



FILLING THE
CITY WITH
SONG

LEEDS LIEDER

“...a compact triumph of
outstanding art song”
Sunday Times

Fleur Barron *mezzo soprano*

Joseph Middleton *piano*

Ashok Klouda *cello*

Saturday 24 April 2021

3.00pm

Leeds Town Hall

“Dreams, Homeland and Childhood”

Bun-Ching Lam	Music When Soft Voices Die
Brahms	Heimweh I: Wie traulich war das Fleckchen, op.63
Chen Yi	Bright Moonlight
Brahms	Heimweh II: O wüßt ich doch den Weg zurück, op.63
Ives	My Native Land
Brahms	Heimweh III: Ich sah als Knabe, op.63
Mussorgsky	excerpts from <i>The Nursery</i>
	With Nanny
	In the Corner
	With Dolly
	At Bedtime
	On the Hobby-Horse
Chen Yi	“Monologue” from <i>Meditation</i>
Chinese Folksong	Northeast Lullaby
Kamala Sankaram	The Far Shore
Chinese Folksong	Fengyang Drums
Borodin	Two songs for voice, cello and piano
	She No Longer Loves Me
	Listen, Dear Friend, to my Song
Brahms	Gestillte Sehnsucht from op.91 <i>for voice, cello, piano</i>
Libby Larsen	Music When Soft Voices Die <i>for voice, cello, piano</i>

Leeds Lieder Concert Season 2020-21

Fleur Barron - *mezzo-soprano*
Ashok Klouda - *cello*
Joseph Middleton - *piano*

Bun-Ching Lam (b. 1954)

Music When Soft Voices Die

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory -
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Heimweh 1

Wie traulich war das Fleckchen
Wo meine Wiege ging!
Kein Bäumchen war, kein Heckchen,
Das nicht voll Träume hing.

Wo nur ein Blümchen blühte,
Da blühten gleich sie mit,
Und alles sang und glühte
Mir zu bei jedem Schritt.

Ich wäre nicht gegangen,
Nicht für die ganze Welt!—
Mein Sehnen, mein Verlangen,
Hier ruht's in Wald und Feld.

Klaus Groth (1819-1899)

Homesickness

How homely was the spot
Where my cradle used to rock!
There was not a tree, not a hedge
Which was not hung with dreams.

Where a single flower bloomed,
There they bloomed too,
And everything sang and glowed
For me with every step I took.

I wouldn't ever have left it.,
Not for anything in the world,
My longongs, my desires
All live here in the forest and field.

Chen Yi (b. 1954)

Bright Moonlight

Outside my window--bright moonlight,
Kissing the grassland;
Near in front, far away
Given to the earth with consonance.

Look at the window--bright moonlight,
Missing my homeland;
Near in front, far away,
Yearning for the world of consonance.

Johannes Brahms

Heimweh II

O wüßt ich doch den Weg zurück,
Den lieben Weg zum Kinderland!
O warum sucht ich nach dem Glück
Und ließ der Mutter Hand?

O wie mich sehnet auszuruhn,
Von keinem Streben aufgeweckt,
Die müden Augen zuzutun,
Von Liebe sanft bedeckt!

Und nichts zu forschen, nichts zu spähn,
Und nur zu träumen leicht und lind;
Der Zeiten Wandel nicht zu sehn,
Zum zweiten Mal ein Kind!

O zeigt mir doch den Weg zurück,
Den lieben Weg zum Kinderland!
Vergebens such ich nach dem Glück,
Ringsum ist öder Strand!

Klaus Groth (1819-1899)

Homesickness II

Oh if only I knew the way back.
The cherished way back to childhood!
Oh why did I go searching for happiness,
And leave my mother's care?

Oh how I long to rest,
Not to be woken by striving.
To close my weary eyes,
Gently covered with love.

And not to be searching or watching for anything,
Just to dream light and gentle dreams;
Not to be aware of times changing,
To be a child again a second time!

Oh please show me the way back,
The cherished way back to childhood!
I have searched in vain for happiness,
I am surrounded by a barren land..

Charles Ives (1874-1954)

My Native Land

My native land now meets my eye,
The old oaks raise their boughs on high,
Violets greeting seem,
Ah! 'tis a dream!

And when in distant lands I roam,
My heart will wander to my home;
While these visions while these fancies teem,
Still let me dream.

Eduard Lassen (1830-1904) after Heinrich Heine

Johannes Brahms

Heimweh III

Ich sah als Knabe Blumen blühen -
Ich weiß nicht mehr, was war es doch?
Ich sah die Sonne drüber glühen -
Mich dünkt, ich seh' es noch.

