

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Sunday 14th April

FILLING THE CITY WITH SONG
LEEDS LIEDER FESTIVAL
2024

ON WINGS *of* SONG

LEEDS LIEDER 20TH
ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL



Howard
Assembly
Room



LEEDS
CONSERVATOIRE



Leeds
Minster



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LOTTERY FUNDED

Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

Director's Welcome

LEEDS LIEDER FESTIVAL 2024

For the 20th Anniversary Festival I have turned to one of the most beloved lyrics in all of Lieder, Heine's *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges*, made immortal for song lovers by Mendelssohn. Heine describes being carried "On wings of song... To the sweetest place I know...". The sweetest place must surely be one of mankind's greatest faculties - our imagination. This sacred space is ripe for exploring in the concert hall. Song gives us the possibility to fly to far-off lands, to empathise with others, and to explore our innermost feelings, all from the comfort of a concert hall seat. On these wings we can connect with others and connect with ourselves.

The feeling of unadulterated joy that can be magicked-up by attending a song concert was surely the *raison d'être* some 20 years ago for a group of inspired friends deciding to get together and promote a song concert in Leeds. With that act, Leeds Lieder was born. The early years of the Festival saw some of the greatest interpreters of Lieder come to Yorkshire: Dame Margaret Price, Dame Janet Baker, Barbara Bonney, Sir Thomas Allen to name a few, and for the first five Festivals the greatest song pianists of our time (Roger Vignoles, Graham Johnson, Julius Drake, Malcolm Martineau and Iain Burnside) each took it in turns as Artistic Director to bring their friends to the city. Those of us who came to Leeds Lieder later are indebted to this merry band of song aficionados led by the Festival founder, Jane Anthony. Her legacy has been kept aloft by subsequent volunteers, all giving selflessly to the charity so that song can thrive in Yorkshire.

As ever, we are indebted to the unwavering support of the artists we champion, promote and commission, our audience and community of Friends, who have rallied in the most generous of ways. We are so grateful to everyone who has invested in the charity. Thanks to you we are able to present this year's 20th Anniversary Festival, and I do hope you like what we have in store for you.



The music on offer is eclectic in scope and outstanding in quality. Thanks to our Friends and supporters we will continue to reach thousands of school children with our education projects and train a new cohort of Young Artists.

On behalf of the whole Leeds Lieder team, we are delighted to welcome you to "your" song Festival and look forward to being carried "on wings of song" together as we enter the next decade of Leeds Lieder.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Middleton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Joseph Middleton
Director



President's Welcome

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT ELLY AMELING

LUCKY LEEDS!

Welcome to all of you who have chosen to attend the Leeds Lieder Festival again. I wish I could be with you....

This year's programme is an incredibly rich choice of Art Songs, performed by the greatest talents of today's singers and pianists. Yes: today's musicians are still utterly thrilled to perform that intimate, moving and at the same time so brilliant kind of *music - on - text*.

The programme presents songs from Schubert to Bernstein - and a fantastic diversity of international composers in between those two. My great compliments to the artists who have assembled this rich FEAST of Art Song.

LEEDS IS LUCKY!

Elly Ameling
President, Leeds Lieder



At a Glance

SATURDAY 13 APRIL

2pm - 4pm SongPath musical walking trail Kirkstall Abbey

SUNDAY 14 APRIL - 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

TODAY

1pm Schubertiade lunchtime opening recital: Nikola Hillebrand, Joseph Middleton and Oliver Casanovas Nuevo The Venue, LC

4pm - 5.30pm Young Artists Schubertiade: Richard Stokes and Leeds Lieder Young Artists The Venue, LC

6.15pm Friends' private reception The Rooftop Bar, LC

7.30pm Schubertiade 20th Anniversary Gala recital: Roderick Williams, Roger Vignoles, Nikola Hillebrand, Joseph Middleton and Leeds Lieder Young Artists The Venue, LC

MONDAY 15 APRIL

2.30pm - 5.30pm Friends' Festival Masterclass I: Sir Thomas Allen Leeds Minster

TUESDAY 16 APRIL

7.30pm Evening recital: Nina Kanter, Oscar Castellino and Keval Shah Sikh Centre

WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL

11am - 12pm Schools Culmination Concert I - Living Lieder The Ballroom, Pudsey Civic Hall

1.30pm - 2.30pm Schools Culmination Concert II - Discovering Lieder The Ballroom, Pudsey Civic Hall

4pm - 5.30pm Composers & Poets Forum Showcase: *A Leeds Songbook* Leeds Minster

8pm Evening recital: James Newby and Joseph Middleton Hyde Park Book Club

THURSDAY 18 APRIL - A DAY OF FRENCH SONG

10am - 12pm Festival Masterclass II: Dame Felicity Lott The Rooftop Bar, LC

1pm - 2pm Lunchtime lecture recital: Graham Johnson, Sarah Fox and Florian Störtz The Venue, LC

3pm - 6pm Festival Masterclass III: Graham Johnson The Venue, LC

7pm - 7.30pm Pre-concert talk with Professor Barbara Kelly The Rooftop Bar, LC

8pm Evening recital: James Gilchrist and Anna Tilbrook The Venue, LC

FRIDAY 19 APRIL

12pm - 1.30pm Lunchtime recital: Young Artists Showcase HAR

3pm - 6pm Festival Masterclass IV: James Gilchrist and Anna Tilbrook Howard Opera Centre

6.30pm - 7pm Pre-concert talk with Dr George Kennaway HAR

7.30pm Evening recital: Carolyn Sampson and Joseph Middleton HAR

10pm - 11pm Late night cabaret: Claire Barnett-Jones and Libby Burgess Kino @ HAR

SATURDAY 20 APRIL

10am - 12pm Festival Masterclass V: Benjamin Appl Howard Opera Centre

1pm - 2pm Lunchtime recital: Harriet Burns, Nick Pritchard, Christopher Glynn and Kate Wakeling HAR

2.30pm - 5pm Bring and Sing! rehearsal Leeds Minster

5.30pm - 6.30pm Bring and Sing! concert: Vivaldi *Gloria* Leeds Minster

6.30pm - 7pm Pre-concert talk with Tansy Davies HAR

7.30pm Evening recital: Ema Nikolovska and Joseph Middleton HAR

10pm - 11pm Lieder Lounge with Leeds Lieder Young Artists Kino @ HAR

SUNDAY 21 APRIL

1pm - 2pm Lunchtime recital: Fleur Barron and Joseph Middleton The Venue, LC

2.30pm - 3.30pm Film screening: *Sense ficció - Brava, Victoria!* The Venue, LC

5pm - 6.30pm Finale concert: Leeds Lieder Young Artists The Venue, LC

7.30pm Evening closing recital: Benjamin Appl and Sholto Kynoch The Venue, LC

HAR = Howard Assembly Room | LC = Leeds Conservatoire | All information correct at the time of going to print.
Leeds Lieder reserves the right to change artists, programmes and events if necessary.

Sunday 14 April

FILLING THE CITY WITH SONG
LEEDS LIEDER FESTIVAL
20 YEARS

SUN 14 APRIL | 1PM
THE VENUE, LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE

Schubertiade lunchtime opening recital

*This recital is generously supported by
Elizabeth and Olav Arnold.*

Nikola Hillebrand soprano
Joseph Middleton piano
Oliver Casanovas Nuevo clarinet



FRANZ SCHUBERT

Suleika I
Lachen und Weinen
Nachtstück
Nachtviolen
Gretchens Bitte

Kennst du das Land?
Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt
Heiß mich nicht reden
So laßt mich scheinen

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen

German soprano Nikola Hillebrand made her UK recital début at Leeds Lieder at the 2022 Festival. It was a knockout performance resulting in 'Gramophone' magazine writing that "Hillebrand's radiant, gilt tone fits this repertoire lusciously, her diction is excellent and she communicates with warmth." Known as a Schubert singer of the highest quality, it's a delight to invite this special artist to open our 20th Anniversary Festival. The programme will include Schubert's evergreen Shepherd on the Rock performed with the Principal clarinetist from the Orchestra of Opera North, Oliver Casanovas Nuevo, and Leeds Lieder Director Joseph Middleton.

opera
north

Programme notes

Marianne von Willemer, the poet of Schubert's two Suleika poems (Goethe merely revised them for inclusion in the *West-östlicher Divan*) was the 30 year-old wife of a wealthy Frankfurt banker with whom the ageing Goethe had a passionate affair of short duration. Schubert set two of her poems: 'Was bedeutet die Bewegung', which was written on her way eastward from Frankfurt to Heidelberg on 23 September 1815 to meet Goethe; and 'Ach, um deine feuchten Schwingen' a few days later, as she left Goethe for what turned out to be the last time. During their fourteen-month acquaintance, Goethe was studying oriental poetry and, in particular, the verse of Hafiz, the great Persian poet whom he strove to emulate. The *Buch Suleika* from the *West-östlicher Divan* („Divan“ means 'anthology'), which ostensibly celebrates the love of Hatem and Suleika, clearly enabled Goethe to give clandestine expression to his own passion for Marianne, for the presence of Hatem (or Goethe) is adumbrated in the line: „Kann mir nur sein Atem geben!“ Brahms considered **Suleika I** ('Was bedeutet die Bewegung') to be 'the loveliest song that has ever been written'. It is one of Schubert's most passionate and erotic songs, with an ostinato rhythm that pulsates through the first five strophes like a throbbing heart. Perhaps the most remarkable passage occurs at the beginning of the final verse, which is marked *etwas langsamer*: the key shifts to B major, the throbbing semiquavers cease, and the new rhythm and vocal figuration seem to be almost tremulous with post-coital bliss.


