

Oleg Rostovtsev



Magdalena Kožená & Yefim Bronfman in recital

Monday 20 May 2019 7.30pm, Hall

Brahms Meine Liebe ist grün; Nachtigall; Verzagen; Bei die sind meine Gedanken; Von ewiger Liebe; Anklänge; Das Mädchen spricht; Meerfahrt; Der Schmied; Ach, wende diesen Blick; O wüsst ich doch den Weg zurück; Mädchenlied; Unbewegte laue Luft; Vergebliches Ständchen

interval 20 minutes

Mussorgsky The Nursery – Selected Songs
Shostakovich Satires, Op 109
Bartók Village Scenes

Magdalena Kožená mezzo-soprano
Yefim Bronfman piano

Part of Barbican Presents 2018–19

Frank Stewart



Programme produced by Harriet Smith; printed by Trade Winds Colour Printers Ltd; advertising by Cabbell (tel 020 3603 7930)

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Welcome

A warm welcome to tonight's recital given by two of today's most remarkable artists, Czech mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená and American pianist Yefim Bronfman. Their programme brilliantly demonstrates the sheer range that can be found in a song recital.

We begin with a sequence of Lieder by Brahms, setting a wide variety of poets, including Felix Schumann, son of Robert and Clara. Love is a recurring theme, and in mood they range from the optimism of 'Bei dir sind meine Gedanken' to the desolation of 'Verzagen'.

Mussorgsky's song-cycles are still not as well known as they deserve to be and *The Nursery* sets a wonderfully observed

sequence of acerbic texts, written by the composer himself, centred around Nanny and her young charge Misha.

Shostakovich's *Satires*, written in the 1960s, continue this vein of sarcasm, with subjects ranging from cacti to critics.

We end with Bartók's *Village Scenes*, which illustrate to perfection the composer's ability to take simple texts about everyday events and elevate them in settings that have an earthiness and vigour inspired by his fascination with folk music.

It promises to be a wonderful evening;
I hope you enjoy it.

Huw Humphreys, Head of Music, Barbican

Critics, beetles and nightingales: the art of song

For texts, see page 8

'A thought is much like a seed: it keeps on germinating within you, without your really noticing that it is growing. When I have come up with the beginning of a song ... then I am perfectly prepared to snap my book shut and go out for a walk or start doing something completely different, never thinking back on it for a good six months or so. But it is all still there somewhere or other. When I come back to it again after a long time, then I find that it has taken shape of its own accord, and I can begin to work with it.'

Johannes Brahms

We think of Brahms as a paradigm of the 19th-century classical composer, writing symphonies and concertos, chamber music and a Requiem, though no opera. But that isn't the whole story. We forget how Brahms struggled with the string quartet, once telling a friend that he had discarded enough drafts to paper a room! As for the symphonic music, that came later in his career after he had become an honorary Viennese citizen and felt a need to write for an audience who expected such large-scale orchestral works.

But in one respect Brahms was everything that the 19th century expected its composers to be, though nowadays we sometimes lose sight of this part of his legacy: he wrote Lieder that consciously continued the tradition set by Schubert, whom Brahms greatly admired. At the age of just 23 he wrote to Clara Schumann that he had just heard *Die schöne Müllerin*: 'I have never before experienced such pleasure from hearing Lieder sung as I had yesterday evening. How one immerses oneself in these Lieder and thereby experiences a tremendous amount [having] them sung to you as a group of songs.'

In all, Brahms published some 380 songs for one, two and four voices, about 300 of which are for solo voice and piano. Unlike in, say, Hugo Wolf's Lieder, in a Brahms song the voice leads rather than the piano and there is a sense in which it is the bass part that drives many of them – a nod perhaps to Brahms's then

unfashionable interest in the Baroque and early music. Each song is meticulously constructed, whether it is a simple folk song or something more ambitious. As Brahms's biographer Karl Geiringer wrote: 'If we examine a Brahms song merely from an architectural standpoint, we shall almost always find a symmetrical, beautifully complete, and even form.'

