



Weekend of Song – ‘Rediscovering Lieder’
Saturday 22 October, 7.30pm

The Venue, Leeds Conservatoire

James Gilchrist tenor

Joseph Middleton piano



BIOGRAPHIES

James Gilchrist tenor

James Gilchrist began his working life as a doctor, turning to a full-time career in music in 1996. His musical interest was fired at a young age, singing first as a chorister in the choir of New College, Oxford, and later as a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge. James' extensive concert repertoire has seen him perform in major concert halls throughout the world with conductors including Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Roger Norrington, Bernard Labadie, Harry Christophers, Harry Bicket, Masaaki Suzuki and the late Richard Hickox. A master of English music, he has performed Britten's *Church Parables* in St Petersburg, in London and at the Aldeburgh Festival, *Nocturne* with the NHK Symphony in Tokyo and *War Requiem* with the San Francisco Symphony and the National Youth Orchestra of Germany. Equally at home in Baroque repertoire, appearances include Handel's *L'Allegro il Penseroso ed il Moderato* with Stuttgart Bachakademie and at Teatro Real, Madrid, *Solomon* with Les Violons du Roy, *Semele* with Concerto Köln, *Elijah* with the Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España, Madrid, Goteborgs Symfoniker and Bach Collegium Japan, all under the baton of Masaaki Suzuki, *Hercules* with the English Concert, *Ode to St Cecilia* with Basel Chamber Orchestra and *Messiah* with Boston Handel & Haydn Society and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and the *St John* and *St Matthew Passion* feature prominently in his schedule, and he is celebrated as perhaps the finest Evangelist of his generation; as one review noted, 'he hasn't become a one-man Evangelist industry by chance'.

In the 2022-23 season, James returns to the role of Reverend Horace Adams in Deborah Warner's production of *Peter Grimes*, making his company début at the Opéra national de Paris. Elsewhere in Europe, James joins Bach Collegium Japan for a tour of Bach's *Cantatas* and *B minor Mass*, he also sings *St John Passion* a number of times across the season –with the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra in Toronto, at Westminster Cathedral, and with the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra in Dublin. Further performances include *B minor Mass* again alongside the Sixteen as part of the Lausitz Festival, *Israel in Egypt* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, *Christmas Oratorio* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Clare College Chapel Choir at Trinity Hall College, Cambridge, Britten *Serenade* with Bochumer Symphoniker, *Messiah* at the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival and *Elijah* with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Tenerife.

An established and celebrated recitalist across the UK, this season James returns to the Oxford Lieder Festival and Tunbridge Wells International Music Festival, both alongside pianist Anna Tilbrook, and at Leeds Lieder Festival accompanied by Joseph Middleton. He also joins the Linarol Consort at the Cambridge Early Music Festival, in Tunbridge Wells, Oxford and Leominster, and in Cheltenham he performs alongside the Carducci Quartet for a concert in celebration of Vaughan Williams' 150th Anniversary.

On the opera stage James has performed the role of Reverend Horace Adams in Britten's *Peter Grimes* with Bergen Philharmonic and Edward Gardner with performances at the Bergen and Edinburgh International Festivals, and later at Den

Norske Opera, Oslo, Grieghallen in Bergen and the Royal Festival Hall, London. More recently he reprised the role in a new production by Deborah Warner in his company débuts at the Teatro Real Madrid, conducted by Ivor Bolton, and at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, conducted by Sir Mark Elder.

Recent concert highlights include a European tour of Bach's *St John Passion* with Bach Collegium Japan and Masaaki Suzuki, *Christmas Oratorio* with Stephen Layton and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, *Britten Serenade for Horn, Tenor and Strings* with the London Mozart Players, *Messiah* with Tenebrae, Mendelssohn *Elijah* with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, a live in-concert recording with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales performing works by Warlock, Dowland and Judith Bingham, Haydn's *Creation* with Dallas Symphony Orchestra and for a staged production with Garsington Opera and Ballet Rambert, as well as appearances with Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest, a collaboration with the Academy of Ancient Music on a programme of Bach & Purcell, and a celebrated performance of *St Matthew Passion* at King's College Cambridge as part of Stephen Cleobury's final Easter week as Director of Music. Recent engagements in the US have included *B minor Mass* with Philharmonia Baroque in a tour of California, Bach's *Easter Oratorio* with Music of the Baroque in Chicago, and the *St John* and *St Matthew Passions* as part of the Oregon Bach Festival.