Lachen und Weinen, like many celebrated Lieder, comes from a collection by Friedrich Rückert called *Östliche Rosen* (1822), a sequence of poems that was influenced by Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan* (1819) and mostly inspired by the poet's love for Luise Wiethaus, whom he married in 1821. The first edition of Rückert's poem had no title, though he calls it 'Lachens und Weinens Grund' in a later edition. Schubert took the first line as his title and created a song that typifies the bitter-sweet nature of his melodies. The five introductory bars of **Nachtstück**, to a poem by Mayrhofer, are a wonderful polyphonic nocturne in miniature. An old man, feeling death upon him, steps into the moonlit night and prays for peace. The trees and grasses wish him well, and the song ends with an extraordinary passage which depicts the onset of death, as the music moves from E flat, via D flat, to the tranquillity of C major. The serenity of the old man's demise could not be more different than Mayrhofer's own death: he committed suicide by

throwing himself from the third floor window of the office where he worked in Vienna.

The punning in Mayrhofer's poem **Nachtviolen** on the words 'Nachtviolen' and 'Nächten' is impossible to convey in English, since we call the flower Dame's violet, and not Night violet; Schubert, however, clearly relished the play on words, and ushers in the penultimate line („Und nun blüht in stummen Nächten') with a delicious counter-melody in the voice that moves in contrary motion. Fischer-Dieskau in his book on Schubert states unequivocally that 'Nachtviolen' 'sorrowfully records' the friendship between Schubert and Mayrhofer after they had gone their separate ways in the mid-1820s. Schubert set no fewer than 47 of his friend's poems to music.

In the scene immediately following 'Meine Ruh ist hin' in Goethe's *Faust*, Gretchen innocently asks Faust if he believes in God, and he replies with his famous pantheistic creed that is quite beyond her naive comprehension of the world. He urges her to sleep with him. She replies that her mother would wake and discover them; but when he suggests that she give her a sleeping draught, she consents. By the time of her next song (**Gretchens Bitte**), Gretchen is pregnant and abandoned by her lover. As she decorates the shrine of the Mater Dolorosa outside the cathedral, she chants the opening of her song, a paraphrase of Jacopone da Todi's thirteenth century Good Friday hymn that Palestrina and others also set to music. The opening incantatory refrain gives way to a more personal and staccato utterance („Wer fühlet/Wie wühlet"), which describes the pain of the foetus and the shame within her - wonderfully managed by Schubert in a passage where minor takes over from major and the voice rumbles deep in the lower register. Schubert, having modulated to C major, broke off the song at „Das Herz zerbricht in mir". 'Gretchens Bitte' was completed by Benjamin Britten in December 1938, and first sung by May Blyth in a broadcast on the 27th of the same month.

Goethe's four *Mignon-Lieder* ('Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt', 'Heiß mich nicht reden', 'So laßt mich scheinen' and 'Kennst du das Land') all come from his novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Rarely read today, it contains some of the most memorable lyrics in the German language, sung by the mysterious Harper and Mignon, his daughter through an incestuous relationship with his own sister. The Harper, having fled to Germany, is devoured by guilt and despair, and Mignon



is abducted to Italy, where she yearns for her homeland and human love. That is the theme of **Kennst du das Land?** - a song that has tempted many of the great Lieder composers, including Beethoven, Schumann, Liszt and Wolf. Goethe tells us that Mignon "intoned each verse with a certain solemn grandeur, as if she were drawing attention to something unusual and imparting something of importance. When she reached the third line, the melody became more sombre and gloomy; the words „Kennst du es wohl?“ were given mystery and weight, the „Dahin, dahin“ was suffused with irresistible longing, and she modified the phrase „Laß uns ziehen“ each time it was repeated, so that one time it was entreating and urging, the next time pressing and full of promise." Schubert's A major setting, less grand than Wolf's immortal version, is possibly closer in spirit to Goethe's poem, in which the 13 year-old Mignon pours out her heart.

Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt (Lied der Mignon) conveys her anguish through the insistent 'ei' assonance (ten examples in 12 lines), and the feminine rhymes (all ending in e) which limp their way through the poem. Schubert finds for her state of mind one of his most plangent melodies, and despite the unbroken melodic flow, seems to respond to every nuance in the words. **Heiß mich nicht reden** comes from the close of Chapter 16, Book 5, where we are told that it was a song that 'Mignon had several times recited with great expression'. The vow to which Mignon refers was made by her to the Mother of God who appeared in a vision, as she was being kidnapped and transported to Germany. To be sure of the Mother of God's protection, Mignon vowed that she would never tell her story, never trust anyone, and never reveal that she was the child of the incestuous union between the Harper and her mother Sperata. **So laßt mich scheinen** is the most cryptic of Mignon's songs. Near to death, she takes part in a children's charade and dresses up as an angel so convincingly that the younger children take her for a real angel. As the party draws to a close, Mignon is asked to change out of her costume - the cue for this song which, in Goethe, is sung to a zither accompaniment. Schubert found the poem elusive and set it no fewer than four times, although the two 1816 settings survive only as fragments. The final version, which dates from January 1826, has become the most popular of Schubert's four Mignon settings, and the D minor cry of anguish in the final verse remains one of the most poignant moments in all his Lieder.

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen is a composite poem by Wilhelm Müller and Karl August Varnhagen von Ense. The first four verses come from the opening of Müller's 'Der Berghirt', verses 5 and 6 from Varnhagen's 'Nächtlicher Schall' and verse 7 from Müller's 'Liebesgedanken'. The song was commissioned by the celebrated soprano Anna Milder-Hauptmann, in the sense that she asked Schubert to write her a song with contrasting sections and a brilliant conclusion: in a famous phrase, she complained that the public at large were too interested in mere 'treats for the ear' („Ohrenschmaus“). Composed a month before Schubert's death, the song contrasts strikingly with other late works of the time, such as the last piano sonatas and *Winterreise*; it's almost as if he wrote this bravura song in the hope that it would be commercially successful at a time when he was in financial difficulties. Haslinger published 'Der Hirt auf dem Felsen' in June 1830, stating that the obligato was for 'clarinet or violoncello'. The first performance was given by Milder herself at Riga in March 1830.

Richard Stokes © 2024

Sunday 14 April

FILLING THE CITY WITH SONG
LEEDS LIEDER FESTIVAL
20 YEARS

SUN 14 APRIL | 4PM
THE VENUE, LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE

A Goethe Schubertiade

Richard Stokes

Leeds Lieder Young Artists

A recital featuring the outstanding 2024 cohort of Leeds Lieder's Young Artists. Join us for a Schubertiade, featuring ensembles and solo songs, led by expert linguist, song specialist and pedagogue, Richard Stokes.