'Meine Liebe ist grün' (My love's as green) is a setting of a poem by Felix Schumann, the youngest son of Robert and Clara Schumann who had both helped the young Brahms to make his way as a musician. Within each of the poem's two short verses, which compare love to a lilac bush, there is daring harmonic variety as the piano part modulates through several keys. The bass line is particularly challenging and features a melody built on broken chords as lush as the perfumed lilac itself. If the right-hand part is full of syncopations it helps the song characterise a young love that is by turns innocent and passionate.

'Nachtigall' (Nightingale) belongs to the composer's maturity with a text by Christian Reinhold Köstlin. It was the poet's daughter Maria Fellingner, a photographer who took a number of portraits of Brahms in old age, who introduced the composer to her father's work. For once Brahms abandoned his preoccupation with folk song for this, his second invocation of John Keats's 'immortal bird ... not born for death', choosing a ripper through-composed texture for the song. In just nine lines, set in the bittersweet key of F minor, it is the bird's song and not the bird itself that moves the composer. But if it's a plaintive call that evokes memories of long ago, the piano part, with its hopping, dotted rhythms, conjures the bird itself.

'Verzagen' (Despondency) was the fourth song in a set of five published in 1877. A dark troubled work that begins with the rushing ebb and flow of the waves. 'I sit by the shore of the raging sea/ Searching there for rest.' And there's naught for our comfort as the waters continue to swirl and the vocal line searches for some manner of melodic closure. Piano and voice are pitted

against each other and the song ends bleakly with an unsettling final chord on the piano.

‘Bei dir sind meine Gedanken’ (My thoughts are with you) is from later in the composer’s career, written in 1883 as part of a set of seven songs. There’s all the eagerness of love here with an almost breathless liveliness in both the vocal line and the piano part.

Brahms composed what is now one of his most popular songs, ‘Von ewiger Liebe’ (Eternal love), in 1864. A boy is walking his girlfriend home. Their love has brought shame upon them. No, says the young woman, this love is tougher than steel. The song begins with a short piano prelude with the melody built out of broken chords, as so often in Brahms’s Lieder. First the scene is described, then we have the boy’s anguish and finally his girlfriend’s reassurance, with each part of the song given its own musical character. The composer creates a miniature drama – exactly what is required of the greatest Lieder.

Gustav Jenner, who studied with Brahms in his later years, reported that the composer once told him: ‘one must compose many a Lied before creating one which serves a real purpose’. And an essential part of that purpose is to transcend the personal – indeed, you might argue that this was always Brahms’s first creative principle. ‘Anklänge’ is an early song, written in 1853, with a text by Joseph von Eichendorff, and the simple story in just two stanzas of a young woman spinning silk for her wedding dress in a house ‘high above the silent heights’ has the feel of a folk song – a reminder of Brahms’s passion for this genre. But it also has that perennial theme that runs deep and is half-concealed in so much of Brahms’s own music – one of unfulfilled love and loneliness. In ‘Anklänge’ it’s solitude in nature and there’s perhaps a distant hint of Brahms’s beloved hunting horns in the piano part.

One of the most featured birds in Romantic culture – the swallow – flies into ‘Das Mädchen spricht’ (The maiden speaks): ‘Tell me, swallow, / Is it last year’s mate / You’ve built your nest with, / Or are you / But recently betrothed?’ This is another song from the composer’s maturity – from his five songs, Op 107. But if the piano part seems to take wing carrying the singer aloft, there is perhaps a hint of sadness in its repeated downward phrase.

