

OXFORD INTERNATIONAL SONG FESTIVAL



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A SHORT STORY OF FALLING

Saturday 14th March 2026, 7:45pm
The Levine Building, Trinity College

Harriet Burns soprano
Ian Tindale piano

With thanks to the President and Fellows of Trinity College

PROGRAMME

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Cheryl Frances-Hoad (b. 1980) | Shipwreck gossip [Old Biddy Brannington] 1816 <i>from Six Songs of Melmoth</i> | Sophie Rashbrook (b. 1987) |
| | star falling | - |
| Judith Weir (b. 1954) | King Harald's Saga Act I - King Harald Act II - St Olaf Act III - The Norwegian Army Epilogue - an Icelandic sage | Judith Weir (b. 1954) |
| Cheryl Frances-Hoad (b. 1980) | The King of France | - |
| Christopher Churcher (b. 2004) | There Will Come Soft Rains <i>from Skysongs</i> | Sara Teasdale (1884 - 1933) |
| | ***** | |
| Maude Valérie White (1855 - 1937) | The Throstle | Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809 - 1892) |
| | ***** | |
| Derri Joseph Lewis (b. 1997) | Three Secret Songs A Girl Power in Silence Nests in Elms | 'Michael Field' - Katherine Harris Bradley (1846-1914) & Edith Emma Cooper (1862-1913) |
| | ***** | |
| Roger Quilter (1877 - 1953) | Ye banks and braes | Robert Burns (1759 - 1796) |
| Muriel Herbert (1897 - 1984) | Renouncement | Alice Meynell (1847 - 1922) |
| Donald Swann (1923 - 1994) | A red, red rose | Robert Burns (1759 - 1796) |
| | The Whale | Michael Flanders (1922-1975) |

OXFORD
INTERNATIONAL
SONG FESTIVAL

SONGS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN



THEANO PAPADAKI soprano
SHOLTO KYNOCH piano

THU 14 MAY, 6PM
WOLFSON COLLEGE



[OXFORDSONG.ORG](https://oxfordsong.org)

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

SHIPWRECK GOSSIP [OLD BIDDY BRANNINGTON] 1816

Frances-Hoad / Rashbrook

On the eve of Melmoth's wedding
the ship with his bride, Elinora,
was due to arrive
but a storm whipped up in the harbour

Melmoth was watching from the cliff
when the boat crashed upon the rocks
The bodies was all swallowed up
Then, in his ear, Melmoth heard a voice:

Will you come with me?
I promise deliverance
And the poor fool agreed

Now he's condemned to wander the earth,
independent of time and space
taking different forms,
but always, them blazing eyes

Wassat? How'd I know all this?
This old letter from Elinora
washed up in a bottle next morning
Bit of damage from the salt-water
But it's yours
for three gold coins.

STAR FALLING

Frances-Hoad (for piano solo) - Inspired by *Versöhnung* by Else Lasker-Schüler

VERSÖHNUNG

Es wird ein großer Stern in meinen Schoß fallen...
Wir wollen wachen die Nacht,

In den Sprachen beten,
Die wie Harfen eingeschnitten sind.

Wir wollen uns versöhnen die Nacht –
So viel Gott strömt über.

Kinder sind unsere Herzen,
Die möchten ruhen müdesüß.

Und unsere Lippen wollen sich küssen,
Was zagst du?

Grenzt nicht mein Herz an deins –
Immer färbt dein Blut meine Wangen rot.

Wir wollen uns versöhnen die Nacht,
Wenn wir uns Herzen, sterben wir nicht.

Es wird ein großer Stern in meinen Schoß fallen.

RECONCILIATION

Into my lap a great star will fall...
We would waken the night,

And pray in tongues
Carved like harps.

We would be reconciled in the night –
So much of God overflows.

Our hearts are children
Who, weary-sweet, would rest.

Our lips want to kiss,
What do you fear?

Does my heart not verge on yours –
Your blood still stains my cheeks red.

We would be reconciled in the night,
If we embrace, we shall not die.

Into my lap a great star will fall.

KING HARALD'S SAGA

Weir / Weir

ACT 1

(spoken)

King Harald's Saga, act one. It is the year 1066. In the royal palace at Oslo, King Harald of Norway recounts his previous triumphs on the field of battle. To a fanfare of trumpets, Earl Tostig arrives from England. Tostig is a traitor. He persuades King Harald to invade England.

