

COLOUR REVOLUTION

Friday 20 October 2023 | 7.30pm
Holywell Music Room

Gweneth Ann Rand is generously supported
by **Sir Martin & Lady Elise Smith**

Presented in association with the **Ashmolean Museum**

Gweneth Ann Rand soprano
Simon Lepper piano
Matthew Winterbottom speaker

PROGRAMME

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert

Benjamin Britten
(1913 - 1976)

On This Island, Op. 11

W H Auden
(1907- 1973)

Let the florid music praise
Now the leaves are falling fast
Seascape
Nocturne
As it is, plenty

Thomas Dunhill
(1877 - 1946)

The Cloths of Heaven

William Butler Yeats
(1865 - 1939)

Goethe's Theory of Colours

Olivier Messiaen
(1908 - 1992)

Trois Mélodies

Olivier Messiaen

Pourquoi?
Le sourire
La fiancée perdue

Angel with Lute

Samuel Barber
(1910 - 1981)

Hermit Songs, Op. 29

At Saint Patrick's Purgatory

Church Bell at Night

St. Ita's Vision

The Heavenly Banquet

The Crucifixion

Sea Snatch

Promiscuity

The Monk and his Cat

The Praises of God

The Desire for Hermitage

Seán Ó Faoláin (1990 - 1991)

Howard Mumford Jones
(1892 - 1980)

Anon. Translation
© Chester Kallman
(1921 - 1975)

Seán Ó Faoláin

Howard Mumford Jones

Kenneth H Jackson
(1909 - 1991)

Kenneth H Jackson

W H Auden

W H Auden

Seán Ó Faoláin

Study of Dawn

Claude Debussy
(1862 - 1918)

Proses lyriques, L84

Claude Debussy

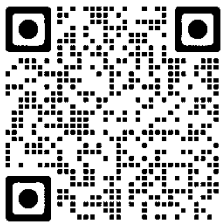
De rêve

De grève

De fleurs

De soir

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

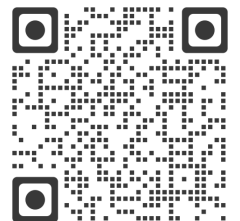


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TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

On This Island

Britten / Auden

LET THE FLORID MUSIC PRAISE

Let a florid music praise,
The flute and the trumpet,
Beauty's conquest of your face:
In that land of flesh and bone,
Where from citadels on high
Her imperial standards fly,
Let the hot sun
Shine on, shine on.

O but the unloved have had power,
The weeping and striking,
Always: time will bring their hour;
Their secretive children walk
Through your vigilance of breath
To unpardonable Death,
And my vows break
Before his look.

NOW THE LEAVES ARE FALLING FAST

Now the leaves are falling fast,
Nurse's flowers will not last;
Nurses to the graves are gone,
And the prams go rolling on.

Whispering neighbours, left and right,
Pluck us from the real delight;
And the active hands must freeze
Lonely on the separate knees.

Dead in hundreds at the back
Follow wooden in our track,
Arms raised stiffly to reprove
In false attitudes of love.

Starving through the leafless wood
Trolls run scolding for their food;
And the nightingale is dumb,
And the angel will not come.

Cold, impossible, ahead
Lifts the mountain's lovely head
Whose white waterfall could bless
Travellers in their last distress.

SEASCAPE

Look, stranger, at this island now
The leaping light
for your delight discovers,
Stand stable here
And silent be,
That through the channels of the ear
May wander like a river
The swaying sound of the sea.

Here at the small field's ending pause
Where the chalk wall falls to the foam,
and its tall ledges
Oppose the pluck
And knock of the tide,
And the shingle scrambles
after the sucking surf,
and the gull lodges
A moment on its sheer side.

Far off like floating seeds the ships
Diverge on urgent voluntary errands;
And the full view
Indeed may enter
And move in memory
as now these clouds do,
That pass the harbour mirror
And all the summer
through the water saunter.