‘Meerfahrt’ (Sea voyage) sets a poem by Heinrich Heine and has all the mystery we find

in a Caspar David Friedrich painting, with two lovers out on the ocean, sailing past a mysterious though alluring island. The piano broods at the beginning and end of the song with the voice somehow struggling to find purchase on this musical journey. The song was written at about the time that Arnold Böcklin painted his earliest version of *The Isle of the Dead* in 1880. Is it death that the lovers skirt round on their voyage?

‘Der Schmied’ (The blacksmith) was almost certainly written for Agathe Siebold, a fine amateur singer who might have married Brahms if the composer hadn’t priggishly told her that his music was more important than his or her personal happiness! Here Brahms invents a folk-song melody for a song about a handsome blacksmith loved by a girl watching him at work in the forge. And as we hear the ringing arpeggios in the piano part mimicking the smith at his anvil, there is a neat parallel between his skills and those displayed by the pianist, who would, of course, have been Brahms himself when Agathe Siebold first sang this song.

‘Ach, wende diesen Blick’ (Ah, turn away that gaze) dates from the early 1870s and is a setting of a poem by Georg Friedrich Daumer. Without any preamble voice and piano launch straight into the song and, as the emotional temperature rises, there are flowing arpeggios in the piano part, but always downwards – as if to warn that we are playing with fire here. And is that implied death at the start of the second stanza the only release from the itch of desire? As the final verse explains one of ‘those glances’ could awaken the dead! Then musically we are back at the start of the song. But who can turn away?

‘O wüsst ich doch den Weg zurück’, written in the early 1870s, is a setting of a poem by Klaus Groth who became a friend of the composer’s in 1856. It is the best known of three *Heimweh* songs from Op 63, each of which taps into that vein of nostalgia that runs deep within European Romanticism, a yearning to go back to a time and place that were somehow better. ‘Ah! if I but knew the way back, / The sweet way back to childhood’s land! / Ah! why did I seek my fortune / And let go my mother’s hand?’ Autobiography is inescapable in this song given the extraordinarily close relationship Brahms had with his mother.

‘Mädchenlied’ (A young girl’s song) is the penultimate in a set of seven late songs published in 1884. Brahms takes just two of four verses by

the poet Paul Heyse, whose Nobel Prize citation in 1910 compared him to Goethe, which only intensifies the dark mood of this Lied, one of three that Brahms composed with the same title. Here a young woman imagines waking on Judgement Day and looking for her beloved. 'And if my sweetest doesn't arrive, / I do not wish to be in Paradise.' An almost playful interchange between piano and voice soon gives way to something darker, while the final chord is oddly unsettling.

Brahms once told his friend and mentor Clara Schumann that folk song was the model which a composer should strive to attain, and the resonances of folk songs are never far from any Brahms song. However, his settings of eight poems by Georg Friedrich Daumer are an exception. Written and published in 1871, they nod in the direction of the composer's instrumental music. In 'Unbewegte laue Luft' (Motionless mild air) the peaceful quiet of a summer garden at night is compared with the passionate feelings that the poet experiences within himself. He begs his lover to share these overwhelming feelings; and while the piano part begins by surveying the garden it soon matches the soloist's outbursts with a vital interlude bridging the inner and outer worlds of the song.

'Vergebliches Ständchen' (Futile serenade), written in the late 1870s, has a young man trying his luck with his girlfriend, hoping she'll let him into her house as he serenades her. She's having none of it and the song slips into minor mode as the boy grows more desperate. We're back to the major key when the boy threatens her, saying it's so cold that his love for her will be frozen out of him. But she holds her ground, bidding him a firm good night.

'My music must be an artistic reproduction of human speech in all its finest shades. That is, the sounds of human speech, as the external manifestations of thought and feeling must, without exaggeration or violence, become true, accurate music.'

Modest Mussorgsky

It is possibly the language barrier that has kept Mussorgsky's *The Nursery*, a cycle of nine songs (of which seven are performed tonight) to texts written by the composer, from taking the place that it deserves in the repertoire. After all the wordless

Pictures at an Exhibition in both its orchestral and piano versions is a constant companion in the concert hall and the recital room.

