

Horn, Voice and Piano - sound and song

Programme Notes

In the first half of this programme we were inspired by the quality of the music and poetry in Cooke's *Nocturnes* for voice, horn and piano with which we begin our recital.

The five songs of the *Nocturnes*, although connected by the night-time setting, present very different scenes and characters. It is interesting to note that the *Nocturnes* ends with a departure on water, which ultimately connects us to the final work of the recital, Schubert's famous song for horn, voice and piano *Auf dem Strom*.

To compliment the evocative *Nocturnes* it seemed natural to bring a lot of English Song repertoire and find poems which further explored the night-time theme. In the two groups that follow, amongst the more famous English Song writers such as Britten and Quilter, are some composers whose songs deserve to be heard more often: Gibbs and Bliss, as well as one American composer, Lee Hoiby, who sets the famous American poet e.e. cummings.

Firstly we explore unreal worlds conjured up by the moon. Two French songs to poetry of Verlaine are framed by an English song which nostalgically remembers an era from the past - moon-inspired and romantic - and an American fantasy - a vision of naive joy.

The final group of the first half begins with the horn solo *Im tiefsten Walde* by Schmid which sets the mood. As evening turns into night, the flora and fauna of the natural world respond by transforming, awakening, bringing magic. In *Now sleeps the crimson petal*, heard here in two settings, the awakening of nature has a personal, romantic meaning, symbolising the awakening of love. Other songs recall the owl from Cooke's *Nocturnes*: creatures in their own night-time realm, briefly glimpsed, overheard, or completely unnoticed by the humans nearby.

The second half of the programme is built around three German Lieder which include the horn: Richard Strauss' *Alphorn*, Lachner's *Waldvöglein*, and Schubert's well-loved *Auf dem Strom*. Our three groups of songs give each of these works a home, surrounding them with repertoire to resonate with their timeless poetical themes. The range of musical styles in German, French and English song allows space to breathe for the classical structures of these three songs.

Many songs in the Lieder repertoire are concerned with irresistible yearnings and quests; seeking answers to unanswerable questions or being urged relentlessly towards something mysterious or unknowable. These urges are often invoked by unworldly sounds and set in large-scale landscapes. Thus these sentiments found in *Alphorn* are complimented by Cornelius' enigmatic *Ein Ton*, Gibb's atmospheric *To one who passed whistling through the night* and Wolf's exciting, epic song *Lied vom Winde*.

Lachner's lyrical music is the perfect setting for the charming poem in *Waldvöglein* – "Oh, to be a happy forest bird rather than a human weighed down with earthly sorrows!" The characters in the accompanying two songs also envy the non-human state - whether to prove one's worthiness as a lover (Schubert's *Liebhaber*) or, in Chausson's *Le colibri*, to indulge in the sensuality of love.

To end our recital we present the great *Auf dem Strom* - one of the most substantial and lovely songs of departure - and we begin this last group with Wolf's *Mir ward gesagt* - one of the shortest, most beautiful and poignant. Roussel may not be as well known a composer as some of his French counterparts, but in *Le départ* you will hear that he is an equal master in song writing, combining a truly romantic sense of the pain of departure with the subtle colours and nuances that we love and expect in French music.

Programme

Nocturnes

I. The moon
II. Returning, we hear the larks
III. River roses
IV. The owl
V. Boat song

Arnold Atkinson Cooke

Alphorn
Ein Ton
To one who passed whistling through the night
Lied vom Winde

Richard Georg Strauss
Cornelius
Cecil Armstrong Gibbs
Hugo Wolf

Neglected moon!
Claire de lune
Fantoches
always, it's Spring

Cecil Armstrong Gibbs
Gabriel Fauré
Claude Achille Debussy
Lee Hoiby

Liebhaber in allen Gestalten
Le colibri
Waldvöglein

Franz Peter Schubert
Ernest Amédée Chausson
Franz Lachner

Im tiefsten Walde
Now sleeps the crimson petal
The fallow deer at the lonely house
The Hare
Midnight's bell goes ting, ting, ting
Now sleeps the crimson petal

Heinrich Kaspar Schmid
Roger Quilter
Sir Arthur Edward Drummond Bliss
Sir Arthur Edward Drummond Bliss
Benjamin Britten
Benjamin Britten

Mir ward gesagt, du reitest in die Ferne
Le depart
Auf dem Strom

Hugo Wolf
Albert Roussel
Franz Peter Schubert

Interval