NOCTURNE

Now through night's caressing grip
Earth and all her oceans slip,
Capes of China slide away
From her fingers into day
And th'Americas incline
Coasts towards her shadow line.

Now the ragged vagrants creep
Into crooked holes to sleep:
Just and unjust, worst and best,
Change their places as they rest:
Awkward lovers like in fields
Where disdainful beauty yields:

While the splendid and the proud
Naked stand before the crowd
And the losing gambler gains
And the beggar entertains:
May sleep's healing power extend
Through these hours to our friend.
Unpursued by hostile force,
Traction engine, bull or horse
Or revolting succubus;
Calmly till the morning break
Let him lie, then gently wake.

THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN

Dunhill / Yeats

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths
Enwrought with golden and silver light
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,

I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

AS IT IS, PLENTY

As it is, plenty;
As it's admitted
The children happy
And the car, the car
That goes so far
And the wife devoted:
To this as it is,
To the work and the banks
Let his thinning hair
And his hauteur
Give thanks, give thanks.

All that was thought
As like as not, is not
When nothing was enough
But love, but love
And the rough future
Of an intransigent nature
And the betraying smile,
Betraying, but a smile:
That that is not, is not;
Forget, forget.

Let him not cease to praise
Then his spacious days;
Yes, and the success
Let him bless, let him bless:
Let him see in this
The profits larger
And the sins venal,
Lest he see as it is
The loss as major
And final, final.

Trois Mélodies

POURQUOI?

Messiaen / Messiaen

Pourquoi les oiseaux de l'air,
Pourquoi les reflets de l'eau,
Pourquoi les nuages du ciel,
Pourquoi ?
Pourquoi les feuilles de l'automne,
Pourquoi les roses de l'été,
Pourquoi les chansons du Printemps,
Pourquoi ?
Pourquoi n'ont-ils pour moi de charmes,
Pourquoi ?
Pourquoi, Ah ! Pourquoi ?

LE SOURIRE

Messiaen / Sauvage

Certain mot murmuré
Par vous est un baiser
Intime et prolongé
Comme un baiser sur l'âme.
Ma bouche veut sourire
Et mon sourire tremble.

LA FIANCÉE PERDUE

Messiaen / Messiaen

C'est la douce fiancée,
C'est l'ange de la bonté,
C'est un après-midi ensoleillé,
C'est le vent sur les fleurs.
C'est un sourire pur
comme un cœur d'enfant,
C'est un grand lys blanc comme une aile,
très haut dans une coupe d'or!
O Jésus, bénissez-la !
Elle !
Donnez-lui votre Grâce puissante !
Qu'elle ignore la souffrance, les larmes !
Donnez-lui le repos Jésus !

WHY?

English Translation © Richard Stokes

Why are the birds of the air,
Why are the gleaming waters,
Why are the clouds of heaven,
Why?
Why are the leaves of autumn,
Why are the roses of summer,
Why are the songs of spring,
Why?
Why for me are they devoid of charm,
Why?
Why? Ah, why?

THE SMILE

English Translation © Richard Stokes

A certain word whispered
By you is a kiss,
Intimate and lingering,
Like a kiss on the soul.
My mouth wishes to smile
And my smile flickers.

THE LOST FIANCÉE

English Translation © Richard Stokes

She is the gentle fiancée,
She is the angel of kindness,
She is a sun-drenched afternoon,
She is the wind on the flowers.
She is a smile
as pure as a child's heart,
She is a tall lily, white as a wing,
towering in a gold vase!
O Jesus, bless her!
Her!
Bestow on her your powerful Grace!
May she never know pain and tears!
Bestow peace of mind on her, O Jesus!

Hermit Songs

AT SAINT PATRICK'S PURGATORY

Barber / Seán Ó Faoláin

Pity me on my pilgrimage to Loch Derg!
O King of the churches and the bells
Bewailing your sores and your wounds
But not a tear can I squeeze from my eyes!
Not moisten an eye after so much sin!
Pity me, O King!
What shall I do with a heart
 that seeks only its own ease?
O only begotten Son
 by whom all men were made,
Who shunned not the death by three wounds,
Pity me on my pilgrimage to Loch Derg
And I with a heart not softer than a stone!