However, perhaps there is another reason why *The Nursery* is rarely allowed downstairs to join the adults, namely the composer's distinctive way with setting texts that strives to reproduce naturalistic speech patterns in the vocal line, an ambition that greatly influenced Debussy when he came to compose his only opera *Péleas et Mélisande*. In a way Mussorgsky's ambition is to set the ordinary everyday to music.

The Nursery was composed between 1868 and 1872 and Mussorgsky originally intended there to be two cycles, with the second to be called *At the Dacha*. However, only two songs from the second series have survived.

'With Nanny', the first song in the cycle, is perhaps the boldest of the nine with both piano part and vocal line aspiring to the condition of human speech. And the child blabbering on to Nanny about its best-loved stories poses a real challenge for the composer, as Mussorgsky strives to match the abrupt changes and emotional slippages that are an essential part of speech. With 'In the corner' Nanny gets into a real bate. Naughty Misha must be punished, but why? It was all the fault of the cat that Nanny's knitting got jumbled up. 'Misha has been a good boy ... Nanny is old and bad ... Misha won't love his Nanny any more.' The mood changes when Misha is beguiled by the big black beetle ('The beetle') that he has found behind the summer-house. If the musical setting has a quirky charm, it's Mussorgsky's insight into the imagination of the child that stands out here and in the next song, 'With the doll', a gently rocking lullaby for a favourite friend. Dolly will dream of 'a wonderful island where no-one reaps or sows' and 'where the juiciest pears flower and ripen'. A child's idea of escape but completely scatterbrained. Time for Misha to go to sleep now, but first he must say his prayers. The list gets longer and longer. Is he trying to spin it out and avoid bed? Nanny is there to keep him on the straight and narrow. 'What else, Nanny? Look at you, what a little rascal! How many times have I told you: O lord, forgive me my sins.'

The last two songs in the cycle give the composer a chance to show us his mettle, not just in the vocal writing but in the piano part too. So there's a lovely bouncy rhythm for 'Hobby-horse rider' and a suitable musical disaster when Misha comes a

cropper. Then in 'Matros the cat' our hero takes up arms on behalf of a bird cornered by his feline pet. Here, as throughout this short cycle, it's the words that lead, with the piano part underscoring the drama and perhaps offering insight into the mind of a child doing ordinary things.

'I'll admit that writing doesn't always come, but I'm totally against walking around looking at the sky when you're experiencing a block, waiting for inspiration to strike you. Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov didn't like each other and agreed on very few things, but they were of one opinion on this: you had to write constantly. If you can't write a major work, write minor trifles. If you can't write at all, orchestrate something.'

Dmitry Shostakovich

At one level Shostakovich's *Satires* can be counted as trifles, but they pack a real punch and are born from that ironic sensibility that we associate with arguably the greatest Russian composer of the last century. They also seem to belong to a literary tradition that goes back to Gogol and other Russian writers, including Pushkin.

Shostakovich chose poems by Aleksander Glukberg, an early 20th-century master of satirical invective who delighted in puncturing artistic pretension and who wrote under the deliberately provocative pseudonym of Sasha Chyorny – Sasha the Black.

These five *Satires* are late works composed in 1960 for Galina Vishnevskaya; and while the critics were less than enthusiastic about the first performance in which Mstislav Rostropovich accompanied his wife Vishnevskaya, the audience was apparently delighted and demanded an encore of all five songs.

Maybe the critics took against the first song, 'To a critic', which warns against 'over-reading' a poem. The almost conversational tone of the start of the song would seem to take its cue from Mussorgsky's ambition to set ordinary speech to music but then melody creeps in and the piano part positively dances in a short postlude after the last laugh of the poem: 'The poet is a man, and even has a beard.'

