



SENIOR RECITAL | PROGRAM IN MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Saturday, April 29th, 2023, 8:00 PM

Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

Nicholas Allen '23

Baritone

Bildungsroman

Songs of innocence and grief

Featuring:

Julia Hanna, *piano*

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment for the Certificate Program in Vocal Performance from the voice studio of Dr. Christopher Arneson.

*The use of photographic, video, or audio equipment is strictly prohibited.
Please turn off or mute electronic devices for the duration of the performance.*

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PROGRAM

RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT
(1936–2012)

***Songs Before Sleep* (2002)**

- I. The Mouse and the Bumblebee
- II. Wee Willie Winkie
- III. Twinkle, twinkle, little star
- IV. Baby, baby, naughty baby
- V. As I walked by myself
- VI. There was an old woman

Duration: 17 minutes (1 – 3 – 4 – 2 – 3 – 4)

KURT WEILL
(1900–1950)

***Four Walt Whitman Songs* (1942/1947)**

- I. Beat! Beat! Drums!
- II. O Captain! My Captain!
- III. Come Up from the Fields, Father
- IV. Dirge for Two Veterans

Duration: 17 minutes (3 – 5 – 5 – 4)

INTERMISSION

MAURICE RAVEL
(1875–1937)

***Histoires naturelles* (1906)**

- I. Le paon
- II. Le grillon
- III. Le cygne
- IV. Le martin-pêcheur
- V. La pintade

Duration: 16 minutes (5 – 3 – 3 – 2 – 3)

CHARLES IVES
(1874–1954)

***Selections from 114 Songs* (1887–1921)**

- I. Remembrance
- II. Walt Whitman
- III. Cradle Song
- IV. The Things Our Fathers Loved
- V. At the River
- VI. Tom Sails Away
- VII. Evidence
- VIII. Songs my Mother taught me

Duration: 15 minutes (1 – 1 – 2 – 2 – 2 – 3 – 1 – 3)

PROGRAM NOTES

RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT (1936–2012)

***Songs Before Sleep* (2002)**

Sir Richard Rodney Bennett had the luck — rare in the 20th century — to be born into a family of classical musicians whose daily life revolved around music making. And in certain ways his output of solo songs with piano seems to perpetuate that childhood world in his cleaving to proverbial rhymes and satirical games rather than texts of deep romantic introspection, and in his preference for generic musical forms and styles rather than radical innovation. Because he has preferred to work with many singers of different kinds rather than developing a life-long partnership with one, his output harbors no unified body of song such as we find in the work of Poulenc or Britten. What it offers, by contrast, is a glittering array of styles prompted by the many friendships and occasions, often domestic, for which he has composed, and characterized by the seemingly effortless professionalism with which that early start imbued every aspect of his multifarious musical life.

These six songs were commissioned jointly by BBC Radio 3 and the Royal Philharmonic Society as part of the New Generation Artists scheme, and first performed by their dedicatee, the bass-baritone Jonathan Lemalu with Michael Hampton at the 2003 Spitalfields Festival. Bennett credits the title and explanation of the ditties and nonsense poems drawn from the *Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* to his sister, the writer Meg Peacocke. Although some of the poems, such as Jane Taylor's **Twinkle, twinkle, little star** have acquired traditional tunes, Bennett comes up with melodies of his own throughout. As usual in his song writing, he prefers to sustain, or to cross-cut, appropriate textures throughout each setting rather than continually to turn aside for detailed “word-painting” — so that, for instance, the bleak propositions of **As I walked by myself** are underpinned by an even pacing of quarter-notes throughout. The only exceptions are the more capricious setting of **Wee Willie Winkie**, and the composite set of **There was an old woman** rhymes comprising the knees-up finale.