ST. ITA'S VISION

Barber / Anon.

Translation from the Irish © Chester Kallman

'I will take nothing from my Lord,' said she,
'unless He gives me His Son from Heaven
In the form of a Baby that I may nurse Him.'
So that Christ came down to her
in the form of a Baby and then she said:
'Infant Jesus, at my breast,
Nothing in this world is true
Save, O tiny nursling, You.
Infant Jesus at my breast,
By my heart every night,
You I nurse are not a churl
But were begot on Mary the Jewess
By Heaven's light.
Infant Jesus at my breast,
What King is there but You who could
Give everlasting good?
Wherefore I give my food.
Sing to Him, maidens, sing your best!
There is none that has such right
To your song as Heaven's King
Who every night
Is Infant Jesus at my breast'.

CHURCH BELL AT NIGHT

Barber / Mumford Jones

Sweet little bell, struck on a windy night,
I would liefer keep tryst with thee
Than be with a light and foolish woman.

THE HEAVENLY BANQUET

Barber / Ó Faoláin

I would like to have the men
 of Heaven in my own house;
with vats of good cheer laid out for them.
I would like to have the three Mary's,
their fame is so great.
I would like people
 from every corner of Heaven.
I would like them to be cheerful
 in their drinking.
I would like to have Jesus
 sitting here among them.
I would like a great lake of beer
 for the King of Kings.
I would like to be watching
 Heaven's family
Drinking it through all eternity.

THE CRUCIFIXION

Barber / Mumford Jones

At the cry of the first bird
They began to crucify Thee, O Swan!
Never shall lament cease because of that.
It was like the parting of day from night.
Ah, sore was the suffering borne
By the body of Mary's Son,
But sorer still to Him was the grief
Which for His sake
Came upon His Mother.

SEA SNATCH

Barber / Jackson

It has broken us, it has crushed us,
it has drowned us,
O King of the starbright Kingdom of Heaven!
The wind has consumed us, swallowed us,
As timber is devoured
by crimson fire from Heaven.
It has broken us, it has crushed us,
it has drowned us,
O King of the starbright Kingdom of Heaven!

PROMISCUITY

Barber / Jackson

I do not know with whom Edan will sleep,
but I do know that fair Edan will not sleep alone.

THE MONK AND HIS CAT

Barber / Auden

Pangur, white Pangur,
How happy we are
Alone together, Scholar and cat.
Each has his own work to do daily;
For you it is hunting, for me, study.
Your shining eye watches the wall;
My feeble eye is fixed on a book.
You rejoice when your claws entrap a mouse;
I rejoice when my mind fathoms a problem.
Pleased with his own art
Neither hinders the other;
Thus we live ever
Without tedium and envy.
Pangur, white Pangur,
How happy we are,
Alone together, Scholar and cat.

THE PRAISES OF GOD

Barber / Auden

How foolish the man who does not raise
His voice and praise with joyful words,
As he alone can, Heaven's High King.
To whom the light birds with no soul but air,
All day, everywhere laudations sing.

THE DESIRE FOR HERMITAGE

Barber / Ó Faoláin

Ah! To be all alone in a little cell
with nobody near me;
beloved that pilgrimage
before the last pilgrimage to Death.
Singing the passing hours
to cloudy Heaven;
feeding upon dry bread and water
from the cold spring.
That will be an end to evil when I am alone
in a lovely little corner among tombs
Far from the houses of the great.
Ah! To be all alone in a little cell,
to be alone, all alone:
Alone I came into the world,
Alone I shall go from it.

Proses Lyriques

Debussy / Debussy
English Translations © Richard Stokes

DE RÊVE

La nuit a des douceurs de femmes !
Et les vieux arbres,
 sous la lune d'or, songent
À celle qui vient de passer
 la tête emperlée,
Maintenant navrée !
À jamais navrée !
Ils n'ont pas su lui faire signe ...