'The awakening of spring' mocks those who are sentimental about the coming of the Russian spring, turning Rachmaninov's celebrated 'Spring Waters' into a musical joke. But are the piano's leaping arpeggios and the singer's shouts of joy about another 'thaw' perhaps a veiled reference to the political thaw that followed the death of Stalin?

Shostakovich writes an insistent waltz-like accompaniment for 'Descendants'. And one commentator suggests 'this repetitiveness in the piano forces the listener to focus on the text, which blatantly denounces the current regime and expresses disillusionment with the idea of a better future'. Perhaps we should be wary of over-reading the 'I' of this poem and hear the song as a cynical chronicle of the vanity of human wishes.

In the final two songs the first person gives way to the third, and the mood seems to change. But 'Misunderstanding' has equally dark things to say about artistic pretensions and the dangers of desire as a would-be dandy misreads a poetess's verses as an invitation for a fling, with each character carefully delineated – and teased – by the piano which, like the poetess, sends the crestfallen lover off with a flea in his ear.

In the piano part of 'Kreutzer Sonata', the musical joke is on Beethoven even though the song only hints at Tolstoy's novella of the same name. As a plump laundress makes out with a lodger, Shostakovich clearly relishes a joke about social class while living in the classless Soviet Union. "You are of the people, whereas I am an intellectual," he says to her, between kisses.' In other words, he's saying: we understand each other perfectly well, which is why we're here.'

'Folk melodies are the embodiment of an artistic perfection of the highest order; in fact they are models of the way in which a musical idea can be expressed with utmost perfection in terms of brevity of form and simplicity of means.'

Béla Bartók

Béla Bartók finished *Village Scenes* in 1924; and while it has been called an 'occasional' work composed between the *Dance Suite* of 1923 and the Piano Sonata of three years later, it

reveals much about Bartók's preoccupation with traditional songs and how he could use them in his own music. Indeed, this short song-cycle was written when Bartók was engaged in preparing his collection of Slovak folk melodies for publication – altogether some 2,500 melodies. Should we be surprised then that he wanted to share his enthusiasm for this music with a wider audience?

There's clearly autobiography at work in the choice of subjects in the three middle songs of *Village Scenes*, which are about women's lives in a traditional rural community, with a young bride, her wedding and then a lullaby for a child. The year before Bartók began work on *Village Scenes* he had divorced his first wife and married the pianist Ditta Pásztory, who bore him a son called Peter in 1924. And this work is dedicated to Pásztory.

The two framing songs of the five take us outdoors and into the wider life of the rural community with the first about haymaking and the second a dance for the village lads.

Bartók had gathered these Slovak melodies in the Zólyom region of Hungary in 1915 and 1916 and the musical ethnographer in him was particularly attracted to the almost exclusive use of the Mixolydian and Lydian modes in this music and, to be technical, how they featured the interval of the augmented fourth. The working musician on the other hand was keen to rethink his earlier thoughts on how to recompose traditional music. As he noted in a lecture in 1931, 'The melody serves as a "motto" while that which is built round it is of real importance.' The original melody is a starting point not a constant companion on these musical journeys. So in the third movement of *Village Scenes* Bartók combines two very different melodies, one solemn and processional and the other a great deal livelier, indeed cheerful. But the most striking musical moment comes in his treatment of the second melody in 'Lullaby'. As Vera Lampert writes in *The Bartók Companion*, this melody 'is embedded in a gently humming background of triplets. Capturing the magical moment at the threshold of sleep, this arresting part of the score is one of the most beautiful representatives of Bartók's "night music" type of slow movement.'

Programme note © Christopher Cook

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)**Meine Liebe ist grün, Op 63 No 5**

Meine Liebe ist grün wie der Fliederbusch
 Und mein Lieb ist schön wie die Sonne;
 Die glänzt wohl herab auf den Fliederbusch
 Und füllt ihn mit Duft und mit Wonne.