Es war ein Duft, es war ein Glanz,
Die Seele sog ihn durstend ein.
Ich pflückte sie zu einem Kranz -
Wo mag er blieben sein?

Ich such' an jedem Blümchen nach
Um jenen Schmelz, um jenes Licht,
Ich forsche jeden Sommertag -
Doch solche find' ich nicht.

Ihr wußtet nimmer, was ich trieb?
Ich suchte meinen alten Kranz.
Er war so frisch, so licht, so lieb -
Es war der Jugendglanz.

Klaus Groth (1819-1899)

Homesickness III

As a boy I saw flowers blooming,
I can't remember any more how it was.
I saw the sun gleaming on them -
It seems I can still see it.

There was a fragrance, a glow,
My soul drank it in thirstily.
I picked them for a wreath -
Where can that be now?

I seek it in every little flower
That lustre and that light,
I search every Summer's day -
But I cannot find any like it.

Did you never know what I was doing?
I was looking for my lost wreath.
It was so fresh, so light, so sweet -
It was the gleam of youth.

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

from: *The Nursery*

English translations: Jonathan Powell

S nyaney

Rasskazhi mne, nyanyushka,
Rasskazhi mne, milaya,
Pro togo pro buku strashnogo:
Kak tot buka po lesam brodil,
Kak tot buka v les detey nosil
I kak griz on ikh beliye kostochki,
I kak deti te krichali, plakali.
Nyanyushka!
Ved' za to ikh, detey-to, buka s' yel,
Shto obideli nyanyu staruyu, told them,
Papu s mamoy ne poslushali,
Ved' za to on s' yel ikh, nyanyushka?
Ili vot chto:
Rasskazhi mne luchshe pro tsarya s tsaritsey,
Chto za morem zhili v teremu bogatom
Yechsho tsar vsyo na nogu khromal
Kak spotknyotsya tak grib virstit
Tsaritsi-to vsyo nasmork bil,
Kak chikhnyot styokla v drebezgi!
Znayesh, nyanyushka:
Ti pro buku-to uzh ne rasskazivay!
Bog s nim, s bukoy!
Rasskazhi mne, nyanya, tu, smeshnuyu-to!

V uglu

Akh ti, prokaznik!
Klubok razmotal, prutki rasteryal,
Akh ti! vse petli spustil!
Chulok ves zabrizgal chernilami!
V ugol! V ugol!
Poshyol v ugol!
Prokaznik!
Ya nichego ne sdela, nyanyushka,
Ya chulochek ne trogal, nyanyushka!
Kluboček razmotal kotyonoček,
I prutochki razbrosal kotyonoček,
A Mishen'ka bil pain'ka,
Mishen'ka bil umnitsa.
A nyanya zlaya, staraya,
U nyani nosik-to zapachkanniy.
Misha chisten'kiy, prichyosanniy,
A u nyani chepchik na boku.
Nyanya Mishen'ku obidela,
Naprasno v ugol postavila:
Misha bol'she ne budet lyubit' svoyu
Nyanyushku, vot shto!

With Nanny

Come and tell me, Nanny dear,
That old tale you know so well,
About the wolf, that dreadful, wicked wolf.
How he used to roam around the house,
How he carried children to the wood
And devoured them not leaving a single bone
And the children used to weep and cry for help
Nanny dear!
Was the reason he ate them every bit,
Because they would not do what their nannies
Disobeying both their parents, too
So he ate those children, Nanny dear?
Wait a moment!
I would rather hear about the Tsar and Tsarina,
Who lived beside the sea in a lovely palace.
He was lame and hobbled as he walked
Wherever he stumbled, up sprang a mushroom!
The Queen had such a nasty cold,
That when she sneezed all the window panes cracked!
Yes, O Nanny dear,
I don't want to hear about the wolf again.
Let us leave him!
Let me hear the other, yes! That funny tale!

In the corner

Really, how naughty!
My wool is upset, my needles astray,
Dear me! All my stitches are dropped!
My knitting with ink is bespattered!
Really! Shocking!
In that corner
How naughty!
I've never done a single thing at all,
Never once did I touch your knitting!
The kitten played around and spoiled your wool,
And needles all came out because of that.
And Mishenka behaved himself,
Mishenka was as good as gold.
But Nursey is a bad old thing,
And her nose is very dirty;
Misha's hair is smooth and nicely brushed,
Nanny's cap is never straight.
For no earthly reason Nanny's cross,
And I am sent in the corner here.
Little Misha doesn't love you any more
Nanny, so there!