— Bayan Northcott (2010)

KURT WEILL (1900–1950)

***Four Walt Whitman Songs* (1942/1947)**

Walt Whitman's collection of poems *Drum-Taps*, published in 1865 as the American Civil War was coming to an end, according to Lawrence Kramer “helped to create a new, modern poetry of war, a poetry not just of patriotic exhortation but of somber witness.” That modern aspect may be one reason why Whitman appealed to so many German composers in the following century, especially exiles from the Third Reich. One such was Kurt Weill, who in late 1941, in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, returned to Whitman's collection *Leaves of Grass*, which he had first encountered in the 1920's. He quickly composed what were published as the *Three Walt Whitman Songs* in 1942. Then, after a trip to Europe, he expanded the collection in 1947 to *Four Walt Whitman Songs* with the addition of **Come Up from the Fields, Father** (an orchestral version was devised subsequently). Weill's wife, the singer Lotte Lenya, told him that the *Walt Whitman Songs* were “the best and most effortless songs you have ever written,” but they received no public performances in his lifetime.

PROGRAM NOTES

The problem, according to some commentators, was the way they blurred the boundaries of popular and cultivated, or maybe American and European styles (although that seems little different from the rest of Weill's oeuvre); or, that, in the songs' original order, Weill seems to read Whitman's verses as pro-war when they were anything but. When they were re-ordered in 1947, however, a more convincing narrative was constructed that stressed the futility of fighting: beginning with a vigorous but ominous call-to-arms (**Beat! Beat! Drums!**), then a lament for the ship's captain's death (**O Captain! My Captain**), followed by the tragic narrative of informing those back home of their son's death and the mother's ensuing grief (**Come Up from the Fields, Father**) and, finally, a dirge for not only the son but the father too (**Dirge for Two Veterans**).

— Laura Tunbridge (2018)

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

***Histoires naturelles* (1906)**

In all Ravel's output, his songs are perhaps the least appreciated genre. Why this is so remains something of a mystery, but it could stem from his refusal to repeat himself, so that there is nothing we can call a typical Ravel song. Of course this refusal applies to every other aspect of his work, but is there something in the psyche of music lovers that prefers songs to be ever so slightly predictable?

With this group of songs, *Histoires naturelles* on prose poems by Jules Renard, Ravel's playfulness tipped over into controversy and the premiere in January 1907 was a noisy affair. His chief crime was to eliminate some of the final mute 'e's, in the popular style of the café concert. In the opening **Le paon**, the peacock's pomposity is undercut by the shortening of "la fi-an-cé-e n'ar-ri-ve pas" to "la fian-cé n'ar-riv' pas." There was even shouting when, in **Le grillon**, as the cricket took a rest ("Il se repose") Ravel's music came to a sudden halt. Equally disconcerting, after the busy-busy movements of the cricket (which some commentators have likened to Ravel himself), is the magical, visionary epilogue in D flat major, where he later admitted he had deliberately allowed his Romantic inclinations to surface. Debussy, who by 1907 was no longer a friend, complained of the "factitious Americanism" of the more light-hearted passages in the cycle, but even he had to admit **Le cygne** was beautiful music. The piano part is marked "very gentle and enveloped in pedal" and the setting of seven sixteenths in the right hand against two in the left makes for effortless progress, quite different from the cricket's precise gestures. Ravel dedicated the song to Misia Godebska, a mover and shaker in Parisian musical circles who was soon to become Diaghilev's right-hand woman, and it could be that Ravel saw her as the swan, gliding smoothly through society with her eye fixed on the main chance.

"Not a bite, this evening," complains the fisherman at the start of **Le martin-pêcheur**. The cool, diamond-like, almost Messiaenic chords do not react (unlike the 1907 audience which here rose to an apogee of outrage) but go their way "as slowly as possible." Here is a music of silence, the singer somehow conveying breathlessness while breathing deeply. Pierre Bernac called it "the most difficult mélodie of the set." But for the pianist the worst moments come in **La pintade**. With its *gruppetti* and shrill, explosive *acciaccaturas*, it looks back not just to *Alborada del gracioso* but to another fowl-piece, "Baba-Yaga" from Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. It makes an entertaining and aesthetically uncomplicated finale to the set, but also displays Ravel's aggressive side.