Toutes ! Elles ont passé :
Les Frêles,
Les Folles,
Semant leur rire au gazon grêle,
Aux brises frôleuses
La caresse charmeuse
Des hanches fleurissantes.
Hélas ! de tout ceci,
 plus rien qu'un blanc frisson.

Les vieux arbres
 sous la lune d'or pleurent
Leurs belles feuilles d'or !
Nul ne leur dédiera plus
 la fierté des casques d'or
Maintenant ternis !
À jamais ternis !
Les chevaliers sont morts
 sur le chemin du Grâal !

La nuit a des douceurs de femmes !
Des mains semblent frôler les âmes,
Mains si folles, si frêles,
Au temps où les épées
 chantaient pour Elles ! ...
D'étranges soupirs s'élèvent
 sous les arbres.
Mon âme! C'est du rêve ancien qui t'étreint !

DE GRÈVE

Sur la mer les crépuscules tombent,
Soie blanche effilée !
Les vagues comme de petites folles,
Jasent, petites filles sortant de l'école,
Parmi les froufrous de leur robe,
Soie verte irisée !

OF DREAMS

The night has a woman's softness!
And the old trees
 beneath the golden moon dream
Of her who has just gone by,
 her head bespangled,
Now broken-hearted!
Forever broken-hearted!
They were not able to beckon her ...

All! All have gone by:
The Frail,
The Foolish,
Scattering their laughter on the thin grass,
Casting to the glancing breezes
The bewitching caress
Of their burgeoning hips.
Alas! of all this
 nothing is left but a pale tremor.

The old trees
 beneath the golden moon tearfully shed
Their lovely golden leaves!
No one will plight them again
 the pride of golden helmets
Now tarnished!
Forever tarnished!
The Knights have died
 in their quest for the Grail!

The night has a woman's softness!
Hands seem to brush the souls,
Hands so foolish, so frail,
In the days when swords
 sang for them! ...
Strange sighs rose from
 beneath the trees.
My soul, you are gripped by some former dream!

OF THE SHORE

Dusk falls over the sea,
Like frayed white silk!
The waves like wild little things
Chatter, little girls coming out of school,
Amid their rustling frocks
Of iridescent green silk!

Les nuages, graves voyageurs,
Se concertent sur le prochain orage,
Et, c'est un fond vraiment trop grave
À cette anglaise aquarelle.
Les vagues, les petites vagues,
Ne savent plus où se mettre,
Car voici la méchante averse,
Froufrous de jupes envolées,
Soie verte affolée !

Mais la lune, compatissante à tous,
Vient apaiser ce gris conflit,
Et caresse lentement ses petites amies,
Qui s'offrent, comme lèvres aimantes
À ce tiède et blanc baiser.
Puis, plus rien !
Plus que les cloches attardées
Des flottantes églises !
Angélus des vagues,
Soie blanche apaisée !

DE FLEURS

Dans l'ennui si désolément vert
De la serre de douleur,
Les Fleurs enlacent mon cœur
De leurs tiges méchantes.
Ah ! quand reviendront autour de ma tête
Les chères mains
si tendrement désenlaceuses ?

Les grands Iris violets
Violèrent méchamment tes yeux,
En semblant les refléter,
Eux, qui furent l'eau du songe
Où plongèrent mes rêves si doucement
Enclos en leur couleur ;
Et les lys,
blancs jets d'eau de pistils embaumés,
Ont perdu leur grâce blanche
Et ne sont plus que pauvres malades
sans soleil !

Soleil ! ami des fleurs mauvaises,
Tueur de rêves ! Tueur d'illusions,
Ce pain béni des âmes misérables !
Venez ! Venez ! Les mains salvatrices !
Brisez les vitres de mensonge,
Brisez les vitres de maléfice,
Mon âme meurt de trop de soleil !