S kykloy

Tyapa, bay, bay, tyapa, spi.
Usni, ugomon tebya voz'mi
Tyapa, spat' nado!
Tyapa, spi, usni!
Tyapu buka s'yest, seriy volk voz'met
V tyomniy les snesyot!
Tyapa, spi, usni!
Chto vo sne uvidish' mne pro to rasskazhesh':
Pro ostrov chudiy, gde ni zhnut, ni seyut,
Gde tsvetut I zreyut grushi nalivniye,
Den' I noch' poyut ptichki zolotiye!
Bay, bay, bayu bay, bay bay, Tyapa

Na son gryadushciny

Gospodi pomiluy papu i mamu
I spasi ikh, gospodi!
Gospodi pomiluy bratsa Vasen'ku i bratsa.
Mishen'ku
Gospodi pomiluy babushku staren'kuyu,
Poshli ti yey dobroye zdorov'itse,
Babushke dobren'koy, babushke staren'koy;
Gospodi!
I spasi, boshe nash:
Tyotyuu Katyu, tyotyuu Natashu, tyotyuu Mashu,
tyotyuu Parashu, tyotyey: Lyubu, Varyu, Sashu,
I Olyu, i Tanyu, i Nadyu;
Dyadey: Petyu i Kolyu,
Dyadey: Volodyu, i Grishu, i Sashu;
I vsekh ikh, gospodi, spasi i pomiluy.
I Fil'ku, i Van'ku, i Mit'ku, i Pet'ku,
I Dashu, Pashu, Sonyu, Dunyushku ...
Nyanya, a nyanya! Kak dal'she, nyanya?
'Vish' ti, prokaznitsa kakaya!
Uzh skol'ko raz uchila:
Gospodi pomiluy I menya greshnuyu!
Gospodi pomiluy I menya greshnuyu!
Tak, nyanyushka!

Poyekhal na palochke

Gey! Gop, gop, gop!
Gop, gop, gey, podi!
Gey! Gey! Gey, podi!
Gop gop, ta ta ta.
Podi! Tprustoy!
Vasya, a Vasya, Slushay:
Prikhodi igrat' segodnya.
Tol'ko ne pozdno!
Hu ti, gop! Gop!
Proshchay, Vasya!
Ya v Yuki poyekhal ... tol'ko k vecheru
Nepremenno budu ...
Mi ved' rano, ochen' rano spat' lozhimsya
Prikhodi, smotri!
Ta ta ta, gey!
Razdavlyu! Oy!

With Dolly

Go to bye-bye, Dolly, go to sleep!
Close your little eyes to rest!
Dolly, sleep, will you!
Dolly, go to sleep!
If you're not good, the grey wolf will come
And take you away to the dark woods!
Dolly, go to sleep!
In the morning tell me all the dreams you've had:
Of wonderful islands where in magic gardens
Bloom lovely flowers, grow sweet pears,
Night and day sings golden birds!
Come now, go to sleep, to sleep, Dolly!

At bedtime

Gentle God, watch over mummy and daddy,
And keep them safe, God!
Gentle God, watch over brother Vasenka and brother
Mishenka!
Gentle God watch over old grandma,
Send her years of good health,
Grandma is so very good and so old; dear God!

And Dear God, don't forget:
Aunty Katya, aunty Natasha, aunty Masha,
Aunty Parasha, and the aunties: Lyuba, Varya, Sasha,
Olga, Tanya and Nadya;
Uncle Petya and Kolya,
Uncle Volodya, Grisha and Sasha;
Dear God, please watch over all of them.
And Filka, and Vanya, and Mitya, and Petya,
And Dasha, Pasha, Sonya, Dunyushka ...
Nurse, do tell me, what comes next?
'O really, what a dreadful memory!
How many times have I taught you?
Gentle God, watch over little me!
Gentle God, watch over little me!
Is that right, Nurse?

On the hobby horse

Hi! Trot, trot, trot,
Trot, trot, trot, get along!
Gee up, gee up! On we go!
Trot, trot.
Enough! Whoa-back, whoa!
Vasya, Vasya, listen:
Come and play today.
But don't come late!
Get on now, trot!
Goodbye, Vasya!
I've to go a long way, but I'll be home
By evening ...
For you I'm put to bed so early ...
Make sure you show up!
Gallop, gallop, Hi!
Clear the way! Oh!

Oy, bol'no! Oy, nogu! Oy, bol'no! Oy, nogu!
Mil'iy moy, moy mal'chik, chto za gore!
Nu, polno plakat'; prodyot, moy drug.
Postoy-ko. Vstan' na noshki pryamo: vot tak,
ditya.
Posmotri, kakaya prelest'. Vidish' v kustakh
nalevo?
Akh, chto za ptichka divnaya!
Chto za per'ishki!
Vidish'? Nu, chto? Proshlo? Proshlo!
Ya v Yuki s'yездil, mama,
Teper' ... domoy toropit'sya nado
Gop, gop! Gosti budut ...
Gop! Toropit'sya nado ...