— Roger Nichols (2009)

PROGRAM NOTES

CHARLES IVES (1874–1954)

Selections from *114 Songs* (1887–1921)

Ives wrote songs through his entire creative life — from *Slow March* for the funeral of the family cat (probably 1887) to *In the Mornin'* (1930), a setting of the Negro spiritual *Give me Jesus!*. This aspect of his art brings us closer than any other to his emotional core. In all he composed around two hundred songs — far more than the famous collection of *114 Songs* he published privately in 1922.

Remembrance (1921) was written in 1906 as a “song without voice” for cornet and chamber ensemble called *The Pond*. Ives once called it an “obvious picture,” and it is an elegy for his father — buried at Wooster Cemetery in his home town of Danbury, CT (where the pond in question lies) — whose expressive cornet-playing was always an abiding memory. The cornet has the main melody, and Ives put words to it on the score. In *114 Songs*, he gave these words to the singer, adding a superscription — two lines by Wordsworth: “The music in my heart I bore / Long after it was heard no more.”

The Things Our Fathers Loved (1917), subtitled “(and the greatest of these was Liberty)”, is one of Ives’s greatest songs, one of his crucial statements about what his music is about, and typically woven from a veritable tapestry of quotations of tunes, including “Dixie,” “My Old Kentucky Home,” “The Battle Cry of Freedom” and “In the sweet Bye and Bye.” The date of composition is significant: Ives thought it was important to remember the values he felt were enshrined in these melodies, as America entered the Great War. Another and more explicit “war song” from 1917 – though entirely unwarlike in character — is **Tom Sails Away**. Here the hallucinatory textures create a haze of childhood memories, shadowed by the consciousness of war in Europe. The popular song “Over there” is referred to in the music, along with “Araby’s daughter” and Ives’s great favorite, “Columbia, the Jewel of the Ocean.” The elegiac close suggests that the kid brother who has enlisted and taken ship for “over there” will not return.

At the River is dated 1916; the text and basic tune come from the revivalist hymn by Robert Lowry, now famous from the setting in Aaron Copland’s *Old American Songs*. Ives arranged this song from the second movement of his Violin Sonata No. 4; there may have been an earlier version for cornet and violins. Note the very free accentuation of the words, which causes the song to end with an “unanswered question” of its own.

Evidence is dated 1910, but here Ives had substituted his own words to what was a much earlier setting (about 1898) of the poem “Wie Melodien zieht es mir” by Klaus Groth (also set by Brahms, in his Op. 105). In this lyric landscape, the onset of night is symbolized in the voice’s drooping, descending phrases.

Songs My Mother Taught Me was written in 1895: the text is a translation by Natalie Macfarren of the Czech poem by Adolf Heyduk that had already been set (rather famously) by Dvořák. Around 1903 Ives made a chamber ensemble version of this song under the title *An Old Song Deranged* — in his “psychological biography” of Ives, Stuart Feder takes this to imply that Ives’s mother Mollie could have suffered from dementia, but there is no hard evidence: the title may have been a passing word-play.

— Calum MacDonald (2008)

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT (1936–2012)

***Songs Before Sleep* (2002)**

texts from *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*

I. The Mouse and the Bumblebee

traditional

A cat came fiddling out of a barn,
With a pair of bagpipes under her arm.
She could sing nothing but fiddle-de-dee,
The mouse shall marry the bumblebee.
Pipe, cat, dance, mouse!
We'll have a wedding at our good house.

Fiddle-dee-dee, fiddle-dee-dee,
The mouse has married the bumblebee.
They went to church and married was she,
The mouse has married the bumblebee.

The cat came fiddling out of the barn,
With a pair of bagpipes under her arm.
She sang nothing but fiddle-de-dee,
Which worried the mouse and the bumblebee.
Puss began purring, the mouse ran away,
And the bee flew off with a wild huzza!

II. Wee Willie Winkie

text by William Miller (1810–1872)

Wee Willie Winkie runs through the town,
Upstairs and downstairs in his nightgown.
Rapping at the window, crying at the lock,
Are the children in bed for it's now ten o'clock.