Laura Coppinger & David Palmer:
Gretchen am Spinnrade

Deirunas Jasiulionis & Fang-Lin Liu:
Wer nie sein Brot mit Tränen aß

Cerys MacAllister & André Bertoncini:
Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt

Thomas McGowan & Benjamin Collyer:
An Schwager Kronos

Biqing Zhang & Yongqiu Yuan:
Ganymed

Anton Kirchhoff & Jou-an Chen:
Der Musensohn

Èlia Farreras-Cabero & Lucas Huber Sierra:
Auf dem See

Aksel Rykkvin & Zany Denyer:
Geheimen

Anusha Merrin & Chunmeng Ge:
Clara Schumann: Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen

Felicitas Wrede & Abhisri Chaudhuri:
Nähe des Geliebten



Sunday 14 April

FILLING THE CITY WITH SONG
LEEDS LIEDER FESTIVAL
20 YEARS

SUN 14 APRIL | 7.30PM

THE VENUE, LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE

Schubertiade 20th Anniversary Gala recital

In memory of Jane Bonner

Roderick Williams OBE baritone

Roger Vignoles piano

Nikola Hillebrand soprano

Joseph Middleton piano

Leeds Lieder Young Artists

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Die Geselligkeit
Viel tausend Sterne prangen

FIGURES IN A LANDSCAPE

Auf der Riesenkoppe • Der Wanderer •
Ganymed • Der Wanderer an den Mond •
Die Sterne • Im Frühling •
Rastlose Liebe • Der Musensohn

TO BE SUNG ON THE WATER

Meeres Stille • Auf der Donau •
Auf dem See • Fischerweise •
Die Gebüsche • Auf dem Wasser zu singen
Erlafsee • Der Schiffer

Interval

Fantasie in F minor for piano four hands

SONGS OF NIGHT AND NATURE

Der Winterabend • Bertas Lied in der Nacht •
Im Freien • Nachtstück • Waldesnacht



This evening's opening gala performance is dedicated to our dear friend and colleague Jane Bonner, who died all too soon on 5 October 2023 having been suffering from cancer. Jane worked for Opera North for over 40 years, first as a Stage Manager and later as Company Manager. I first knew Jane when I joined the company as Friends Administrator in 1985. I confess that she terrified me on first acquaintance! But I quickly came to realise that she was one of life's very special people, wise, funny, immensely gifted and utterly committed to whatever she undertook. Jane brought all these attributes to her involvement with Leeds Lieder, where she became our go-to person when we needed a page turner. She raised this essential task to an art form, supporting pianists with her total and unshowy reliability. She completely understood the artistic temperament and backstage, she was a friend to artists and staff, soothing any nerves and maintaining calm. Nothing fazed Jane. I, and all of us at Leeds Lieder who knew her, will be forever grateful that we knew our dear Ms Page-Turner (our affectionate nickname for her). Thank you, Jane. We miss you.

Kathleen Evans, Chair, Leeds Lieder

Programme notes

PART-SONGS

The majority of Schubert's 100 or so part-songs are settings of poems for male quartet (TTBB), a line-up favoured by Michael Haydn, a composer much admired by Schubert. But as the demand for *Gesellschaftsmusik* grew, Schubert composed a substantial number of vocal quartets for the more traditional SATB arrangement - we hear two of them this evening. Johann Karl Unger's **Die Geselligkeit** praises conviviality and gregariousness and Schubert responds with boisterous music in D major. **Viel tausend Sterne prangen**, also in D major, sets the opening eight lines of a much longer poem by August Gottlob Eberhard called 'Das Feuerwerk'. Schubert's radiant music describes not the fireworks (they only appear later in the poem) but a starlit night - a subject that he returned to again and again in his solo songs and in 'Nachthelle', that magical part song (TTBB) to a poem by Seidl.


FIGURES IN A LANDSCAPE

Auf der Riesenkoppe is the last of Schubert's fourteen settings of Theodor Körner, the patriotic poet who was killed in action in August 1813 during the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon. The poem describes the view - the 'three kingdoms' of stanza three refer to Saxony, Silesia and Bohemia - from the summit of one of the peaks of the Riesengebirge, a mountain range near Dresden, where Körner had been born.

'Dort, wo du nicht bist, ist das Glück!' runs the final line of Schmidt von Lübeck's 'Des Fremdlings Abendlied', a poem that was rescued from obscurity by Franz Schubert, who in 1816 changed the title to **Der Wanderer**, altered the famous final line and composed one of his most celebrated songs that was said to have earned Diabelli, the publisher, 27,000 florins within forty years. The song was second only in popularity to 'Erlkönig' during Schubert's lifetime and became regarded as an archetypal expression of Romantic Sehnsucht and alienation. 'Der Wanderer' takes the form of a short cantata: the opening recitative, marked *sehr langsam* and accompanied by throbbing triplets, gives way to a C sharp minor adagio melody that Schubert later reworked as the centre piece of his *Wanderer-Fantasie* of 1822; there follows a quicker section („Wo bist du, wo bist du, mein geliebtes Land?"), before the melody of the first verse returns, and the song ends in sepulchral recitative.

Ganymede in myth was a beautiful young Phrygian shepherd raised up to Olympus by Zeus disguised as an eagle - see Rembrandt's wittily grotesque painting in Dresden. Zeus had fallen in love with the boy and wished him to replace Hebe as his cup-bearer. The poem is drenched in amorous language: „Frühling, Geliebter", „Liebeswonne", „lieblicher Morgenwind", „liebend nach mir aus dem Nebeltal", „neigen sich der sehnenenden Liebe", „Allliebender Vater!". The many variations on the word „Liebe" reflect not just Ganymede's adoration of the natural world, but also the ubiquitous presence of lascivious Jove, who appears in several guises throughout the poem. In typical Sturm und Drang fashion, Goethe changes the myth and has Ganymede borne aloft by the intensity of his own feelings - a process that is given almost tangible form by Schubert's key-design, from A flat to F major via G flat and E major, also by the melismatic setting of the final phrase and the soaring postlude of minims and semibreves, marked *pp* and *diminuendo*.

Der Wanderer an den Mond contrasts the wanderer's sad lot with the moon's serenity, minor contrasts with major, strongly accented chords, depicting the wanderer's tread through the landscape, contrast with the flowing semiquavers of the moon's light. **Die Sterne** (D684), like 'Abendröte', depicts the Schlegelian philosophy of the unity of man and nature. It is not clear whether Schubert intended both strophes to be sung: the Peters Edition prints only one verse, but the song makes much better sense with the second verse as well - which reinforces the philosophy of the oneness of all creation. The key is E flat major, the tonality of his other great song about stars: the 1828 setting of Leitner's 'Die Sterne'. The hundred poems of Ernst Konrad Friedrich Schulze's *Poetisches Tagebuch* (*Verse Diary*) were almost entirely inspired by his love for Adelheid and Cäcilie Tychsén, the daughters of a celebrated orientalist and archaeologist. Neither sister returned his affection, and Schulze poured out his obsession in verse that often deludedly depicts his love as requited. **Im Frühling** is a perfect example of such self-delusion. Although the opening verses describe *his* happiness in love, the poem never speaks of any reciprocation: it is he who is close by her side, not the other way round. Cäcilie, indeed, finally refused even to see him and he was banned from her house. The penultimate stanza, which deals with rejection and the transience of love, is biographically the only accurate passage of the poem, and Schubert responds with a set of minor variations of the main theme, switching the limpid semiquavers, that had rung out brightly in



the right hand throughout verses 3 and 4, to the left hand, where they sound murky and threatening. The last verse returns to the major, and the final phrase is repeated, *ppp*, as the aching music murmurs to a close.

Eduard Bauernfeld, in an article published in June 1829, described how Goethe's **Rastlose Liebe** had possessed the eighteen year-old Schubert at the time of its composition. It was, incidentally, one of his first songs to win public approval, as we learn from an entry in his diary, dated 13 June 1816, in which he describes a concert at which he sang [sic.] the song to unreserved applause. Goethe's poetry, he modestly remarked, contributed greatly to the success. Goethe quotes the beginning of **Der Musensohn** in his autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Part 4, Chapter 16) as exemplifying the way in which his poetical effusions used to pour out of him. He describes how he would wake up in the middle of the night and rush to his desk in order to write down poems such as 'Der Musensohn' that were already fully formed in his brain; and how he preferred to use a pencil, since the scratching of the quill would disturb his 'somniaesthetistic writing'. Having flitted his indefatigable way through the landscape, the son of the muses asks when he too will rest 'in his beloved's embrace' - an image of the lonely Schubert's springs to mind playing his music at the Schubertiaden while his friends dance the evening away. There is a sadness in the final bars, suggested by the *pianissimo* marking in the final verse, and an exquisite *ritardando* on 'Busen'.

TO BE SUNG ON THE WATER


Goethe's **Meeres Stille** was first published, with 'Glückliche Fahrt', in Schiller's *Musen Almanach* for 1796. The two poems have always been printed together, since the poet clearly wished to display the contrasting ideas of stillness and movement. They can also be seen as exercises in the use of trochaic and dactylic metres - the incessant trochees (long/short) of 'Meeres Stille' reflecting the stillness of the ocean, as the sailor is becalmed. Both poems refer to a voyage that Goethe made in 1787 on his Italian Journey, when he crossed the sea from Sicily to Naples and experienced a flat calm - perfectly caught by no fewer than 32 semibreve chords in Schubert's great song - and frightening storms.

Johann Mayrhofer, who inspired no fewer than 47 Schubert Lieder, worked in Vienna as a book censor and shared lodgings with Schubert for a while, from the autumn of 1818 until the winter of 1820. The poems set by Schubert paint a vivid picture of this melancholic poet who committed suicide in 1836, after a failed attempt in 1831, by hurling himself

from a third-floor window of the office where he worked. Mayrhofer's pessimism is reflected in **Auf der Donau**, and anyone familiar with the poet's despondent nature will not be fooled by the tranquil barcarolle with which Schubert begins the song; by verse two it has become a much more sinister affair, with the sort of eerie bass trills that foreshadow those of the B Flat Piano Sonata. Here they denote impending doom, and this remarkable song ends with twelve bars that echo to the single word „Untergang“ - 'destruction'. The final two lines refer obliquely to the tyranny of Metternich's regime in contemporary Vienna.