Oh, it's hurting! Oh, my foot!
My dear boy, what's the matter?
Don't cry; it will pass, my friend.
Come on, stand up; just like that my child.
Look, can you see that lovely thing in the bushes
on the left?
What a delightful little bird!
And the feathers too!
See it? Well then? Has it gone? It's gone!
Mummy, I've been on such a journey,
Now I must hurry home ...
Trot, trot! Guests are coming ...
Trot! We'd better hurry ...

Chen Yi

*Lyrics: Chen Zi' Ang (from: **Meditation**)*

Monologue

I do not see my ancestors in front
I see no one coming from behind
Where are the sages of the past and those of future years?
I think of the boundlessness of the universe
Alone and sad, I weep

*Chinese folksong: **Northeast Lullaby***

The tree leaves cover up the windows,
Crickets sing softly,
Just like the sound of strings plucking.
The soft plucking, the beautiful tune,
The cradle rocks slowly,
Mom's little babe, close your eyes,
Fall deeply into your dreams.

Kamala Sankaram (b. 1978)

The Far Shore

This life waxes and wanes.
It does not last long.
The leaf that falls does not return to the branch.
But behold the Ocean of Rebirth.
Behold its irresistible tide.
Oh, Pilot of my soul,
Swiftly guide my ship to the far shore.

Chinese Folksong – Fenyang Drums

Left hand hold the gong
Right hand hold the drum
Beat the gong and drum while I sing
I don't know how to sing other songs
I only know this Fengyang song
yi ya ya hu hei der lang dang piao yi piao
My life is hard
My life is really hard
My whole life I haven't married a good husband
Other husbands have high ranks
My husband only plays the flower drums
yi ya ya hu hei der lang dang piao yi piao
My life is thin
My life is really thin
My whole life I haven't married a good wife
Other wives embroider flowers
My wife has a pair of big flower feet
They measure more than one Chi* la la la
yi ya ya hu hei der lang dang piao yi piao

Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)

Razljubila krasna devica

Razljubila krasna devica
Moi kudri, glaza jasnye.
Razljubila nenarljadnaja
Moi pesni, rechi krasnye.

Zatumanilis' vse radosti,
Budto cvetiki zavjanuli;
Laski nezhnje nebesnye
Slovno kamnem v vodu kanuli.

Chto zh mne delat' ot kruchinushki?
Polechu ja v vys' nebesnuju,
Zapoju tam o svojej ljubvi
Pesnju zvonkuju, chudesnuju, zapoju.

She no longer loves me

The beautiful maiden no longer loves
My curls, my fair eyes,
My adored one no longer loves
My songs or heartfelt words.

Fogging over all the joys
Like decaying flowers,
Heavenly, gentle caresses are now like
Stones you throw into the water.

What should I do about my sadness?
I will fly up to the heavens,
Where I will sing about my love,
A wondrous, tuneful song there I will sing.

Listen, Dear Friend, to my Song

Dear friend, listen to my little song.
I wrote this song about my fate. Ah!
Lonely it was to live as a sad orphan
It is heavy on my heart to keep this secret from everyone.

Johannes Brahms

Gestillte Sehnsucht

In goldnen Abendschein getauchet,
Wie feierlich die Wälder stehn!
In leise Stimmen der Vöglein hauchet
Des Abendwindes leises Wehn.
Was lispeln die Winde, die Vögelein?
Sie lispeln die Welt in Schlummer ein.

Ihr Wünsche, die ihr stets euch reget
Im Herzen sonder Rast und Ruh!
Du Sehnen, das die Brust beweget,
Wann ruhest du, wann schlummerst du?
Beim Lispeln der Winde, der Vögelein,
Ihr sehnenenden Wünsche, wann schlaft ihr ein?

Ach, wenn nicht mehr in goldne Fernen
Mein Geist auf Traumgefieder eilt,
Nicht mehr an ewig fernen Sternen
Mit sehndem Blick mein Auge weilt;
Dann lispeln die Winde, die Vögelein
Mit meinem Sehnen mein Leben ein.

Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866)

Satisfied Longing

Bathed in the golden light of evening,
How solemn the forests stand!
The soft birdsong mingles with
The gentle sighing of the evening wind.
What are the birds and the wind whispering?
They are whispering the world to sleep.

But you, my desires, which stir
My heart without rest or peace!
You, my longing, which troubles my breast,
When will you rest, when will you sleep?
The winds and the birds whister,
But you, aching desires, when will you sleep?