Hey, Willie Winkie, are you coming in?
The cat's singing quiet songs to the sleeping hen,
The dog's sprawled across the floor, and doesn't give a cheep,
But here's a wakeful laddie that will not fall asleep.

Anything but sleep, you rogue! Glowering like the moon,
Rattling in an iron jug with an iron spoon,
Rumbling, tumbling roundabout, crowing like a cock,
Squealing like I-don't-know-what, waking sleeping folk.

Hey, Willie Winkie, the child's in a creel,
Scrambling off it's mother's knee like a very eel,
Tugging at the cat's ear and spoiling all her dreams,
Hey, Willie Winkie see, here he comes!

Weary is the mother that has a wakeful bairn,
A wee willful mischief that can't be left alone,
That battles ev'ry night with sleep before he'll close an eye,
But a kiss from off his rosy lips gives strength anew to me.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

III. Twinkle, twinkle, little star

text by Jane Taylor (1783–1824)

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle all the night.

When the trav'ler in the dark
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He could not see which way to go
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep,
For you never close your eye,
'Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark
Lights the trav'ler in the dark,
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

IV. Baby, baby, naughty baby

traditional

Baby, baby, naughty baby
Hush, you squalling thing, I say.
Peace this moment, peace or maybe
Bonaparte will pass this way.

Baby, baby, he's a giant,
Tall and black as Rouen steeple.
And he breakfasts, dines, rely on't,
Ev'ry day on naughty people.

Baby, baby, if he hears you,
As he gallops past the house.
Limb from limb at once he'll tear you,
Just as pussy tears a mouse.

And he'll beat you, beat you, beat you,
And he'll beat you all to pap,
And he'll eat you, eat you, eat you,
Snap, snap, snap.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

V. As I walked by myself

text attrib. Bernard Barton (1780–1840)

As I walked by myself
And talked to myself,
Myself said unto me,
Look to thyself,
Take care of thyself,
For nobody cares for thee.

I answered myself,
And said to myself
In the selfsame repartee,
Look to thyself,
Or not to thyself,
The selfsame thing will be.

VI. There was an old woman

traditional

There was an old woman lived under a hill,
And if she's not gone she lives there still.
There was an old woman lived under a hill,
Put a mouse in a bag and went to the mill.
The miller did swear by the point of his knife,
He never took toll of a mouse in his life.

There was an old woman and nothing she had,
And so this old woman was said to be mad.
She'd nothing to eat and nothing to wear,
She'd nothing to lose and nothing to fear.
She'd nothing to ask and nothing to give,
And when she did die, she'd nothing to leave.

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe,
She had so many children she didn't know what to do.
She gave them some porridge without any bread,
Then she borrowed a hammer and knocked them all dead.
She went to the town to bespeak 'em a coffin,
But when she got back they were lying there laughing.
She went up the stairs to ring the bell
Then she slipped her foot and down she fell.
So she got the coffin to herself.

There was an old woman tossed up in a basket,
Seventeen times as high as the moon.
And where she was going I couldn't but ask it,
For in her hand she carried a broom.
Old woman, old woman, old woman, quoth I,
Where are you going to, up so high?
To brush the cobwebs off the sky.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

KURT WEILL (1900–1950)

***Four Walt Whitman Songs* (1942/1947)**

texts by Walt Whitman (1819–1892)

I. Beat! Beat! Drums! (1942)

from *Harpers Weekly* (1861)

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows — through doors — burst like a ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation;
Into the school where the scholar is studying,
Leave not the bridegroom quiet — no happiness must he have now with his bride,
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field or gathering his grain;
So fierce you whirr and pound, you drums — so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow!
Over the traffic of cities — over the rumble of wheels in the streets:
Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses? no sleepers must sleep in those beds;
No bargainers' bargains by day — no brokers or speculators — would they continue?
Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?
Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the judge?
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums — you bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow!
Make no parley — stop for no expostulation;
Mind not the timid — mind not the weeper or prayer;
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man;
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties;
Make even the trestles to shake the dead, where they lie awaiting the hearses,
So strong, you thump, O terrible drums — so loud you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow!