Goethe in 1774 was already a celebrity and confident of his own powers. Then came the summons in 1775 from Carl August, the 18 year-old ruler of the small Duchy of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, to join the cultured circle of the court. Soon after he had received the invitation he wrote an impromptu poem in his diary under the heading '15 Juni 1775, aufm Zürichersee' and later revised it for publication in 1789, giving it the title **Auf dem See**. The poem, on the surface, is about rowing on Lake Zurich, but there is a deeper symbolism at work that reflects Goethe's uncertainty of mind. The initial iambic rhythm conveys the pull of the oars, and the harmony he feels with nature is expressed in the opening two lines. The peaceful mood does not last; the iambs cease, he rests on his oars and, to a new trochaic metre, reflects on his life. The 'golden dreams' refer to his love for Lili Schönemann, to whom he was engaged but now wished to shun. He resolves to forget the dream, and instead embrace the present. To a quicker rhythm he now rows ashore (wonderfully expressed by Schubert in the new 2/4 time), and glimpses the ripening fruit in the morning light. 'Ripening fruit' („Reifende Frucht“), given the abundance of imagery in the first stanza connected with nurture ('saug/suckle', 'Busen/breast', 'wiegen/cradle' and, in the original version, the umbilical chord: „Ich saug an meiner Nabelschnur/Nun Nahrung aus der Welt . . .“), implies a new maturity as he faces the future and the challenge of Weimar.

Fischerweise was sung by Vogl and accompanied by the composer at Schubert's benefit concert on 26 March 1828. The poem clearly bewitched Schubert, who responded with a delicious figure in the bass on the subdominant chord, which is then cheekily repeated above the stave on the dominant. The song is basically strophic, but the final verse, at „schlauer Wicht“, ingeniously displaces the rhythm to draw attention to the 'wily minx' on the bridge. Schubert never wrote a sunnier song. No song of Schubert's better sums up the Romantic temperament than his setting of Friedrich Schlegel's **Die Gebüsche**, the last four lines of which describe the hypersensitivity



of the chosen few who can hear the hidden music in nature. The song is the final poem of Schlegel's *Abendröte* sequence, which attempts to depict the unity of man and nature. It was not published until 1885.

The dactylic rhythm of Friedrich Leopold, Graf zu Stolberg-Stolberg's **Auf dem Wasser zu singen** inspired Schubert to write a memorably broad melody, whose gently descending semiquavers and obligato-like vocal line recall the fourth Impromptu, D899. This liquid music is clearly suggestive of waves lapping against the boat in verse one, and the wind murmuring through reeds in verse two. The poem, written in 1782 shortly before Stolberg's marriage to his fiancé Agnes von Witzleben (the original poem is called 'Lied auf dem Wasser zu singen, für meine Agnes'), describes the joy that the couple experience together at the heart of nature, and celebrates the rapture of being alive, despite the threat of ephemerality expressed in the final stanza. The song was composed in 1823, when Schubert's syphilis was diagnosed and he became acutely aware of his own mortality. Agnes died, aged 27, which was Schubert's age when he composed this wonderful song. He had four more years to live.

The first half of this gala concert ends with two more settings of Mayrhofer. **Erlafsee** must be one of his happiest poems, notwithstanding the opening line ('So happy I feel, so sad, by quiet Erlaf lake'). Schubert set only 14 of Mayrhofer's 36 lines, ignoring the philosophical stanzas, and concentrating instead on the ones that describe the beauty of the scene and its effect on the poet's soul. Schubert's song, which dates from 1817, was one of his first songs to be published. It appeared in 1818, as a supplement to Franz Sartori's annual 'Picturesque Album for Admirers of the most interesting Sites and most noteworthy works of Nature and Art in the Austrian Monarchy'. **Der Schiffer** describes a boatman confronting and conquering the raging storm, and Schubert rises magnificently to the challenge. The marking is *geschwind und feurig* (swift and fiery) and there is no let up from start to finish, as the boatman/poet seeks to tame the wild forces of nature. Schubert gives almost palpable expression to this mighty struggle in the harmonic clashes at „Ich peitsche die Wellen mit mächtigem Schlag“ ('I lash the waves with mighty strokes') and at the same point in each subsequent verse. He pits the marcato bass octaves against the rapid, flowing semiquavers, and we seem to see the boat's prow scatter the spray heavenward.

Schubert dedicated his **Fantasie in F minor for pianoforte duet** to Countess Caroline Esterházy, to whom he gave piano lessons. That Schubert was in

love with the young princess is confirmed by Eduard Bauernfeld, who writes in his memoirs: Schubert was not without his infatuations. He was head over heels in love with one of his pupils, a young Countess Esterházy, to whom he dedicated one of his most beautiful piano pieces, the Fantasy in F minor for pianoforte duet.

SONGS OF NIGHT AND NATURE

The leisurely and reflective **Der Winterabend** describes a winter evening after sunset. People have returned home from work. All is silent. The narrator sits in his darkened room and watches the moonlight spreading its shimmering veil over furniture and walls. He sits at the window and gazes up at the clouds and stars, recalling the past, his dead wife and love's happiness. He sighs softly, and muses and muses. The hypnotic semiquavers in the right hand were surely suggested by Leitner's line, describing how the fallen snow had draped blankets through the streets. The melismas on the seemingly insignificant „und“ in the final line are absolutely right - for there is no end to the poet's musing, as he survives the long, lonely night by feeding off fond memories. **Bertas Lied in der Nacht** was written by Grillparzer to be sung in the first act of his play *Die Ahnfrau* in January 1817 - it was, however, not incorporated in the text and survives as a separate poem. It is one of Schubert's finest night pieces in which the sequence of quaver Cs produce a wonderfully hypnotic effect. **Im Freien** describes a traveller returning home, overcome with emotion at seeing once more the familiar scenes he had so sorely missed. Virtually an independent piano piece, the voice does little more than double the top line of the piano. The five introductory bars of **Nachtstück** are a wonderful polyphonic nocturne in miniature. An old man, feeling death upon him, steps into the moonlit night and prays for peace. The trees and grasses wish him well, and the song ends with an extraordinary passage which depicts the onset of death, as the music moves from E flat, via D flat, to the tranquillity of C major. Schubert's excitement at coming across Friedrich Schlegel's pantheistic **Waldesnacht** is mirrored in the wild handwriting of the manuscript. The song sweeps along in 214 bars of unflagging inspiration - it is the grandest of all Schubert's nature songs.

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Oliver Casanovas Nuevo

Clarinet

As an orchestral player, Casanovas has been invited to perform with many of the leading orchestra's across Europe and around the world, such as the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Stockholm Orchestra, Swedish Philharmonia, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Dalasinfoniettan, Aalborg Symfoniorkester (Denmark), Madrid Symphony Orchestra (Teatro Real), Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and he had the opportunity to perform the great symphonic repertoire under the batons of conductor such as Esa-Pekka Salonen, Daniel Harding, Manfred Honeck, Krzysztof Urbanski, Michael Sanderling, Teodor Currentzis and Christoph Eschenbach.

Casanovas has also shared the stage with many distinguished soloists, including Martin Fröst, Stefan Dohr, Lars Vogt, Jan Lisiecki, Vikingur Ólafsson, Martin Grubinger, Steven Isserlis, Anna Sofie von Otter, and many others.



In addition to his orchestral endeavours, Oliver has performed as a chamber musician at various esteemed festivals, including Schleswig-Holstein Festival (Germany), The International Chamber Music Festival Vinterfest (Sweden), and Festival Bozen (Italy).

Alongside his engagements as a soloist and chamber musician, Oliver was appointed as principal clarinet with the Orchestra of Opera North in 2023.

Nikola Hillebrand

Soprano

German soprano Nikola Hillebrand is one of the leading sopranos in the new generation of artists. Whilst still at the beginning of her career, she has already appeared at leading opera and concert houses including the Bavarian State Opera, the Glyndebourne Festival, Vienna's Musikverein and Konzerthaus, the Salzburg Festival, Mozartwoche Salzburg, Laeizshalle Hamburg, and the Philharmonie in Cologne with conductors such as Adam Fischer, Fabien Gabel, Stephan Gottfried, Manfred Honeck, René Jacobs, Vaclav Luks, Raphaël Pichon, Andris Nelsons, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Jérémie Rhorer, Alexander Soddy, Robin Ticciati and Franz Welser-Möst.