Oh when my spirit no longer hastens
On wings of dreams towards golden distances,
When my longing eyes no longer
Dwell on the ever-distant stars;
Then the wind and the birds can whisper
My longing and my life to sleep..

Libby Larson (b.1950)

Music When Soft Voices Die

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory -
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

PROGRAMME NOTES

Bun-Ching Lam

Music When Soft Voices Die

Bun-Ching Lam (b. 1954) is a Chinese American composer, pianist, and conductor. She taught at the Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, was Jean MacDuff Vaux Composer-in-Residence at Mills College in Oakland, California, and visiting professor of composition at Yale University and at Bennington College in Vermont. This strikingly expressive Shelley setting is for unaccompanied voice.

Johannes Brahms

Heimweh I: Wie traulich war das Fleckchen op.63/7

The three 'Heimweh' songs are the last of the nine songs of Brahms's *Lieder und Gesänge* op. 63, published in 1874. Three poets were included in that group: Gottfried von Schenkendorf, Felix Schumann (Robert's son), and Brahms's friend Klaus Groth. The songs reflect on an increasingly distant childhood that is evoked by elements of folksong. 'Heimweh I' discreetly suggests the rocking of the cradle in the opening bars, and has a striking harmonic sideslip in each verse which is changed for greater emotional effect in the last verse at 'Verlangen'.

Chen Yi

Bright Moonlight

Chen Yi (b. 1953) is a Chinese American violinist and composer. She was the first Chinese woman to receive an MA in music composition from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, was a finalist for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for Music for her composition *Si Ji* (Four Seasons), and has received awards from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation and American Academy of Arts and Letters and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2019. She studied composition at Columbia University. Her husband is the composer Zhou Long and both Chen and Zhou are professors of composition at the University of Missouri–Kansas City Conservatory. Alongside many orchestral works, Chen has written much choral and chamber music, including works written for traditional Chinese instruments. 'Bright Moonlight' was commissioned in 2000 by the New York Festival of Song and premiered the next year. The composer writes: 'The structure of the poem is borrowed from a fixed form of Chinese ancient poems called "Picking Mulberry with Added Characters." It is simple, straight but abstract -- from outside to inside, from describing landscape to expressing thinking, from close by to distance, from the past to the future.' The music is fluid and adventurous, and combines atonal and pentatonic harmonies.

Johannes Brahms

**Heimweh II: O wüßt ich doch den Weg zurück
op.63/8**

This is the most familiar of the Heimweh group. It is more sombre in mood than the first, especially at the end, where, like 'Heimweh I', Brahms moves in a different harmonic direction towards the minor; note also the prolonged phrase for 'der Mutter Hand', which recurs at the close, 'öder Strand'.

Charles Ives

My Native Land

'My native land' sets a poem by Heine in an anonymous English translation. Ives was fond of the poem and made two settings, one in the late 1890s and another a few years later. They are broadly similar, but the earlier version begins with a piano prelude which is omitted from the second version. Themes of dreaming and attachment to home always drew a sympathetic response from Ives; many of his compositions include elements of childhood memories.

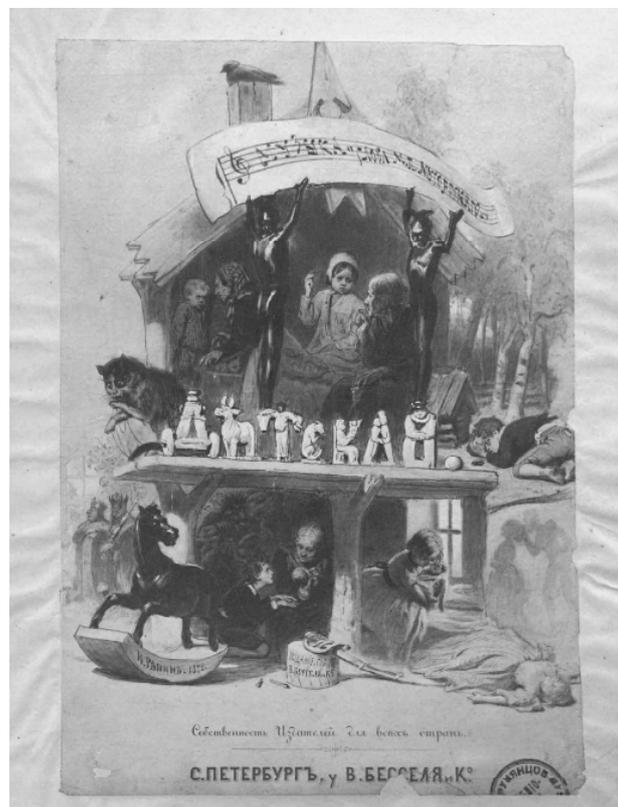
Johannes Brahms

Heimweh III: Ich sah als Knabe op.63/9

The third Heimweh song again looks back on a lost childhood symbolised by the floral wreath the singer made when a boy, but the musical setting's predominantly major key and the simple melody lighten the mood.