The clouds, grave travellers,
Consult over the coming storm,
A background truly too solemn
For this English watercolour.
The waves, the little waves,
No longer know which way to turn,
For here comes the malicious downpour,
The rustling of flying shirts,
The panic of green silk!

But the moon, with pity for all,
Comes to calm this grey conflict,
And slowly caresses his lady friends,
Who offer themselves like loving lips
To this warm, white kiss.
Then, nothing more!
Only the belated bells
Of floating churches!
Angelus of the waves,
Smoothed white silk!

OF FLOWERS

In the tedium so desolately green
Of sorrow's hothouse,
The Flowers entwine my heart
With their wicked stems.
Ah! when shall they return about my head,
Those dear hands,
so tenderly disentwining?

The tall violet Irises
Wickedly violated your eyes,
While seeming to reflect them,
They, who were the dream-water
Into which my dreams plunged, so softly
Enclosed in their colour;
And the lilies,
white pistil-scented fountains,
Have lost their white grace
And are but poor, sickly,
sunless things!

Sun! friend of evil flowers,
Destroyer of dreams, destroyer of illusions,
This blessed wafer of wretched souls!
Come! Come! Redeeming hands!
Shatter the panes of mendacity,
Shatter the panes of evil,
My soul is dying of too much sun!

Mirages ! Plus ne reflourira
la joie de mes yeux,
Et mes mains sont lasses de prier,
Mes yeux sont las de pleurer !
Éternellement ce bruit fou
Des pétales noirs de l'ennui,
Tombant goutte à goutte sur ma tête
Dans le vert de la serre de douleur !

DE SOIR

Dimanche sur les villes,
Dimanche dans les cœurs !
Dimanche chez les petites filles
Chantant d'une voix informée
Des rondes obstinées,
Où de bonnes Tours
N'en ont plus que pour quelques jours !

Dimanche, les gares sont folles !
Tout le monde appareille
Pour des banlieues d'aventure
En se disant adieu
Avec des gestes éperdus !

Dimanche les trains vont vite,
Dévorés par d'insatiables tunnels ;
Et les bons signaux des routes
Échangent d'un œil unique
Des impressions toutes mécaniques.

Dimanche, dans le bleu de mes rêves
Où mes pensées tristes
De feux d'artifices manqués
Ne veulent plus quitter
Le deuil de vieux Dimanches trépassés.

Et la nuit à pas de velours
Vient endormir le beau ciel fatigué,
Et c'est Dimanche
dans les avenues d'étoiles ;
La Vierge or sur argent
Laisse tomber les fleurs de sommeil !

Vite, les petits anges,
Dépassez les hirondelles
Afin de vous coucher
Forts d'absolution !
Prenez pitié des villes,
Prenez pitié des cœurs,
Vous, la Vierge or sur argent !

Mirages! The joy of my eyes
will never reflower,
And my hands are weary of praying,
My eyes are weary of weeping!
Eternally this insane sound
Of tedium's black petals
Falling drop by drop on my head
In the green of sorrow's hothouse!

OF EVENING

Sunday over the cities,
Sunday in people's hearts!
Sunday for the little girls
Singing with childish voices
Persistent rounds
In which good Towers
Have only a few days left!

On Sunday, the stations are frantic!
Everyone sets out
For suburb adventures,
Saying farewell
With frenzied gestures!

On Sunday, trains go fast,
Devoured by insatiable tunnels;
And the good signals
Exchange with their single eye
Wholly mechanical impressions.

Sunday, in the blue of my dreams,
When my thoughts,
Saddened by fizzled fireworks,
Will no longer cease
Mourning for old Sundays dead and gone.

And night with velvet tread
Comes to lull the lovely tired sky to sleep,
And it is Sunday
on the avenues of stars;
The gold-on-silver Virgin
Let fall the flowers of sleep!

Quick! you tiny angels,
Outstrip the swallows,
That you may go to rest
Fortified by absolution!
Take pity on the cities,
Take pity on the hearts,
You gold-on-silver Virgin!

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