Steering away from familiar styles, James recently worked with Eddie Parker's Debussy Mirrored Ensemble with performances in York, Bristol and London. With a fusion of jazz, classical and improvisation the work was a celebration and creative response to Debussy's work in the centenary of the composer's death. This season, James celebrates 25 years of collaboration with pianist Anna Tilbrook, commemorating the anniversary this October with a recital at the Oxford Lieder Festival, whose theme this year fortuitously centres around the subject of 'Friendship in Song'. Recent performances together include recitals 'Times Cruel Hand' at the Wigmore Hall, 'Around the World in 30 Songs' at St John's Smith Square, and a recital trilogy project for the Wigmore Hall - 'Schumann and the English Romantics', pairing Schumann song cycles with new commissions from leading composers Sally Beamish, Julian Philips and Jonathan Dove. Following the release of their new disc *Solitude* in July 2020, James and Anna returned to the Wigmore Hall for an exclusive performance of the programme broadcast live online. The disc, released on Chandos Records includes Jonathan Dove's *Under Alter'd Skies*, commission by and premiered at the Wigmore in 2017 for the Schumann song cycle project. James' impressive discography includes recordings of *Albert Herring* (title role) and Vaughan Williams' *A Poisoned Kiss*, *St John Passion* with the AAM, the Finzi song cycle *Oh Fair To See*, the critically-acclaimed recordings of Schubert's song cycles for Orchid Classics and a disc of Schumann song cycles for Linn Records. More recently he has released *Songs of Travel* for Chandos, both alongside Anna Tilbrook, and *100 Years of British Song*, a three-part recording project focussing on 'The Art of British Song', in collaboration with pianist Nathan Williamson, on Somm Recordings.

Joseph Middleton piano

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 labeled 'the cream of the new generation' by The Times. He is Director of Leeds Lieder, Musician in Residence and a Bye-Fellow at Pembroke College, Cambridge and a Fellow of his alma mater, the Royal Academy of Music, where he is also 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 and Musikverein Vienna, Zürich Tonhalle, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, Berlin BoulezSaal, Kölner Philharmonie, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, Lille and Gothenburg Opera Houses, Baden-Baden, 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, Soeul, Stuttgart, Toronto and Vancouver. He made his BBC Proms debut in 2016 alongside Iestyn Davies and Carolyn Sampson and returned in 2018 alongside Dame Sarah Connolly where they premièred 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, Marianne Crebassa, Iestyn Davies, Fatma Said, Samuel Hasselhorn, Christiane Karg, Katarina Karnéus, Angelika Kirchschrager, Dame Felicity Lott, Christopher Maltman, John Mark Ainsley, Ann Murray DBE, James Newby, Mark Padmore, Mauro Peter, Miah Persson, Sophie Rennert, Ashley Riches, Dorothea Röschmann, Kate Royal, Carolyn Sampson, Nicky Spence and Roderick Williams.

He has a special relationship with BBC Radio 3, frequently curating his own series and performing alongside the BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists. His critically acclaimed and fast-growing discography has seen him awarded a Diapason D'or, Edison Award and Priz Caecilia as well as receiving numerous nominations for Gramophone, BBC Music Magazines and International Classical Music Awards. His interest in the furthering of the song repertoire has led Gramophone Magazine to describe him as 'the absolute king of programming'.

www.josephmiddleton.com

PROGRAMME

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

An die ferne Geliebte

Robert Schumann (1810-56)

Liederkreis op. 24

Morgens steh' ich auf und frage
Es treibt mich hin
Ich wandelte unter den Bäumen
Lieb' Liebchen
Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden
Warte, warte, wilder Schiffmann
Berg und Bergen schau herunter
Anfangs wollt' ich fast verzagen
Mit Myrten und Rosen

Robert Schumann

Tragödie I, II, III

Entflieh' mit mir und sei mein Weib
Es fiel ein Reif in der Frühlingsnacht
Auf ihrem Grab da steht ein Linde

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

La bonne chanson

Une sainte en son auréole
Puisque l'aube grandit
La lune blanche
J'allais par des chemins perfides
J'ai presque peur, en vérité
Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été
N'est-ce pas?
L'hiver a cessé

PROGRAMME NOTES

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

An die ferne Geliebte

An die ferne Geliebte, composed in 1816, can be seen as the first 'song cycle' – a series of songs which are linked together by a theme, narrative, or musical form, as opposed to a simple anthology of songs. The title page of the first publication of the cycle called it a 'Liederkreis', an unusual term that did not have a formal definition until 1865, but which was recognised at the time as denoting a collection of songs connected in some way. A review of the songs in 1817 noted that the songs were

closely connected both poetically and musically... The short turn to C minor [at the end of the fifth *Lied*] makes the return, in the last Lied, of the key, as well as the mood and loveliness of the first lied, all the more magnificent. It is truly splendid that, toward the end, even the poet lets the first lied itself again become more discernible, only condensed, ending with a free and heartfelt close. Thus, at the same time, the whole work concludes as a true Lieder-Kreis ...

The texts are by the minor poet Alois Jeitteles (1794-1858), a young Viennese doctor whose verse had become very popular. The songs are heard without breaks, and piano transitions link some of them. The cycle is further unified by a tonal scheme centred around E flat major, and, as the first reviewer noted, by the return of the first song's opening phrase at the end of the final song. The formal sophistication of the cycle is underlined by the poet making a gift of these very songs to his beloved.