Harald

I, Harald, by the grace of almighty God,
King of all the northern lands, mightiest
warrior that ever donned a coat of mail and
held a sharp-edged sword, strongest king
that ever strode a longship's prow and
sailed the restless sea,
Most merciless fighter that ever killed a living man,
Whereas my brother the blessed and holy
man Olaf the saint said: 'Love thine enemies,'
I say: 'Sever their limbs until they cause no trouble.'
When I was young I raided endless Russia,
My ship sailed past Byzantium,
I scourged the Saracen men in Sicily,

I trod the holy ground of Palestine.
They knew my justice on both banks of the Jordan;
Wherever I went, men said:
May his soul abide in Christ!
All around the orb of the world, my name is feared;
By this name am I known: Harald the merciless.

Fanfare

Hail Tostig; tell all, Tostig; tell us your tale, tall Tostig.
Treat us to the truth, tempt us with a truthless
trick, trick us in a trance, tall terse Tostig.
Tell us all, tell us all, talk! all hail! tall hale tell-
tale, talk! tall-tale telling Tostig.

Tostig

Hail, Take, Kill, Win, Sail, Fight, Go; Go.

ACT 2

(spoken)

Act two. It is the middle of the night. King Harald is asleep. He dreams that he is in Trondheim, and meets his dead brother, St Olaf, who warns him that his expedition to England is ill-fated. King Harald is not afraid of dreams; he leaps from his bed and orders his navy to make for England. The ships sail out of the fjord, into the open sea, and out of sight. Harald's two wives bid him farewell.

St Olaf

Sleep Harald, sleep on, I fear that death awaits,
I hear the wolves cry in the mountains,
I see the wolves' jaws red with blood;
I see black ravens, birds of carrion, fly to the west.
I died at home a holy man, to my blessed memory be
true, trusty hero.

Harald

Put out to sea, put out to sea.
Sail far over sea.

Harald's wives

Farewell, Harald. Take care, Harald.
God bless, Harald.

ACT 3

(spoken)

Act three. King Harald's army lands at Scarborough. A messenger reveals that the English army has been sighted in unexpectedly large numbers. The two armies fight at Stamford Bridge in Yorkshire. The Norwegians are slaughtered by the thousand. Amongst the dead is King Harald.

The Norwegian army

We gladly leave for Harald
the land from which we came;
beneath his royal standard,
his courage and his fame.
We gladly fight for Harald,
we plunder and we steal;
our warriors' strength is famous,
our courage and our zeal.
We gladly kill for Harald,
we slaughter all his foes;
first, we beat them to the ground,
and then we –

A messenger

O Sir! O Harald; I bring fateful news. Your army lies in great peril; the sun is bright but the fates are black. We thought to meet no danger; but as we approached the town of York, we saw dust, a cloud of dust, raised by the hooves of horses; and below it the gleam of handsome shields and white coats of mail; and we could see that it was an army, an army of men; and their glittering weapons sparkled like a field of broken ice.

A soldier

Side by side the armies fought.
Shoulder to shoulder their men attacked;
the storm of arrows raged around the king,
and all around the clash of mail, the clang of swords;
men running and falling; the crack of blows,
bright weapons flying, hewing flesh,
grating, glinting, men flinching,
kicking, jolting, flinging axes,
breathless they gash and graze and grate.
No room to move, tripping, falling,
horses rearing, a litter of corpses;
they shove and stab and stab,
raining blows without purpose;
the leaders cannot command,
their shouted orders unheard
in the ripping and crashing.
Now Harald the Norwegian king felt anger and fury;
into the thickest knot of bodies he ran,
fighting two-handed, swinging weapons aimlessly.
Blood pouring, cramp and sweat, shouting, roaring,
cutting down, moving blindly.
Nearby, a man exhausted, fallen in the mud cried:
'Disaster has befallen us! We have been duped!
There was no cause for Harald to bring his forces
westward;
we are all as good as dead!'
At this moment, King Harald was struck in the throat,
And drew his last breath,
his last gasp.

EPILOGUE

(spoken)

Epilogue. Back in Oslo, an ancient Icelandic sage ponders Harald's violent end.

An Icelandic sage

I have seen this all before; ships returning to the harbour unloading not live men, but corpses. Women weeping, children who have never seen their fathers: it seems to happen often, and always they say the same thing:
'Since so many were killed, we will never forget and make the same mistake'; but they do! and it happens again.
Why did Harald bother? He could have stayed at home and made the best of it. I could have told him it would end like this.