Modest Mussorgsky

From *The Nursery* (*Dyetskaya*)



Title page illustration of *The Nursery*, series 1, 1st edition 1871

Mussorgsky's song cycle *The Nursery* was composed between 1868 and 1872.

It was published in two series (only the first two songs survive of the second series) and apart from the last song today's selection comes from series 1.

These songs are not sentimental evocations of childhood. They employ a wide range of musical techniques typical of Mussorgsky but highly unusual in European music at the time: widely varying bar-lengths, sudden pauses, piano textures ranging from simple chords to almost percussive effects, and much else, but always working with the rhythm and intonation of the Russian voice.

Mussorgsky even evokes the music of the Idiot in his opera *Boris Godunov* (he had completed its first version in late 1869) in the child's response to the angry nanny in 'In the Corner' and in the doll's lullaby. The critic Vladimir Stasov's niece Varvara Komarova-Stasova met Mussorgsky when she was seven, and said that 'he did not strike a pose with us and did not speak to us in that artificial language ordinarily used by adults with children'.

Chen Yi

"Monologue" from *Meditation*

Meditation consists of two settings of Chinese poems from the Tang dynasty (7th and 8th centuries), 'Know You How Many Petals Falling' and 'Monologue'; 'Monologue' sets a poem by Chen Zi-ang. The text is in both Chinese and English at 'Where are the sages of the past', which the composer explains is to intensify the climax when phrases are repeated.

[Notes on Chen Yi's songs borrowed from Wen Zhang's 2012 D.M.A. dissertation on Chen Yi, University of Nevada]

Chinese Folksong

Northeast Lullaby

This folk song from northeast China is a lullaby known widely in China.

Kamala Sankaram

The Far Shore

Kamala Sankaram (b. 1978) is an Indian American composer, vocalist, playwright and actress based in New York City. She grew up in Ramona, a small town in San Diego County. Her music-theatre works have been produced by the Washington National Opera, the Los Angeles Opera and the Houston Grand Opera, and she has written numerous vocal and instrumental chamber works. She has performed as a soprano with many contemporary ensembles and is the leader of Bombay Rickey, a band that evokes 1960s movie soundscapes through a fusion of genres from surf music to Spaghetti Western. She teaches composition at the State University of New York-Purchase, and is co-Artistic Director of the New York-based company Experiments in Opera. She is best known for chamber operas about women confronting patriarchal structures. *The Far Shore* was premiered in 2014. It sets a poem by the mystical poet Meera Bai (b. 1498), using Hindustani ragas.

Chinese Folksong

Fengyang Drums

This folk song is in a form that was first developed during the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). It was originally performed in the street by a man playing the gong and a woman playing the drum. It tells of the suffering of refugees following the flooding of the Yellow River.

Aleksandr Borodin

Two songs for voice, cello and piano

Borodin wrote three songs for this relatively unusual combination of instruments in the mid-1850s. He had taught himself the cello which he continued for some years, and for which he wrote a sonata.

There was a surprisingly large number of works written for voice, cello, and piano in the 19th century (and not all by cellists!). At this time Borodin was still studying chemistry, at which he was very gifted; his professor told him to spend less time on music as he wanted him to succeed him in his post at the St Petersburg Medical-Surgical Academy.

His songs from this period are very much in the Russian 'romance' genre, the kind of songs that he would have heard and played at home – the songs heard offstage at the start of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* are of this type.

Johannes Brahms

Gestillte Sehnsucht op.91 no.1

Brahms's two op. 91 songs, for voice, viola, and piano, were published in 1884. The second song ('Geistliches Wiegenlied') was written 20 years earlier to celebrate the birth of a child to friends the violinist Joseph Joachim (also a fine violist) and his wife, the alto Amalie Schneeweis. Brahms revised this song and composed 'Gestillte Sehnsucht' as a companion piece in 1884. 'Gestillte Sehnsucht' was intended to help the Joachims' troubled marriage – Amalie had begun divorce proceedings in 1881 and Brahms testified on Amalie's side. The song did not bring them together and they divorced that year; Brahms's relationship with Joachim suffered until he composed his Double Concerto in 1887. The songs were later published as for viola or cello, and the latter instrument is heard today. Brahms sets three of the four stanzas of Rückert's poem. The instrumentation helps create the glow of evening, with rustling broken chords in the piano supporting the whole. The mood is only momentarily disturbed by the poet's minor-key agitation in the second stanza.