II. O Captain! My Captain! (1942)

from *The Saturday Press* (1865)

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done;
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won;
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
 But O heart! heart! heart!
 O the bleeding drops of red,
 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up — for you the flag is flung — for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths — for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
 Here Captain! dear father!
 This arm beneath your head!
 It is some dream that on the deck,
 You've fallen cold and dead.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still.
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will.
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won.
 Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
 But I, with mournful tread,
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

III. Come Up from the Fields, Father (1947)

from *Drum-Taps* (1865)

Come up from the fields father, here's a letter from our Pete,
And come to the front door mother, here's a letter from thy dear son.

Lo, 'tis autumn,
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves fluttering in the mod'rate wind,
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and grapes on the trellis'd vines,

Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent after the rain, and with wondrous clouds,
Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful, and the farm prospers well.

Down in the fields all prospers well,
But now from the fields come father, come at the daughter's call,
And come to the entry mother, to the front door come right away.

Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous, her steps trembling,
She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,
O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd,
O a strange hand writes for our dear son, O stricken mother's soul!
All swims before her eyes, flashes with black, she catches the main words only,
Sentences broken, *gunshot wound in the breast, calvary skirmish, taken to hospital,*
At present low, but will soon be better.

Alas poor boy, he will never be better, (nor may-be needs to be better, that brave and simple soul,)
While they stand at home at the door he is dead already;
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,
She with thin form presently drest in black,
By day her meals untouch'd, then at night fitfully sleeping, often waking,
In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep longing,
O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent from life escape and withdraw,
To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

IV. Dirge for Two Veterans (1942)

from *Drum-Taps* (1865)

The last sunbeam
Lightly falls from the finish'd Sabbath,
On the pavement hear, and there beyond it is looking,
Down a new-made double grave.

Lo, the moon ascending,
Up from the east, the silvery round moon,
Beautiful over the house-tops, ghastly, phantom moon,
Immense and silent moon.

I see a sad procession,
And I hear the sound of coming full-key'd bugles,
All the channels of the city streets they're flooding,
As with voices and with tears.

I hear the great drums pounding,
And the small drums steady whirring,
And ev'ry blow of the great convulsive drums,
Strikes me through and through.

For the son is brought with the father,
(In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they fell,
Two veterans, son and father, dropt together,
And the double grave awaits them.)

Now nearer blow the bugles,
And the drums strike more convulsive,
And the daylight o'er the pavement quite has faded,
And the strong dead-march enwraps me.

In the eastern sky up-buoying,
The sorrowful vast phantom moves illumin'd,
(Tis some mother's large transparent face,
In heaven brighter glowing.)

O strong dead-march you please me!
O moon immense with your silvery face you soothe me!
O my soldiers twain! O my veterans, passing to burial!
What I have I also give you.

The moon gives you light,
And the bugles and the drums give you music,
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,
My heart gives you love.

INTERMISSION

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

***Histoires naturelles* (1906)**

I. Le paon

Il va sûrement se marier aujourd'hui.

Ce devait être pour hier.
En habit de gala, il était prêt.
Il n'attendait que sa fiancée.
Elle n'est pas venue.
Elle ne peut tarder.

Glorieux, il se promène
avec une allure de prince indien
et porte sur lui les riches présents d'usage.
L'amour avive l'éclat de ses couleurs
et son aigrette tremble comme une lyre.

La fiancée n'arrive pas.

Il monte au haut du toit
et regarde du côté du soleil.
Il jette son cri diabolique:

Léon! Léon!

C'est ainsi qu'il appelle sa fiancée.
Il ne voit rien venir et personne ne répond.
Les volailles habituées
ne lèvent même point la tête.
Elles sont lasses de l'admirer.
Il redescend dans la cour,
si sûr d'être beau
qu'il est incapable de rancune.

Son mariage sera pour demain.

Et, ne sachant que faire
de reste de la journée,
il se dirige vers le perron.
Il gravit les marches,
comme des marches de temple,
d'un pas officiel.

Il relève sa robe
à queue toute lourde des yeux
qui n'ont pu se détacher d'elle.