After studying in Munich, Nikola was engaged at the National Theatre in Mannheim. Since 2020 she has been a member of the Semperoper Dresden, where she has performed roles such as Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Zdenka (*Arabella*), Musetta (*La bohème*), Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*), Ännchen (*Der Freischütz*) and Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), which she sang alongside Jonas Kaufmann as Eisenstein at the Semperoper's New Year's Eve concert in 2018.

Further highlights include Zdenka in Richard Strauss' *Arabella* at the Opernhaus Zurich, as well as her début at the State Opera Hamburg



as Pamina and Adele. This season she gave her début as Kunigunde in Bernstein's *Candide* at the Theater an der Wien as well as giving concerts with the Concentus Musicus and Stefan Gottfried, the Tonkünstler Orchester Niederösterreich under Jun Märkl, the Orchestre National de France under Cristian Macelaru, and with Raphaël Pichon and the Ensemble Pygmalion.

In addition to her opera and concert activities Nikola is a passionate lied singer. She is the winner of the international song competition "Das Lied 2019" in Heidelberg (jury chaired by Thomas Quasthoff). Recently she gave recitals at the Wigmore Hall in London, the Heidelberger Frühling, the Easter Festival in Aix-en-Provence, the Schleswig-Holstein Festival, the Leeds Lieder Festival, the Philharmonie Essen, the Pierre-Boulez-Hall in Berlin, in Stuttgart and Graz.

Joseph Middleton

Piano

Pianist Joseph Middleton specialises in the art of song accompaniment and chamber music and has been internationally acclaimed within this field. Described in the 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 and “a perfect accompanist” by Opera Now.

Joseph enjoys fruitful partnerships 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 Kirchsclager, Dame Felicity Lott, Christopher Maltman, John Mark Ainsley, Ann Murray, James Newby, Mark Padmore, Mauro Peter, Miah Persson, Carolyn Sampson, and Roderick Williams. He collaborates with rising stars from the younger generation and regularly programmes his own series for BBC Radio 3.

Recent seasons have taken him to London’s Wigmore Hall, Royal Opera House and Royal Festival Hall, the Vienna Konzerthaus and Musikverein, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Palau de Musica, Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw, Köln Philharmonie, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, Lille and Gothenburg Opera Houses, Berlin Boulez Saal, Paris Musée d’Orsay, Zürich Tonhalle, deSingel Antwerp, Luxembourg Philharmonie, Bozar Brussels, Tokyo’s Oji Hall and New York’s Alice Tully Hall. He regularly appears at festivals in Aix-en-Provence, Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Munich, Schubertiade Schwarzenberg, Vilarbertran and Hohenems, Stuttgart, Heidelberger Frühling, Frankfurt, Ravinia, Japan, San Francisco, Toronto and Vancouver as well as the BBC Proms. His fast-growing discography on Harmonia Mundi, BIS, Chandos and Signum Records have won him a Diapason D’or, Edison Award, Prix Caecilia as well as numerous Gramophone and BBC Music Magazine Award nominations.



In 2023/24 he returns to the Life Victoria Festival Barcelona with Miah Persson and Dame Sarah Connolly where he was last season’s artist in residence. Further appearances with Dame Sarah Connolly include performances in Seville, Amsterdam, and at the Wigmore Hall. He joins Sir Simon Keenlyside in Cambridge; Louise Alder in Vienna and London; Fatma Said in Vienna, Dortmund, Amsterdam, and at London’s Barbican Centre; Carolyn Sampson in Amsterdam, Zeist, and London; and Katharina Konradi at the Schubertiade in Schwarzenberg, Vilarbertran and at the Wigmore Hall where he also partners Iestyn Davies, Nicky Spence, Mary Bevan, James Newby, Ashley Riches, and Ruby Hughes.

Joseph Middleton is Director of Leeds Lieder, Musician in Residence at, and a Bye-Fellow of Pembroke College Cambridge and a Professor and Fellow at his alma mater, the Royal Academy of Music. He was the recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society’s Young Artist of the Year Award in 2017.

Richard Stokes

Lecturer / Professor of Lieder (RAM)

Richard Stokes, Professor of Lieder at the Royal Academy of Music, is a regular juror at international song competitions. For the operatic stage he has translated *Wozzeck* and *La voix humaine* (Opera North), and *Parsifal*, *Lulu*, *L'Amour de loin* and *Jakob Lenz* (ENO). His books include *The Spanish Song Companion* (with Jacqueline Cockburn), *J.S. Bach - The Complete Cantatas* (Scarecrow Press), *A French Song Companion* (with Graham Johnson) (OUP), *The Book of Lieder* (Faber), a translation of Jules Renard's complete *Histoires Naturelles* in a dual-language edition (Alma Classics) and *The Penguin Book of English Song - Seven Centuries of Poetry from Chaucer to Auden*, now available in paperback. With Alfred Brendel he collaborated on the latter's *Collected Poems: Playing the Human Game* (Phaidon). His translations of Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and *The Trial* have been published by Hesperus Press, and Alma Books published his translation (with Hannah Stokes) of Kafka's *Letter to his Father*. His translation of Helmut Deutsch's *Memoirs of an Accompanist* appeared in the autumn of 2020 (Kahn & Averill) and Faber recently published *The Complete Songs of Hugo Wolf. Life, Letters, Lieder*. Richard Stokes was awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2012 and the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art in 2022.



Roger Vignoles

Piano

Roger Vignoles is one of the most distinguished piano accompanists of our time. In a career spanning five decades he has become recognised throughout the world as a leading exponent of the art of song.

He has appeared at all the world's principal venues and festivals, from the Concertgebouw to Carnegie Hall, and with many of the world's foremost artists, such as Sir Thomas Allen, Barbara Bonney, Christine Brewer, Florian Boesch, Bernarda Fink, Elina Garanca, Susan Graham, Dame Kiri te Kanawa, Angelika Kirchsclager, Dame Felicity Lott, Mark Padmore, Christoph Prégardien and Sarah Walker.

His extensive discography includes a long and fruitful association with Hyperion Records, recently crowned by the completion of the Complete Songs of Richard Strauss. Other notable recordings include Reynaldo Hahn with Susan Graham; Schumann, Brahms and Dvorak with Bernarda Fink; Schubert, Loewe and Krenek with Florian Boesch; Britten and Finzi with Mark Padmore, Fauré, Wolf, Rachmaninov, Chausson and Koechlin with Marie-Nicole Lemieux, and a wide range from Schubert to Cabaret Songs with Sarah Walker.

Recent engagements include an all-Tchaikovsky programme with Sofia Fomina at de Singel Antwerp, recitals in London, Toulouse, Marseille, Stuttgart and Quebec with Marie-Nicole Lemieux, with Roderick Williams in Aarhus, with Michael Spyres at Opéra national du Rhin and La Monnaie, with Christoph Prégardien in Hong Kong, the Netherlands and Madrid, with Elena Copons and Marta Fontanals-Simmons at the Fundación Juan March and several appearances at the Wigmore Hall with Elizabeth Watts, James Gilchrist, Nash



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Ensemble, Julia Sitkovetsky, Nardus Williams and Johannes Kammler. Vignoles had a residency at the Bogota International Music Festival, as well as masterclasses at Tanglewood Music Center, the Marlboro Music Festival, National University of Singapore, the Cleveland Art Song Festival, and the Aldeburgh Festival.

While continuing his busy playing career, Vignoles is deeply committed to working with and coaching younger singers and pianists. He gives frequent masterclasses and workshops in Europe, Scandinavia and the US, where he is a regular visitor to the Juilliard School, Cleveland Institute of Music and the Tanglewood Music Center. He is an Honorary fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge and Prince Consort Professor of Accompaniment at the Royal College of Music.

Originally inspired to pursue a career as a piano accompanist by the playing of Gerald Moore, Vignoles read music at Magdalene College, Cambridge, studied piano and accompaniment at the RCM, and later joined the Royal Opera House as a répétiteur. He completed his training with the renowned Viennese-born pianist and coach Paul Hamburger.

Roderick Williams OBE

Baritone

Roderick Williams is one of the most sought-after baritones of his generation. He performs a wide repertoire from baroque to contemporary music, in the opera house, on the concert platform and is in demand as a recitalist worldwide.

He enjoys relationships with all the major UK opera houses and has sung opera world premières by David Sawer, Sally Beamish, Michael van der Aa, Robert Saxton and Alexander Knaifel. Recent and future engagements include *The Traveller (Death in Venice)* for Welsh National Opera, the title role in *Eugene Onegin* for Garsington, Papageno for Covent Garden, Sharpless (*Madame Butterfly*) for ENO and van de Aa's *Upload* with Cologne Opera, Bregenz Festival and the Netherlands Opera.

Roderick sings regularly with all the BBC orchestras and all the major UK orchestras, as well as the Berlin, London and New York Philharmonic Orchestras, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Cincinnati Symphony, London Symphony and Bach Collegium Japan amongst others. His many festival appearances include the BBC Proms (including the Last Night in 2014), Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Bath, Aldeburgh and Melbourne Festivals.