Libby Larsen

Music When Soft Voices Die

Libby Larsen (b. 1950) is one of America's most performed living composers.

She has held the Papamarkou Chair at John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress and residencies with several orchestras in the USA.

She studied at the University of Minnesota, receiving a Ph.D. in 1978. In 1983, Larsen was appointed one of the Minnesota Orchestra's two composers-in-residence, making her the first woman to serve as a resident composer with a major orchestra. Her first symphony, *Water Music*, was premiered in 1985 under Sir Neville Marriner.

In 1993, she won a Grammy Award for producer of Best Classical Vocal Performance for 'The Art of Arlene Augér', featuring her song cycle *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. In 2010 she received a George Peabody Medal for Outstanding Contributions to Music in America. This Shelley setting was first performed in 1994; it comes from a group of songs for voice, cello, and piano entitled *Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers*, named after one of Elizabeth Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, including settings of Rilke, Browning, and Shelley.

© Dr George Kennaway 2021

FLEUR BARRON

Singaporean-British mezzo Fleur Barron is a 2018 HSBC Laureate of the Aix-en-Provence Festival and the recipient of the 2016 Jackson Prize from the Tanglewood Music Festival, awarded to one outstanding young singer each year.

Fleur is mentored by Barbara Hannigan.

In the 20-21 season, Fleur sings Olga in *Eugene Onegin* for Garsington Opera and Mercedes in *Carmen* at Monte-Carlo Opera. Several debuts have been postponed due to COVID, including Ottavia in Monteverdi's *L'Inconorazione di Poppea* at Opéra Royal de Versailles, the title role in *Carmen* for Arizona Opera, and Sasha Garner in the world Premiere of Jennifer Higdon's *Woman with Eyes Closed* at Opera Philadelphia. Orchestral engagements this season include Chausson's *Poème de l'Amour et de la Mer* with Orchestre Symphonique de Toulon and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* with Geneva's Léman Lyriques Festival. On the recital platform, Fleur joins regular collaborator Julius Drake for recitals at Het Concertgebouw, Chamber Music Northwest, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and Oxford Lieder Festival. She curates and performs a series of recitals at the Aix-en-Provence Festival on the theme of Empire/colonialism with pianist Kunal Lahiry; curates a recital with pianist Myra Huang around Asian composers/poets for Cincinnati Song Initiative; performs recitals with Joseph Middleton at Leeds Lieder and Blackheath Halls; with Adrian Kelly at Buxton Festival; and with Jocelyn Freeman at The Red House at Aldeburgh.

In the 19-20 season, Fleur debuted with the Berlin Philharmoniker under Kirill Petrenko as La Zelatrice in a staged production of *Suor Angelica*, sang the title role in Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice* with Cape Town Opera, and Suzuki with both the Hallé Orchestra under Sir Mark Elder and at Opéra National de Montpellier. She was also scheduled to sing the title role in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* with the NDR Radiophilharmonie in Hannover. In concert, Fleur debuted with the Munich Philharmonic in Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* under Barbara Hannigan and sang Berlioz arias with the Malaysian Philharmonic. She continued her partnership with Julius Drake in multiple recitals at Het Concertgebouw and in the U.K., joined regular collaborator Roger Vignoles in recital at Aldeburgh Festival, and performed one of the first livestreamed concerts in lockdown with pianist Myra Huang at the 92 Street Y, which was viewed by over 79,000 people.

Other recent highlights include Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress* at La Monnaie and Aldeburgh Festival, Fenena in *Nabucco* with Opéra National de Montpellier, Anna I in Kurt Weill's *Die sieben Todsünden* at the Tanglewood Music Festival, Bernstein's *Songfest* with the BBCSO, and Vaughn Williams' *Serenade to Music* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Fleur holds degrees from Manhattan School of Music and Columbia University.

JOSEPH MIDDLETON

Pianist Joseph Middleton specializes in the art of song accompaniment and chamber music and has been highly acclaimed in this field. Described in Opera Magazine as 'the rightful heir to legendary accompanist Gerald Moore', by BBC Music Magazine as 'one of the brightest stars in the world of song and Lieder', he has also been labelled 'the cream of the new generation' by The Times. He is Director of Leeds Lieder, Musician in Residence at Pembroke College, Cambridge and a Fellow of his alma mater, the Royal Academy of Music, where he is a Professor. He was the first accompanist to win the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Artist Award.

