can be heard at venues and festivals including Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, LSO St Luke's, the Perth Concert Hall, Oxford Lieder Festival, London Song Festival, the Musikverein, Vienna and appears regularly on Radio 3 both as a performer and a presenter. In 2017/18 he will perform all three Schubert Cycles at the Wigmore Hall.

His numerous recordings include Vaughan Williams, Berkeley and Britten operas for Chandos and an extensive repertoire of English song with pianist Iain Burnside for Naxos. Roderick Williams is also a composer and has had works premiered at the Wigmore and Barbican Halls, the Purcell Room and live on national radio.

He was Artistic Director of Leeds Lieder in April 2016 and won the RPS Singer award in May 2016. He was awarded an OBE in June 2017.

# Susie Allan

Susie Allan was educated at Malvern Girls' College, Worcester College, Oxford, and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, where she studied Accompaniment under Paul Hamburger, Graham Johnson, Iain Burnside and Martin Isepp (at the Banff Centre for the Arts, Alberta). She was the recipient of many prizes including the Gerald Moore Award and a Geoffrey Parsons Memorial Award. Post Guildhall, she was a regular accompanist for masterclasses at the Britten-Pears School (founded by Benjamin Britten at Snape Maltings). Here she played for the classes of Elly Ameling, Roger Vignoles, Elisabeth Soderstrom, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, and Hugues Cuenod, amongst others.

Susie has become best-known for her work as a Vocal Accompanist, and on the concert platform in Britain and Europe she has appeared with many British singers such as William Dazeley, Susan Gritton, the American Thomas Randle, and the Canadian Nathan Berg, as well as Roderick Williams of course. She is a former Professor of Accompaniment at the Royal College of Music, London, and of the Royal Welsh College of Music, Cardiff, and has given masterclasses for the East Anglian Summer Music School. She was appointed as a Repertoire Coach at the Royal Academy of Music last summer.

Susie has had a long-standing musical partnership with Roderick Williams, and over the years has appeared with him at many festivals all over Britain, as well as at concerts in France, Austria (Schloss Atzenbrugg – Schubert Museum for Martin Randall) and New Haven (Yale). She has also recorded with him both discs and broadcasts, more recently for the BBC Proms on radio and TV, premiering his own arrangement of *Amazing Grace*. They recently collaborated with Jenny Agutter in a successful tour of Schubert's *Schwanengesang*, which they took from venues in Shropshire to London (Sam Wanamaker Playhouse) and New York (Park Avenue Armory).

Other projects include 2015 Bermuda Festival playing a four-handed version of *La Traviata* for Opera a la Carte, and a number of recitals with duet partner Rosalind Jones. She performed more Schubert with Roddy last autumn at the Oxford Lieder Festival and Budleigh Music Festival. Earlier this year she recorded an English Song recital with Roddy, which will be released in time for Christmas 2017. She played for a masterclass with bass Robert Lloyd, at the Machynlleth Festival last summer, and in the autumn collaborated with the Presteigne Festival, in a singing project for primary schools.

As a 'Shropshire lass,' she is heavily involved in the musical life of the area, has appeared at the Ludlow Song Weekend, and lives with her three children in the county celebrated in the 'Shropshire Lad' poems of A E Housman, who is buried at the church of her local town, Ludlow.

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