Roderick Williams has an extensive discography. He is a composer and has had works premiered at the Wigmore and Barbican Halls, the Purcell Room and live on national radio.



© Theo Williams

In December 2016 he won the prize for best choral composition at the British Composer Awards. From 2022/23 season he takes the position of Composer in Association of the BBC Singers.

He performed the three Schubert song cycles around the UK culminating in performances at the Wigmore Hall and has subsequently recorded them for Chandos. Future releases include more Schubert, Schumann in English as well as works by Vaughan Williams.

He was Artistic Director of Leeds Lieder in April 2016, is Artist in Residence for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra from 2020/21 for two seasons and won the RPS Singer of the Year award in May 2016. He was awarded an OBE in June 2017 and sang at the Coronation Service of King Charles III in May 2023 as well as composing a choral work for the event.

Leeds Lieder Young Artists

Laura Coppinger *Soprano*

Laura graduated with an MMus from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), where she held a scholarship, and from Dunedin Consort's Bridging the Gap programme in summer 2023. A versatile performer, she enjoys singing a variety of repertoire from 16th century lute song (having provided recordings for use at Dean Castle, Ayrshire), Lieder, and contemporary song.

A keen recitalist, Laura has given recitals in the Jacqueline du Pré auditorium, Ludlow Assembly Rooms and as part of the New Chamber Opera recital series, amongst others. In 2022 she was a finalist in the Elgar/Spedding Memorial Lieder Competition and achieved second place in the Coro Nuovo Sussex Young Musician competition and the Charles Wood International Song Competition (in addition to winning the Charles Wood Song Prize).

Laura's previous operatic roles include Second Woman (*Dido and Aeneas*) with Glyndebourne Youth Opera, Ninfa (*L'Orfeo*) with Theatron Oneiron, Mabel (*The Pirates of Penzance*), Cunegonde (*Candide*) with Barricade Arts, Baroness Irene (*La Vera Costanza*) with New Chamber Opera, Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) with Oxford Alternative Orchestra, Oasis (*L'Etoile*) at the RCS, Pallas (*The Judgement of Paris*) and most recently the soprano in Schoenberg's *Erwartung* with Orchestra Vox.

Laura particularly loves contemporary music, a passion she has had since performing in the première of David Bruce's *Nothing* as a member of Glyndebourne Youth Opera. Since then, she has performed in several operatic premières, including at the Tête à Tête festival in London.

Laura has been kindly supported by Help Musicians as a Postgraduate Award holder, The Caird Trust, the Sutherland Page Trust and Broadway Arts Festival.

David Palmer *Piano*

Born in 1997, David is a London-based composer and pianist specialising in 20th and 21st century repertoire. He is in demand as a soloist and collaborative pianist and has a particular interest in song. David read music at the University of Oxford, graduating with a first-class BA in 2019. He now teaches undergraduate modules in stylistic composition, arrangement, transcription, and keyboard skills at the University. David studies piano with Ronan O'Hora and Rolf Hind at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, from which he was recently awarded a Master of Performance with distinction and received a Concert Recital Diploma for exceptional performance. He is currently studying on the Artist Diploma course.

David is a member of two contemporary music ensembles: Mad Song and Constellation 15.



He has appeared as a soloist with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama's Ubu Ensemble in Berg's *Kammerkonzert*, Finissy's Piano Concerto No. 3, and Xenakis's *A l'île de Gorée*. Notable 2023 performances include the complete solo piano works of Thomas Metcalf at the University of Edinburgh; Bartok's Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion at TU Conservatoire Dublin; a Saariaho spotlight concert for BBC Radio 3; song recitals at the Broadway Arts Festival, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, and Stoller Hall; various performances with Roderick Williams, Clifton Harrison and the Britten-Pears Contemporary Ensemble at the Aldeburgh Festival; Bartok's *Contrasts* with Andrew Marriner at the GSMD Chamber Music Festival; Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* with Mad Song at the High Barnet Chamber Festival and again at Heath Street Baptist Church; a performance in the St Pancras Clock Tower with Mad Song; and a recital for City Music Society celebrating the 70th birthday of composer Robert Saxton.

David was a 2022/23 Britten Pears Young Artist. He is generously supported by the Norman Gee Foundation.

Èlia Farreras-Cabero

Soprano

Born in 1999, soprano Èlia Farreras-Cabero studied with Elisenda Cabero at the Escola de Música i Conservatori Professional de Sabadell. She is currently studying at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler in Berlin with Britta Schwarz, and has worked under teachers including Wolfram Rieger, Martin Bruns, Christoph Prégardien, Thomas Quasthoff, Lluís Vilamajor and Ulrich Messthaler.

Èlia is a 2024 'Lied the future' scholarship recipient from the Schubertiada, and has performed in such halls as the Konzerthaus in Berlin, the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, el Palau de la Música Catalana, La Faràndula in Sabadell and L`Atlantida in Barcelona.

Lucas Huber Sierra

Piano

Lucas Huber Sierra was raised in Madrid and began his training under concert pianist Eduardo Fernández. He later moved to Germany to study in Cologne and Lübeck with Josef Anton Scherrer and Konrad Elser, earning a bachelor's and master's degree in piano performance with the highest marks.

Over the years, he has received important guidance from artists including Claudio Martínez Mehner, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Anthony Spiri, Thomas Quasthoff, Susan Manoff, Malcolm Martineau and Christoph Prégardien. As a prize winner of several international competitions, he had the opportunity to perform in major European concert halls and record for multiple German radio stations.

Lucas currently studies song accompaniment with Wolfram Rieger at the HfM Hanns Eisler in Berlin, where he also serves as a répétiteur for the singing class of Stephan Rügamer. He is a scholarship holder of the Heidelberger Frühling Lied Academy 2023/24 under the artistic direction of Thomas Hampson and will be part of the 'Lied the future' programme at the Schubertiada Vilabertran this summer.

Èlia Farreras-Cabero and Lucas Huber Sierra's participation in this year's Festival is kindly sponsored by Schubertiada Vilabertran.




Schubertiada

Deirunas Jasiulionis

Tenor

Lithuanian tenor, Deirunas Jasiulionis (Derry) is currently in his final year of his master's at the Royal Academy of Music where he is fortunate to be studying with Susan Waters, Adrian Thompson and Joseph Middleton. Prior to moving to London, Derry was studying with Stephen Robertson at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland from which he graduated with first class Honours, won the Edith Brass prize in Lieder and was a member of Karen Cargill's young artist programme. Some of the highlights also included performing alongside RSNO and Patricia Kopatchinskaja, touring Scottish castles and historic houses, and performing the roles of Idamante (*Idomeneo*) and Monostatos (*The Magic Flute*) at the RCS opera scenes.

London has equally presented Derry with a variety of opportunities. Performing the roles of Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*), Tonio (*La fille du régiment*) and Alfred (*Die Fledermaus*) in the vocal faculty opera scenes as well as participating in internal and external masterclasses with Wolfgang Holzmaier, Ann Murray DBE and John Mark Ainsley were some of the outstanding highlights so far.



Derry is also a member of the Philharmonia Chorus and has performed at venues such as The Royal Festival Hall and the Royal Albert Hall under the batons of Vasily Petrenko, Santtu-Matias Rouvali and Eduardo Strausser. He is currently looking forward to returning to these venues in the following months.

Fang-Lin Liu

Piano

Fang Lin Liu is currently in her final year of her master's degree at the Royal Academy of Music under the guidance of William Fong, after having achieved a first class for her bachelor's. She enjoys taking part in chamber music, working with singers, and has had experience working with dancers.

In 2018, Fang-Lin received a scholarship to commence her bachelor's degree at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) under Aaron Shorr. During her studies in Scotland, she won the Jock Holden Memorial Mozart Prize and performed Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 with the RCS Chamber Orchestra. She achieved second place in a number of RCS competitions: the Governors Recital Prize, the William Leslie Meikle Piano Prize and the Peter Lindsay Miller Prize for Piano Duo.

In 2015, Fang-Lin won the first prize in Los Angeles Gold Star Young Pianist Competition before commencing studies (with scholarship) at the Purcell School for Young Musicians under the tutelage of Tessa Nicholson. During this period, Fang Lin performed at the Fazioli Concert Hall in Italy, the Southbank Centre in London and The Proms at St Jude's Church in London.

She is a keen and ambitious pianist who enjoys collaboration with others, and is eager to continue her musical odyssey.

Anton Kirchoff

Baritone

Lyric baritone Anton Kirchoff commenced his musical journey in his hometown of Cologne at the age of six, starting with the violin. Three years later, he embraced the piano as his secondary instrument and, not long afterward, received his first singing lesson. In parallel to his studies on the violin and piano, he forged a path into the world of music by establishing himself as a boy soprano, discovering in the process a deep love of singing.