Joseph is a frequent guest at major music centres including London's Wigmore Hall (where he has been a featured artist), Royal Opera House and Royal Festival Hall, New York's Alice Tully Hall and Park Avenue Armory, Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Konzerthaus Vienna, Zürich Tonhalle, Kölner Philharmonie, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, Lille and Gothenburg Opera Houses, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Musée d'Orsay Paris, Oji Hall Tokyo and Festivals in Aix-en-Provence, Aldeburgh, Barcelona, Schloss Elmau, Edinburgh, Munich, Ravinia, San Francisco, Schubertiade Hohenems and Schwarzenberg, deSingel, Seoul, Stuttgart, Toronto and Vancouver. He made his BBC Proms debut in 2016 alongside Iestyn Davies and Carolyn Sampson & returned in 2018 alongside Dame Sarah Connolly where they premiered recently discovered songs by Benjamin Britten.

Joseph enjoys recitals with internationally established singers including Sir Thomas Allen, Louise Alder, Mary Bevan, Ian Bostridge, Allan Clayton, Dame Sarah Connolly, Lucy Crowe, Iestyn Davies, Fatma Said, Samuel Hasselhorn, Wolfgang Holzmair, Christiane Karg, Katarina Karnéus, Angelika Kirchsclager, Dame Felicity Lott, Christopher Maltman, John Mark Ainsley, Ann Murray DBE, James Newby, Mark Padmore, Miah Persson, Sophie Rennert, Ashley Riches, Amanda Roocroft, Kate Royal, Matthew Rose, Carolyn Sampson, Nicky Spence and Roderick Williams.

He has a special relationship with BBC Radio 3, frequently curating his own series and working with the BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists. His critically acclaimed and fast-growing discography has seen him awarded a Diapason D'or and Edison Award as well as receiving nominations for Gramophone, BBC Music Magazines and International Classical Music Awards. He enjoys a particularly fruitful collaboration with Carolyn Sampson on the BIS label. Further recording projects include: an English Song recital with Dame Sarah Connolly for Chandos; Strauss Lieder, 'A Russian Connection' and 'Chere Nuit' with Louise Alder, also for Chandos; 'Voyages' and 'A Divine Muse' with Mary Bevan for Signum Records; 'Stille Liebe' with Samuel Hasselhorn for Harmonia Mundi; 'I wonder as I wander' with James Newby for BIS; 'A Musical Zoo' with Ashley Riches for Chandos; 'Nocturnal Variations' with Ruby Hughes, 'Elgar in Sussex' with Dame Felicity Lott, 'Tell me the Truth about Love' with Amanda Roocroft, 'This other Eden' with Kitty Whately, the Lieder of Ludwig Thuille with Sophie Bevan and Jennifer Johnston and the complete Purcell/Britten realizations with Ruby Hughes, Allan Clayton and Matthew Rose, all for Champs Hill Records. His interest in the furthering of the song repertoire has led Gramophone Magazine to describe him as 'the absolute king of programming'.

ASHOK KLOUDA

Ashok started to learn the cello at the age of eight, after requesting to learn the double bass, but being told that the family car was not big enough and that the repertoire for the cello was much better (the latter did not mean much to him at the time). Speaking of the car, it was those journeys to school, listening to recordings of Paul Tortelier's Bach and Christophe Coin's Haydn and Vivaldi that inspired him greatly. All these years later, Ashok is now indisputably recognised as the leading half Indian, quarter Irish, quarter Czech (but still actually British) cellist in Buckinghamshire.

Chamber music is a particular love of Ashok's and has formed a large part of his life. Ashok has performed in ensembles such as the Artea Quartet, the Fibonacci Sequence, Ensemble 360, the Jigsaw Players, cello octet Cellophony, , and the Barbirolli Quartet. Ashok is also proud to have been a member of Chineke! - the UK's only orchestra and chamber ensemble made up predominantly of BAME musicians - since its inception in 2015.

As a cellist he has won various competitions and prizes, but the biggest 'achievement' by far that he continues to be a part of, is raising two children – Enzo and Anoushka – with his wife Natalie Klouda, whilst both of them continue to be performing musicians and jointly run the Highgate International Chamber Music Festival.

If he had to pick one favourite composer, it would be Bach. In the 2017-18 season, Ashok performed a complete cycle of Bach Cello Suites on baroque cello at London's Conway Hall, all recorded and filmed and now available on YouTube. Aside from Bach, and music in general, Ashok is a fan of science fiction, warm weather, Formula One racing, table tennis and spending time with his family.

Ashok has recorded for Nimbus Alliance, Decca, Edition Classics, Ambache Recordings and Champs Hill Records. In 2020, Ashok and Natalie set up 'SoundKlouda.com' and record remotely from their home studio for composers around the world. Ashok performs on a cello made in 2012 by Tibor Semmelweis.