Il répète encore une fois le cérémonie.

texts by Jules Renard (1864–1910)

Natural histories

I. The peacock

He will surely get married today.

It was to have been yesterday.
In full regalia, he was ready.
It was only his bride he was waiting for.
She has not come.
She cannot be long.

Proudly, he processes
with the air of an Indian prince,
bearing about his person the customary lavish gifts.
Love burnishes the brilliance of his colors,
and his crest quivers like a lyre.

His bride does not appear.

He ascends to the top of the roof
and looks towards the sun.
He utters his devilish cry:

Léon! Léon!

It is thus that he summons his bride.
He can see nothing drawing near, and no one replies.
The fowls are used to all this
and do not even raise their heads.
They are tired of admiring him.
He descends once more to the yard,
so sure of his beauty
that he is incapable of resentment.

His marriage will take place tomorrow.

And, not knowing what to do
for the rest of the day,
he heads for the flight of steps.
He ascends them,
as though they were the steps of a temple,
with a formal tread.

He lifts his train,
heavy with eyes
that have been unable to detach themselves.

Once more he repeats the ceremony.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

II. Le grillon

C'est l'heure où, las d'errer,
l'insecte nègre revient de promenade
et répare avec soin le désordre de son domaine.

D'abord il ratisse ses étroites allées de sable.

Il fait du bran de scie qu'il écarte
au seuil de sa retraite.

Il lime la racine de cette grande herbe
propre à le harceler.

Il se repose.

Puis il remonte sa minuscule montre.

A-t-il fini? Est-elle cassée?
Il se repose encore en peu.

Il rentre chez lui et ferme sa porte.

Longtemps il tourne sa clé dans la serrure délicate.

Et il écoute:

Point d'alarme dehors.

Mais il ne se trouve pas en sûreté.

Et comme par une chaînette
dont la poulie grince,
il descend jusqu'au fond de la terre.

On n'entend plu rien.

Dans la campagne muette,
les peupliers se dressent comme des doigts
en l'air et désignent la lune.

III. Le cygne

Il glisse sur le bassin,
comme un traîneau blanc,
de nuage en nuage.
Car il n'a faim que des nuages floconneux
qu'il voit naître, bouger,
et se perdre dans l'eau.

II. The cricket

It is the hour when, weary of wandering,
the black insect returns from his outing
and carefully restores order to his estate.

First he rakes his narrow sandy paths.

He makes sawdust which he scatters
on the threshold of his retreat.

He files the root of this tall grass
likely to annoy him.

He rests.

Then he winds up his tiny watch.

Has he finished? Is it broken?
He rests again for a while.

He goes inside and shuts the door.

For an age he turns his key in the delicate lock.

And he listens:

Nothing untoward outside.

But he does not feel safe.

And as if by a tiny chain
on a creaking pulley,
he lowers himself into the bowels of the earth.

Nothing more is heard.

In the silent countryside,
the poplars rise like fingers
in the air, pointing to the moon.

III. The swan

He glides on the pond
like a white sledge,
from cloud to cloud.
For he is hungry only for the fleecy clouds
that he sees forming, moving,
and dissolving in the water.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

C'est l'un d'eux qu'il désire. Il le vise du bec, et il plonge tout à coup son col vêtu de neige.

Puis, tel un bras de femme
sort d'une marche, il retire.

Il n'a rien.

Il regarde: les nuages effarouchés on disparu.

Il ne reste qu'un instant désabusé,
car les nuages tardent peu à revenir, et,
là-bas, où meurent les ondulations de l'eau,
en voici un qui se reforme.

Doucement, sur son léger coussin de plumes,
le cygne rame et s'approche...

Il s'épuise à pêcher de vains reflets,
et peut-être qu'il mourra, victime de cette illusion,
avant d'attraper un seul morceau de nuage.

Mais qu'est-ce que je dis?

Chaque fois qu'il plonge, il fouille du bec
la vase nourissante et ramène un ver.

Il engraisse comme une oie.