One of the pivotal moments that deeply influenced his passion for opera was his role as Miles (*The Turn of the Screw*) at the Cologne Opera. This experience left an indelible mark on his artistic development, fuelling his desire to explore the operatic world further.

Another important part of Anton's musical work centres around Art Song. His deep-seated passion for German Lieder was profoundly influenced by his mentorships with Benjamin Appl, Christoph Prégardien and Robert Holl. In November 2020, he embarked on a partnership with his piano partner Jou-an Chen. Most recently, having received a scholarship, they took part in the music festival LiedBasel where they performed in the final concert of the week. Their special interest lies in developing concert programmes that fuse contrasting works of various composers and offer new perspectives on their interpretation.

In the summer of 2023, Anton completed his bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance with top honours under the guidance of Thomas Laske at the Robert-Schumann-Hochschule in Düsseldorf. During his time in Düsseldorf, his academic pursuits saw him take on roles in productions at the university, such as Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Schaunard (*La bohème*), and Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*), enriching his operatic experience.


Anton is currently studying on the MA programme at the Royal Academy of Music in London, under Susan Waters and Joseph Middleton.

Jou-an Chen

Piano

Jou-an Chen was born in Taiwan. She began her musical training in both piano and oboe. She holds a bachelor's degree in piano solo and pedagogy from National Taiwan Normal University, a Piano Diplôme Supérieur d'Enseignement from L'École Normale de Musique de Paris supervised by Prof. Nelson Delle-Vigne Fabbri and Erik Berchot, and a master's degree in Liedgestaltung (Klavier) from Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln supervised by Prof. Ulrich Eisenlohr. During her studies, she was supported as a scholarship holder by Kawai Klavier, Pacing Art Culture Education Foundation, and Liedbasel (together with baritone Anton Kirchoff).

As a member of the International Certificate for Piano Artists, she received instruction from Jerome Lowenthal, Mikhail Karpov, and Daniel Blumenthal. In addition to playing piano solo, she enjoys playing art songs with singers.



In 2023, she won the first prize in the Internet Liedwettbewerb der HfMT Köln in a duo with soprano Maria Portela Larisch. From 2024, she is an artist of association "Vrienden van het Lied".

Cerys MacAllister

Soprano

Cerys MacAllister is an award-winning soprano from Ireland. In 2021 she graduated from The Royal Irish Academy of Music with first class honours in bachelor's in music performance. There she studied under the tutelage of Mary Brennan and Dearbhla Collins. Cerys is a recent graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in London where she studied under Yvonne Howard and Jonathan Papp.

In 2020 Cerys was a finalist for the Veronica Dunne international singing bursary and in 2021 was a finalist in The Glenarm Festival of Voice and the Gervase Elwes Feis Ceoil final as well as winning first prize in The Nancy Calthorpe competition for French song, first prize for the Joseph Plunkett Cup, first prize in The Vincent O'Brien Cup and Silver Medal in The Soprano solo competition as well as winning the song prize in RIAM'S Irene Sandford competition.

Cerys's opera credits at the Royal Irish Academy of Music include Stephen McNeff's *Banished*, Francesca C'accini's *La Liberazione di Ruggiero* and the international début of Kevin O'Connell's *Dream Catcher*. At RAM she has covered the role of Barbarina (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and performed as First Bridesmaid. She recently made her professional début as The Dew Fairy (*Hänsel und Gretel*) for HGO. Cerys has premièred new works for Antonino Abbate including his new piece *Shall I compare Thee?* with The Londinium Consort. She performed Abbate's *Sail Away* in her recital at St. James's Piccadilly. She has also performed in prestigious venues such The National Museum of Ireland, The RDS, The National Concert Hall Dublin and The Italian Cultural Institute.

André Bertoncini

Piano

André Bertoncini is a Brazilian collaborative pianist specialising in vocal repertoire. He graduated with distinction from a Master of Arts in Piano Accompaniment at the Royal Academy of Music, being awarded The Evelyn German Prize for the highest mark in final recital. In 2023, he was awarded the accompanist prize at the Bampton Classical Opera Young Singers' Competition. Before coming to the UK, he was Assistant

Collaborative Pianist at the State University of Maringá and at FEMUSC.

André holds a bachelor's degree from EMBAP under the tutelage of Prof. Olga Kiun.

Thomas McGowan

Baritone

Originally from southwest London, Thomas McGowan is currently a Sally Cohen opera scholarship holder at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has been studying under Robert Dean since 2021. Prior to his studies at the Guildhall, Thomas was Choral Scholar at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford where he also studied for a BA in music.

Thomas is in demand as an oratorio soloist. Recent engagements include Fauré's *Requiem*, Vaughan Williams's *Dona Nobis Pacem* and *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. Recent competition and prize successes include first prize in the Dorothy Richardson English Song competition and the Wyburd award for Lieder performance (GSMD).


In the summer of 2023, Thomas was a member of the Buxton International Festival Opera Company, performing in Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, and a new musical, *The Land of Might Have Been* featuring arrangements of Ivor Novello's music by Ian Farrington.

Ben Collyer

Piano

Ben Collyer is acting Director of Music at St John's, Hyde Park Crescent and Artist Diploma Student at the Royal College of Music, where he is generously supported by the Newton Scarth Scholarship. He began his musical education at the age of 7 in his local church choir in Stockport. He then started studies at Chetham's School of Music where he studied with Christopher Stokes and Graham Caskie. In 2017, Ben was awarded his ARCO diploma from the Royal College of Organists. In 2018 Ben took on the role of Organ Scholar at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford whilst studying for a BA in Musicology.

As a recitalist, Ben has performed in a number of prestigious venues including L'Église Saint Vincent de Carcassonne and the Royal Opera House in Muscat. In the academic year 2021/22, Ben was Organ Scholar at St Paul's Cathedral where he was involved with a number of prestigious services including the Platinum Jubilee service for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



Ben began his postgraduate studies at the RCM in 2021, studying for an MPerf in Organ Performance. He achieved a first-class degree in his master's course in 2023, and now continues his studies for a further academic year on the Artist's Diploma course.

Upcoming concerts in 2024 include Holst's *The Planets* at the BBC Proms, a tour to Helsinki with the RCM Symphony Orchestra, and a première of an organ piece commissioned for him by English composer Francis Pott.

Anusha Merrin

Soprano

Indian Soprano Anusha Merrin is a native of Kerala and a resident of the Kingdom of Bahrain. She is currently a GREAT Indian Scholar at the Royal Northern College of Music, pursuing a Postgraduate Diploma: Advanced Studies in Vocal Studies and Opera under the tutelage of Elizabeth Ritchie. Her studies are generously supported by the Dame Eva Turner Award, Opera Awards Foundation Bursary, Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation Take-Off Grant and RNCM entrance scholarship. Prior to this, The Peter Heath Award, the Maurice and Jean and the Dame Eva Turner Award supported her Master of Music in Vocal Performance at the RNCM, where she received the degree with distinction. Anusha holds a BA (hons.) in Music from Middlesex University, London and a Diploma in Music Performance from KM Music Conservatory, Chennai.

Throughout her studies, Anusha further honed her craft by participating in masterclasses with Jennifer Larmore, David Owen Norris, Jennifer Hamilton, Benjamin Appl and Patricia Rozario. Some achievements include Finalist of the Dean and Chadlington Festival 2023, Frederic Cox Award for singing 2023, a member of the RNCM Songsters 2022/23, Second Prize at the Joyce and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss 2022, Best Overall Performer in Art Song Festival 2021 with Trinity Laban and KM Music Conservatory, Chorus in *Madama Butterfly* conducted by Sir Mark Elder with the Hallé and in *La Fedelta Premiata* conducted by Natalie Murray Beale at the Royal Opera House, Mumbai.

Her opera roles include Mary Crawford (*Mansfield Park*), Geraldine (*A Hand of Bridge*) and Ida (*Die Fledermaus*). This summer, she looks forward to joining the Buxton International Festival as a Young Artist.

Chunmeng Ge

Piano

Chunmeng Ge, originally from China, began her musical journey at the age of 5. Under the guidance of her teacher, Yuan Feng, a professor at Shenyang Conservatory of Music, Chunmeng honed her skills and developed a deep passion for music. In 2016, Chunmeng was admitted to the piano accompaniment major at Sichuan Conservatory of Music with the top score in Liaoning Province. During her undergraduate years, she delved into the study of piano and violin sonatas, and lieder, discovering a keen interest in collaborative music.

After completing her undergraduate studies, Chunmeng furthered her study in piano accompaniment under accompanist Qi Wang at the China Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Alongside her musical endeavours, Chunmeng undertook studies in German, passing the German B1 Goethe-Certificate examination in 2020. Chunmeng entered the Royal Academy of Music in 2022, where she was awarded a £10,000 entrance scholarship. Currently in her second year, she receives guidance from renowned professors Michael Dussek and Joseph Middleton. Chunmeng has also performed as an accompanist for Prof. Richard Stokes's German repertoire class since January 2023.