Meine Seele hat Schwingen der Nachtigall
 Und wiegt sich in blühendem Flieder,
 Und jauchzet und singet vom Duft berauscht
 Viel liebestrunkene Lieder.

Felix Schumann (1854–79)

Nachtigall, Op 97 No 1

O Nachtigall,
 Dein süßer Schall,
 Er dringet mir durch Mark und Bein.
 Nein, trauter Vogel, nein!
 Was in mir schafft so süsse Pein,
 Das ist nicht dein, –
 Das ist von andern, himmelschönen,
 Nun längst für mich verklungenen Tönen,
 In deinem Lied ein leiser Widerhall.

Christian Reinhold Köstlin (1813–56)

Verzagen, Op 72 No 4

Ich sitz' am Strande der rauschenden See
 Und suche dort nach Ruh',
 Ich schaue dem Treiben der Wogen
 Mit dumpfer Ergebung zu.
 Die Wogen rauschen zum Strande hin,
 Sie schäumen und vergeh'n,
 Die Wolken, die Winde darüber,
 Die kommen und verweh'n.

Du ungestümes Herz, sei still
 Und gib dich doch zur Ruh';
 Du sollst mit Winden und Wogen
 Dich trösten, – was weinst du?

Karl Lemcke (1831–1913)

Bei dir sind meine Gedanken, Op 95 No 2

Bei dir sind meine Gedanken
 Und flattern um dich her;
 Sie sagen, sie hätten Heimweh,
 Hier litt' es sie nicht mehr.

Bei dir sind meine Gedanken
 Und wollen von dir nicht fort;
 Sie sagen, das wär' auf Erden
 Der allerschönste Ort.

My love's as green

My love's as green as the lilac bush,
 and my sweetheart's as fair as the sun;
 the sun shines down on the lilac bush,
 fills it with delight and fragrance.

My soul has a nightingale's wings
 and sways in the blossoming lilac,
 and, drunk with fragrance, exults and sings
 many a love-drunk song.

Nightingale

O nightingale,
 your sweet voice
 pierces me to the marrow.
 No, dear bird, no!
 What causes me such sweet pain
 is not your notes,
 but others, of heavenly beauty,
 long since vanished for me,
 a gentle echo in your song.

Despondency

I sit by the shore of the raging sea
 searching there for rest,
 I gaze at the waves' motion
 in numb resignation.
 The waves crash on the shore,
 they foam and vanish,
 the clouds, the winds above,
 they come and go.

You, unruly heart, be silent
 and surrender yourself to rest;
 you should find comfort
 in winds and waves – why are you weeping?

My thoughts are with you

My thoughts are with you
 and flutter around you;
 they say they are homesick,
 they are no longer wanted here.

My thoughts are with you
 and do not wish to leave you;
 they say that this is the loveliest
 place on earth.

Sie sagen, unlösbar hielte
Dein Zauber sie festgebannt;
Sie hätten an deinen Blicken
Die Flügel sich verbrannt.

Friedrich Halm (1806–71)

Vonewiger Liebe, Op43No1

Dunkel, wie dunkel in Wald und in Feld!
Abend schon ist es, nun schweiget die Welt.

Nirgend noch Licht und nirgend noch Rauch,
Ja, und die Lerche sie schweiget nun auch.

Kommt aus dem Dorfe der Bursche heraus,
Gibt das Geleit der Geliebten nach Haus,

Führt sie am Weidengebüsche vorbei,
Redet so viel und so mancherlei:

‘Leidest du Schmach und betrübest du dich,
Leidest du Schmach von andern um mich,

Werde die Liebe getrennt so geschwind,
Schnell wie wir früher vereinigt sind.

Scheide mit Regen und scheide mit Wind,
Schnell wie wir früher vereinigt sind.’

Spricht das Mägdelein, Mägdelein spricht:
‘Unsere Liebe sie trennet sich nicht!

Fest ist der Stahl und das Eisen gar sehr,
Unsere Liebe ist fester noch mehr.