IV. Le martin-pêcheur

Ça n'a pas mordu, ce soir,
mais je rapporte une rare émotion.

Comme je tenais ma perche de ligne tendue,
un martin-pêcheur est venu s'y poser.

Nous n'avons pas d'oiseau plus éclatant.

Il semblait une grosse fleur bleue
au bout d'une longue tige.
La perche pliait sous le poids.
Je ne respirais plus, tout fier d'être pris
pour un arbre par un martin-pêcheur.

Et je suis sûr qu'il ne s'est pas envolé de peur,
mais qu'il a cru qu'il ne faisait que
passer d'une branche à une autre.

It is one of these that he wants. He takes aim with his beak, and suddenly immerses his snow-clad neck.

Then, like a woman's arm
emerging from a sleeve, he draws it back up.

He has caught nothing.

He looks about: the startled clouds have vanished.

Only for a second is he disappointed,
for the clouds are not slow to return, and,
over there, where the ripples fade,
there is one reappearing.

Gently, on his soft cushion of down,
the swan paddles and approaches...

He exhausts himself fishing for empty reflections,
and perhaps he will die, a victim of that illusion,
before catching a single shred of cloud.

But what am I saying?

Each time he dives, he burrows with his beak
in the nourishing mud and brings up a worm.

He's getting as fat as a goose.

IV. The kingfisher

Not a bite, this evening,
but I had a rare experience.

As I was holding out my fishing rod,
a kingfisher came and perched on it.

We have no bird more brilliant.

He was a great blue flower
at the tip of a long stem.
The rod bent beneath the weight.
I held my breath, so proud to be taken
for a tree by a kingfisher.

And I'm sure he did not fly off from fear,
but thought he was simply
flitting from one branch to another.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

V. La pintade

C'est la bossue de ma cour.
Elle ne rêve que plaies à cause de sa bosse.

Les poules ne lui disent rien:
Brusquement, elle se précipite et les harcèle.

Puis elle baisse sa tête, penche le corps,
et, de toute la vitesse de ses pattes maigres,
elle court frapper, de son bec dur,
just au centre de la roue d'une dinde.

Cette poseuse l'agaçait.

Ainsi, la tête bleuie, ses barbillons à vif,
cocardière, elle rage du matin au soir.
Elle se bat sans motif,
peut-être parce qu'elle s'imagine
toujours qu'on se moque de sa taille,
de son crâne chauve et de sa queue basse.

Et elle ne cesse de jeter un cri discordant
qui perce l'air comme une pointe.

Parfois elle quitte la cour et disparaît.
Elle laisse aux volailles pacifiques
un moment de répit.
Mais elle revient plus turbulente et plus criarde.
Et, frénétique, elle se vautre par terre.

Qu'a-t'elle donc?

Le sournoise fait une farce.

Elle est allée pondre son oeuf à la campagne.

Je peux le chercher si ça m'amuse.

Et elle se roule dans la poussière comme une bossue.

V. The guinea-fowl

She is the hunchback of my barnyard.
She dreams only of wounding, because of her hump.

The hens say nothing to her:
suddenly, she swoops and harries them.

Then she lowers her head, leans forward,
and, with all the speed of her skinny legs,
she runs and strikes with her hard beak,
at the very center of a turkey's tail.

This poser was provoking her.

Thus, with her bluish head and raw wattles,
pugnaciously, she rages from morn to night.
She fights for no reason,
perhaps because she always thinks
they are making fun of her figure,
of her bald head and drooping tail.

And she never stops screaming her discordant cry,
which pierces the air like a needle.

Sometimes she leaves the yard and vanishes.
She gives the peace-loving poultry
a moment's respite.
But she returns more rowdy and shrill.
And, in a frenzy, she wallows in the earth.

Whatever's wrong with her?

The cunning creature is playing a trick.

She went to lay her egg in the open country.

I can look for it if I like.

And she rolls in the dust, like a hunchback.

— Translations by Richard Stokes

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

CHARLES IVES (1874–1954)

Selections from *114 Songs* (1887–1921)

I. Remembrance (1921)

text by Charles Ives (1874–1954)

A sound of a distant horn,
O'er shadowed lake is borne,
my father's song.