Robert Schumann (1810-56)

Liederkreis op. 24

Morgens steh' ich auf und frage
Es treibt mich hin
Ich wandelte unter den Bäumen
Lieb' Liebchen
Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden
Warte, warte, wilder Schiffmann
Berg und Bergen schaun herunter
Anfangs wollt' ich fast verzagen
Mit Myrten und Rosen

The Heine *Liederkreis* cycle (a later cycle of the same name used texts by Eichendorff) was the first substantial product of Schumann's *Liederjahr* ('Year of Song'), and was completed by the end of February 1840. Song was a marketable genre, and Schumann may have wanted to demonstrate financial stability at a time when marriage negotiations were at a difficult stage. The form also let Schumann engage with a long-standing concern, the uniting of music and poetry. He said in 1839 that he did not think of song-writing as 'great art', but he may have wanted to

achieve what John Daverio called 'the perfecting of imperfect tendencies in contemporary art'. The nine songs tell of frustrated or lost love. Heine's poems sometimes suggest a more bitter tone than is present in Schumann's music, and there is a sense of ambiguity as a result. 'Morgens steh'ich' is quite cheerful; the mysterious change of key for the bird's verse and the melancholy descent of the singer's last words in 'Ich wandelte' suggest introspection; the hesitation at the end of each stanza of 'Lieb' Liebchen' is gleefully sinister and witty, like the off-beat heartbeats in the piano part. 'Schöne Wiege' was Heine's farewell to Hamburg and a doomed love affair, but its bitterness is softened by Schumann. If Schumann comes closer to Heine's mood in 'Warte, warte', with its pounding octaves, in 'Berg und Burgen' he evokes a gently rocking boat where Heine sees pleasure and malice combined in the Rhine. 'Mit Myrten', dissolves in chromatic harmonies having largely regained the cheerfulness of the opening song.

Robert Schumann

Tragödie I, II, III

Entflieh' mit mir und sei mein Weib
Es fiel ein Reif in der Frühlingsnacht
Auf ihrem Grab da steht ein Linde

In *Tragödie* Schumann set three texts of Heinrich Heine which had been extremely popular among his contemporaries and were set in the 19th century many times. 'Entflieh' mit mir' begins as if it were a 19th-century version of Raleigh's 'Come live with me and be my love', but then the singer attempts to woo the lady with implausible threats of loneliness and isolation, accompanied with a dramatic deviation to the minor. The bleak 'Es fiel ein Reif, sets a poem which Heine included in the *Tragödie* group but which he himself said he had heard as a folk song on the Rhine. Schumann gives this a very pared-down setting, opening with a familiar 'horn-call' motif, and often interrupting the song with silence, almost as if already shocked by the ending. 'Auf ihrem Grab' is for tenor and soprano, singing smoothly in close harmony apart from a few bars for each alone. The naïve music in C major belies the sad scene.

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

La bonne chanson

Une sainte en son auréole
Puisque l'aube grandit
La lune blanche
J'allais par des chemins perfides
J'ai presque peur, en vérité
Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été
N'est-ce pas?
L'hiver a cessé

La bonne chanson was composed between 1892 and 1894, while Fauré was having an affair with an amateur singer, Emma Bardac (later Debussy's second wife) – this affair inspired a burst of creativity and a new originality in his music. Fauré's selection of Paul Verlaine's poems reflects his own emotional journey at the time:

I was aided by the spontaneity of the singer who remained its most moving interpreter – spontaneity at least the equal of my own. I have never known any pleasure to equal that which I felt as I heard these pages coming to life, one after the other, as I brought them to her.

From 1891 Fauré found new ways to organise a song cycle, arranging the poems to form a new story, and using recurrent themes to unify the cycle; he did this with his *Cinq mélodies* op.58 as well as *La bonne chanson*. Fauré sometimes chose his texts for their pliability, lack of reference to sounds and, particularly, lack of visual descriptions that would restrict him. He said that he aimed to convey the prevailing atmosphere rather than detailed images in poems of this kind. The most 'pliable' poems were most easily adapted to his melodic inspiration, and in setting them, he often took great liberties with the prosody – quite the opposite of, for example, Debussy's word-setting in *Pelléas et Mélisande*. *La bonne chanson* was first performed on 21 April 1895 by Jeanne Remacle and Fauré for the Société Nationale. The audience found it shocking and too complex, and Saint-Saëns thought Fauré was mad to write music with such difficult quick key changes; on the other hand, Proust loved it. The expressive power, the free and varied vocal style and the importance of the piano part seemed to exceed the proper limits of the song.

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SAVE THE DATES

We are pleased to announce the following forthcoming Leeds Lieder concerts and events:

Recital: Jane Burnell (soprano), Morgana Warren-Jones (mezzo-soprano) and Christopher Pulleyn (piano)

Wednesday 16 November 2022, 1.05pm

The Venue, Leeds Conservatoire

Recital: Jennifer Johnston (mezzo-soprano) and Joseph Middleton (piano)

Friday 10 February 2023, 7.30pm

Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall, University of Leeds

Recital: Mary Bevan (soprano), Nicky Spence (tenor) and Joseph Middleton (piano)

Saturday 4 March 2023, 7.30pm

The Venue, Leeds Conservatoire

Leeds Lieder Festival 2023

Friday 9 June to Saturday 17 June 2023

Howard Assembly Room