Eisen und Stahl, man schmiedet sie um,
Unsere Liebe, wer wandelt sie um?

Eisen und Stahl, sie können zergehn,
Unsere Liebe muss ewig bestehn!’

*August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben
(1798–1874)*

Anklänge, Op7No3

Hoch über stillen Höhen
Stand in dem Wald ein Haus;
So einsam war’s zu sehen,
Dort übern Wald hinaus.

Ein Mädchen sass darinnen
Bei stiller Abendzeit,
Tät seidne Fäden spinnen
Zu ihrem Hochzeitskleid.

Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857)

They say that your magic
holds them inescapably in thrall;
that they have scorched their wings
on your glances.

Eternal love

Dark, how dark in forest and field!
Evening already, and the world is silent.

Nowhere a light and nowhere smoke,
and even the lark is silent now too.

Out of the village there comes a lad,
escorting his sweetheart home,

He leads her past the willow-copse,
talking so much and of so many things:

‘If you suffer sorrow and suffer shame,
shame for what others think of me,

Then let our love be severed as swiftly,
as swiftly as once we two were plighted.

Let us depart in rain and depart in wind,
as swiftly as once we two were plighted.’

The girl speaks, the girl says:
‘Our love cannot be severed!

Steel is strong, and so is iron,
our love is even stronger still:

Iron and steel can both be reforged,
but our love, who shall change it?

Iron and steel can be melted down,
our love must endure for ever!’

Echoes

High over silent heights
a house stood in the forest;
it looked so lonely there,
gazing out over the forest.

A girl sat inside
at silent eventide,
spinning silken threads
for her wedding dress.

Das Mädchen spricht, Op 107 No 3

Schwalbe, sag mir an,
Ist's dein alter Mann,
Mit dem du's Nest gebaut,
Oder hast du jüngst erst
Dich ihm vertraut?

Sag, was zwitschert ihr,
Sag, was flüstert ihr
Des Morgens so vertraut?
Gelt, du bist wohl auch noch
Nicht lange Braut?

Otto Friedrich Gruppe (1804–76)

Meerfahrt, Op 96 No 4

Mein Liebchen, wir sassen beisammen
Traulich im leichten Kahn.
Die Nacht war still und wir schwammen
Auf weiter Wasserbahn.

Die Geisterinsel, die schöne,
Lag dämmrig im Mondglanz;
Dort klangen liebe Töne
Und wogte der Nebeltanz.

Dort klang es lieb und lieber
Und wogt es hin und her;
Wir aber schwammen vorüber
Trostlos auf weitem Meer.

Heinrich Heine (1797–1856)

Der Schmied, Op 19 No 4

Ich hör meinen Schatz,
Den Hammer er schwinget,
Das rauschet, das klinget,
Das dringt in die Weite
Wie Glockengeläute,
Durch Gassen und Platz.

Am schwarzen Kamin,
Da sitzt mein Lieber,
Doch, geh ich vorüber,
Die Bälge dann sausen,
Die Flammen aufbrausen
Und lodern um ihn.

Johann Ludwig Uhland (1787–1862)

The maiden speaks

Tell me, swallow,
is it last year's mate
you've built your nest with,
or are you
but recently betrothed?

Say, what are you twittering,
say, what are you whispering
so intimately in the morning?
Am I right, you haven't long
been married either?

Sea voyage

My sweetest, we sat together,
lovingly in our light boat.
The night was still, and we drifted
along a wide waterway.

The beautiful haunted island
lay dimly in the moon's light;
sweet music was sounding there,
and dancing mists were swirling.

The sounds grew sweeter and sweeter,
the mists swirled this way and that;
we, however, drifted past,
desolate on the wide sea.

The blacksmith

I hear my sweetheart,
swinging his hammer,
it sounds, it resounds,
it peals out afar
like ringing bells
through alleys and square.