II. Walt Whitman (1921)

text by Walt Whitman (1819–1892)

Who goes there? hankering, gross, mystical, and nude;
How is it I extract strength from the beef I eat?

What is man, anyhow? what am I? what are you?

All I mark as my own, you shall offset it with your own;
Else it were time lost a-listening to me.

III. Cradle Song (1919)

text by Amelia Ives (1839–???)

Hush thee, dear child to slumbers;
We will sing softest numbers;
Nought thy sleeping encumbers.

Summer is slowly dying;
Autumnal winds are sighing;
Faded leaflets are flying.

Brightly the willows quiver;
Peacefully flows the river;
So shall love flow forever.

IV. The Things Our Fathers Loved (1917)

text by Charles Ives (1874–1954)

I think there must be a place in the soul
all made of tunes, of tunes of long ago;
I hear the organ on the Main Street corner,
Aunt Sarah humming Gospels; Summer evenings,
The village cornet band, playing in the square.
The town's Red, White and Blue,
all Red, White and Blue;

Now! Hear the songs!
I know not what are the words
But they sing in my soul
of the things our Fathers loved.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

V. At the River (1916)

text by Robert Lowry (1826–1899)

Shall we gather at the river,
Where bright angel feet have trod,
With its crystal tide forever
Flowing by the throne of God?

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river,
Gather with the saints by the river
That flows by the throne of God.

VI. Tom Sails Away (1917)

text by Charles Ives (1874–1954)

Scenes from my childhood are with me,
I'm in the lot behind our house upon the hill,
a spring day's sun is setting,
mother with Tom in her arms is coming towards the garden;
the lettuce rows are showing green.

Thinner grows the smoke o'er the town,
stronger comes the breeze from the ridge,
'Tis after six, the whistles have blown,
the milk train's gone down the valley.
Daddy is coming up the hill from the mill,
We run down the lane to meet him.

But today! In freedom's cause Tom sailed away
for over there, over there, over there!

Scenes from my childhood are floating before my eyes.

VII. Evidence (1910)

text by Charles Ives (1874–1954)

There comes o'er the valley a shadow,
the hilltops still are bright;
There comes o'er the hilltop a shadow,
the mountain's bathed in light;
There comes o'er the mountain a shadow,
but the sun ever shines thro' the night!

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

VIII. Songs My Mother Taught Me (1895)

text by Alfred Heyduk (1835–1923)

Songs my mother taught me
in the days long vanished.
Seldom from her eyelids
were the teardrops banished.

Now I teach my children
each melodious measure;
Often tears are flowing
from my memories treasure.

Songs my mother taught me
in days long vanished.
Seldom from her eyelids
were the teardrops banished.

ABOUT

NICHOLAS ALLEN '23

BARITONE



Nicholas Allen is a baritone and composer from the Princeton Class of 2023, concentrating in Computer Science (B.S.E.) with certificates in Engineering Physics and Vocal Performance. Growing up in Alexander, NY, he took an interest in vocal and choral music from a young age, performing as a soloist with the NAFME All-National Honor Ensemble Mixed Choir under the direction of Dr. Amanda Quist. At Princeton, Nicholas studies voice in the studio of Dr. Christopher Arneson, while also performing and touring with both the Princeton Glee Club and Chamber Choir under the direction of Gabriel Crouch. After completing his bachelor's degree, he plans on working as a research scientist and software engineer at IBM Quantum, with plans to later attend graduate school to study quantum computing.

JULIA HANNA

PIANO



Julia Hanna has performed widely in the New York and Philadelphia metropolitan areas, building an extensive repertoire of solo and chamber music. Currently, she serves as a coach and accompanist at Westminster Choir College. As an accompanist she has also performed and toured with several choirs from the New York area, in which capacity the New York Times has praised her performances as “vivid” and “deft.” In 2018 Julia was honored to be a featured performer in a Philip Glass opera workshop in North Adams, MA.

Photo: Cari Ellen Hermann