THE KING OF FRANCE

Frances-Hoad (for piano solo)

THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS

Churcher / Teasdale

There will come soft rains and the smell of
the ground,
And swallows circling with their shimmering
sound;
And frogs in the pools singing at night,
And wild plum-trees in tremulous white;
Robins will wear their feathery fire
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;
And not one will know of the war, not one
Will care at last when it is done.
Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree
If mankind perished utterly;
And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

THE THROSTLE

White / Tennyson

'Summer is coming, summer is coming.
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again,'
Yes, my wild little poet.
Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.
'New, new, new, new!' Is it then so new
That you should carol so madly?
'Love again, song again, nest again, young again,'
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.
'Here again, here, here, here, happy year!'
O warble unchidden, unbidden!
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
And all the winters are hidden.

THREE SECRET SONGS

Lewis / Field

A GIRL

A Girl,
Her soul a deep-wave pearl
Dim, lucent of all lovely mysteries;
A face flowered for heart's ease,
A brow's grace soft as seas
Seen through faint forest-trees:
A mouth, the lips apart,
Like aspen-leaflets trembling in the breeze
From her tempestuous heart.
Such: and our souls so knit,
I leave a page half-writ –

POWER IN SILENCE

She has the star's own pulse; its throbbing
Is a quick light.
She is a dove
My soul draws to its breast; her sobbing
Is for the warm dark there!
In the heat of her wings I would not care
My close-housed bird should take her flight
To magnify our love.

NESTS IN ELMS

The rooks are cawing up and down the trees!
Among their nests they caw. O sound I
treasure,
Ripe as old music is, the summer's measure,
Sleep at her gossip, sylvan mysteries,
With prate and clamour to give zest of these –
In rune I trace the ancient law of pleasure,
Of love, of all the busy-ness of leisure,
With dream on dream of never-thwarted ease.
O homely birds, whose cry is harbinger
Of nothing sad, who know not anything
Of sea-birds' loneliness, of Procne's strife,
Rock round me when I die! So sweet it were
To die by open doors, with you on wing
Humming the deep security of life.

YE BANKS AND BRAES

Quilter / Burns

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu' o' care!
Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn!
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed, never to return.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine;
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree!
And my fause luvver stole my rose -
But, ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

RENOUNCEMENT

Herbert / Meynell

I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the love that lurks in all delight --
The love of thee -- and in the blue heaven's height,
And in the dearest passage of a song.
Oh, just beyond the sweetest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits hidden yet
bright;
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.
But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away, --
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gather'd to thy heart.

A RED, RED ROSE

Swann / Burns

O my love's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June;
O my love's like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune. —

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in love am I;
And I will love thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry. —

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run. —

And fare thee weel, my only love!
And fare thee weel, a while!
And I will come again, my love,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

THE WHALE

Swann / Flanders

The bottle-nosed whale is a furlong long
And likewise wise but headstrong strong
And he sings this very lugubrious song
As he sails through the great Antarctic Ocean
blue:
Oh why do I swim through seas antarctical, oo,
Freezing cold in every particle, oo?
Some porpoises invited me to come and join
their school
They brought me here and then swam away,
and shouted April Fool!
If I ever catch that school of porpoises, oo,
They won't get no Habeas Corpuses, oo!
I'm lost and alone in a frozen zone and I'm
almost frozen too
A shivering, quivering bottle-nosed whale
The bottle-nosed whale with the flu.
Oh I used to play like a gay Leviathan
Squirting up jets like a soda siphon!
Now every time I try to lift my hanky to my
nose
A great harpoon goes whistling by, to a shout of
'There she blows!'
I like my oceans equatorial, oo,
Where the water's warm and the breeze less
Boreal, oo.
It's Fahrenheit minus twenty-nine, and I don't
know what to do,
A rubbery, blubbery bottle-nosed whale
The bottle-nosed whale with the flu.
The bottle-nosed whale is a furlong long
And likewise wise but headstrong strong
And he sings that very lugubrious song
As he sails through the ocean blue.
Though red your nose, though your toes are
froze,
Though cold it seems to you
Remember the tale of the bottle-nosed whale
Who has not even got his own hot water bot,
The bottle-nosed whale with the flu.

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