Chunmeng has participated in masterclasses given by Hartmut Höll, Susan Manoff and Thomas Steinhöfel at the Royal Academy of Music. Notably, she has performed Fauré's *Cinq Mélodies "de Venise" Op. 58* with mezzo-soprano Angharad Rowlands on BBC Radio 3's In Tune and at the Academy Song Circle concert at Wigmore Hall in January 2024.

Aksel Rykkvin

Baritone

Aksel is studying for a BMus in voice with Prof. Mark Wildman with a full ABRSM scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music. As a baritone, he was placed third in the Joan Chissell/Rex Stephens Schumann Lieder Prize in London in 2023. At the Kathleen Ferrier Society Bursary for Young Singers competition in 2023 he won the Joyce Budd Second Prize and the Norma Procter Song Prize.

Aksel received rave reviews for his treble début album recorded with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the age of twelve. Both his solo albums reached the UK Classical chart top 10.



He performed as a treble soloist at numerous concerts, operas, festivals, on radio and TV in Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. As Yniold in *Pelléas et Mélisande* he was hailed as 'unsurpassable' (ResMusica), and later he impressed in his Paris début at the Opéra Comique as Anthony in *Miranda*.

As a baritone, Aksel has performed as a soloist at festivals, concerts and operas in Norway, Sweden, UK, Austria and Germany.

After his concert at Christian Gerhaher and Gerold Huber's Lied festival at Schloss Elmau in Bavaria, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* wrote he had "a voice as beautiful as milk and blood", and *Deutschlandfunk* radio was "very impressed" and praised his "extremely clear diction". Aksel and his duo partner Zany Denyer were accepted for the five-week summer course "Poetry & Performance of the German Lied" at the Franz Schubert Institute in Baden bei Wien in 2023. Aksel held a solo concert during the Oslo Chamber Music Festival in 2021 and is scheduled to appear again at the festival in August 2024 with songs by Backer Grøndahl and Grieg.

Zany Denyer

Piano

Zany is an award-winning London based pianist, who specialises in chamber music and vocal accompaniment. As co-founder of the award-winning ensemble, Trio Havisham, he has found success with them in various competitions, including first prize at the CAVATINA Intercollegiate Chamber Music Competition at Wigmore Hall in May 2022, and second prize at the Concours International de Musique de Chambre de Lyon in April 2023.

They have won numerous awards including the 2022 Tunnell Trust award, as well as the Musicians' Company Award at Wigmore Hall in February 2023; they are delighted to now be part of their 5-year Young Artists' Programme. They were later invited to be members of ChamberStudio UK's 2023/24 Hans Keller Forum and have recently been chosen as Kirckman Artists for 2024/25.


As a passionate accompanist, Zany enjoys uncovering the intricate world of Lieder with his regular duo partners, and throughout his studies has won numerous accompanist awards including the first prize at the Royal Academy of Music's Schumann Lieder Competition. As a result of these performances, he was invited to become a Samling Institute Young Artist for the 2023/24 season. More recently, he won the Kathleen Ferrier Society's Denis Horner Junior Accompanist prize. He is also a member of the Royal Academy of Music's Song Circle with whom he recently performed at their annual concert at Wigmore Hall.

During his studies, Zany's musicianship has been strongly influenced by several musicians he was fortunate enough to have coachings and masterclasses with. Most notably, these include Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Petr Prause (Talich Quartet), Steven Osborne, Kathryn Stott, Stephen Hough, Philippe Cassard, Piotr Paleczny, Hartmut Höll, So-Ock Kim, The Gould Piano Trio, Trio Karénine, and Trio Gaspard.

Felicitas Wrede

Soprano

German soprano Felicitas Wrede started her studies at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy with Prof. Brigitte Wohlfarth. Since September 2022 she has studied



with Amanda Roocroft at the Royal College of Music as an ABRSM scholar. Felicitas won the second prize as well as the audience prize at the Sollima International Competition 2016 in Sicily.

Felicitas has been fortunate enough to participate in masterclasses with Angela Gheorghiu, Wolfram Rieger, Peter Anton Ling and Joseph Middleton. She has given concerts at venues in Germany including the Thomaskirche, Nikolaikirche, the Gewandhaus and at the Händelfestspiele Göttingen. On the opera stage she has performed as Pamina (*The Magic Flute*), Clomiri (*Imeneo*), the title role in Orff's *Die Kluge* and as Gretel (*Hänsel und Gretel*). She looks forward to being a part of the Atelier Lyrique at the Verbier Festival in the summer 2024.

Abhisri Chaudhuri

Piano

Scottish-Indian pianist, Abhisri Chaudhuri, is currently in her second year of master's studies in Collaborative Piano at the Royal College of Music. She studies under Roger Vignoles and Simon Lepper as a Robert Turnbull Piano Foundation scholar supported by the John Birch Scholarship, and trains with Audrey Hyland and Caroline Dowdle in vocal coaching.

Abhisri graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under the tutelage of Fali Pavri, where she made her début concerto performance of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. She has taken part in masterclasses with highly acclaimed pianists such as David Greilsammer, Susan Manoff, and Lydia Brown. She attended Brel Summer School in France where she learnt from Joseph Middleton and Amanda Roocroft.

Abhisri performed in the summer 2023 at the Nei Suoni Dei Luoghi Festival as both a soloist and collaborative pianist in Udine, Italy. Abhisri recently performed in a concert for the Princess Royal, representing the Caledonian Club in London. She has also worked with Pegasus Opera Company.

Abhisri's awards include the Nora C Leggat Prize for Pianoforte by the ABRSM, Dundee's District Rotary Young Musician, the Tony & Tania Webster Russian Song Prize and the Sir John Leng Silver Medal. She was also highly commended in the RCM Brooks Van der Pump English Song competition and in the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Classical Writers Award, where her work is published on their website.

Biqing Zhang

Soprano

Chinese soprano, Biqing Zhang is currently in her first year of the opera course at Guildhall School of Music & Drama where she holds the Rosemary Thayer Scholarship, studying with vocal teacher Marilyn Rees and coach Linnhe Roberson. Biqing finished her bachelor's degree in vocal performance at Shanghai, Tongji University. In London, Biqing finished her two-year master's in vocal performance at Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

From a young age Biqing has regularly appeared as a soloist on stage. She has performed as a soloist in venues including Shanghai Concert Hall, Shanghai Oriental Art Centre, Barbican Hall and Milton Court in London.

In 2023, Biqing was one of the semi-finalists in the Handel International Competition at St George's Hanover Square. In the same year, Biqing performed in the role of Poppea (*Agrippina*) at Hampstead Garden Opera. More recently, Biqing played as a nightingale (*La Bella Dormente Bosco*) in the Guildhall Autumn Opera. She also performed in the Guildhall Opera Scenes in the roles of Sandman (*Hansel and Gretel*), Ophelia (*Hamlet*) and Lucia (*The Rape of Lucretia*).

Yongqiu Yuan

Piano

Yongqiu Yuan is an accomplished solo pianist, collaborative pianist and répétiteur, whose interests and capabilities span a broad spectrum. She began playing the piano at the age of 10 and received her early training at the Middle School of Sichuan Conservatory of Music in China. She obtained her BMus degree at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she was also awarded the Ensemble Prize.

In 2013, Yongqiu was granted a scholarship to continue her studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, focusing on piano accompaniment. She is an active solo and collaborative pianist who has performed in Wigmore Hall, Milton Court, Blackheath Halls, the People's Palace, and the Corbett Theatre. She has also accompanied the performances of *The Monk and the Lotus* at Tête à Tête Opera Festival and Grimeborn Festival. Additionally, Yongqiu is the official accompanist for the China-UK International Music Festival.

About Leeds Lieder



Leeds Lieder was founded in 2004 by Jane Anthony, in partnership with a group of individuals and Leeds College of Music, to promote the enjoyment, understanding, appreciation, composition and performance of art song.

With relatively few opportunities to hear the art song repertoire in live performance outside London, this gap in the musical landscape provided the inspiration for Leeds Lieder.

Leeds Lieder was inaugurated with a Festival of song in 2005 and there followed a decade of biennial Festivals attracting some of the finest singers and pianists of our time. Encouraged by this success, in 2017 it was decided that the Festival should become an annual event. In between Festivals, audiences are able to enjoy a lively season of concerts and masterclasses presented as co-promotions with our principal partners, the Howard Assembly Room, the University of Leeds, Leeds International Concert Season and Leeds Conservatoire.

The pianist Joseph Middleton was appointed Director of Leeds Lieder in December 2014.

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