At the black forge
my love is sitting,
but if I go past,
the bellows start blowing,
the flames flare up
and blaze all around him.

Ach, wende diesen Blick, Op 57 No 4

Ach, wende diesen Blick, dies Angesicht!
Das Inn're mir mit ewig-neuer Glut,
Mit ewig-neuem Harm erfülle nicht!

Wenn einmal die gequälte Seele ruht,
Und mit so fieberischer Wilde nicht
In meinen Adern rollt das heisse Blut –

Ein Strahl, ein flüchtiger, von deinem Licht,
Er wecket auf des Weh's gesammte Wut,
Das schlangengleich mich in das Herze sticht.

Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800–75)

O wüsst ich doch den Weg zurück, Op 63 No 8

O wüsst ich doch den Weg zurück,
Den lieben Weg zum Kinderland!
O warum sucht ich nach dem Glück
Und liess der Mutter Hand?

O wie mich sehnet auszuruhn,
Von keinem Streben aufgeweckt,
Die müden Augen zuzutun,
Von Liebe sanft bedeckt!

Und nichts zu forschen, nichts zu spähn,
Und nur zu träumen leicht und lind;
Der Zeiten Wandel nicht zu sehn,
Zum zweiten Mal ein Kind!

O zeigt mir doch den Weg zurück,
Den lieben Weg zum Kinderland!
Vergebens such ich nach dem Glück,
Ringsum ist öder Strand!

Klaus Groth (1819–99)

Mädchenlied, Op 95 No 6

Am jüngsten Tag ich aufersteh'
Und gleich nach meinem Liebsten seh',
Und wenn ich ihn nicht finden kann,
Leg' wieder mich zum Schlafen dann.

O Herzeleid, du Ewigkeit!
Selbänder nur ist Seligkeit!
Und kommt mein Liebster nicht hinein,
Mag nicht im Paradiese sein!

Paul Heyse (1830–1914)

Ah, turn away that gaze

Ah, turn away that gaze, that face!
Do not fill my inmost being with ever-new fire,
with ever-new grief!

When once my tormented soul finds rest,
and my hot blood no longer courses
through my veins so wildly, so feverishly –

A single fleeting ray of your light
would reawaken the entire rage of pain
that stings my heart like a serpent.

Ah! if I but knew the way back,

Ah! if I but knew the way back,
the sweet way back to childhood's land!
Ah! why did I seek my fortune
and let go my mother's hand?

Ah! how I long for utter rest,
not to be roused by any striving,
long to close my weary eyes,
gently shrouded by love!

And search for nothing, watch for nothing,
dream only light and gentle dreams,
not to see the times change,
to be a child a second time!

Ah! show me that way back,
the sweet way back to childhood's land!
I seek happiness in vain,
ringed round by barren shores.

A young girl's song

On Judgement Day I'll rise up
and look at once for my sweetest love,
and if I cannot find him,
I'll lie down and go to sleep again.

O heartache! Eternal heartache!
To be with another is the only bliss!
And if my sweetest doesn't arrive,
I do not wish to be in Paradise!

Unbewegte laue Luft, Op 57 No 8

Unbewegte laue Luft,
Tiefe Ruhe der Natur,
Durch die stille Gartennacht
Plätschert die Fontäne nur,
Aber im Gemüte schwillt
Heissere Begierde mir,
Aber in der Ader quillt
Leben und verlangt nach Leben.
Sollten nicht auch deine Brust
Sehnlichere Wünsche heben?
Sollte meiner Seele Ruf
Nicht die deine tief durchbeben?
Leise mit dem Ätherfuss
Säume nicht daher zu schweben!
Komm, o komm, damit wir uns
Himmlische Genüge geben!

Georg Friedrich Daumer

Vergebliches Ständchen, Op 84 No 4

He
Guten Abend, mein Schatz,
Guten Abend, mein Kind!
Ich komm aus Lieb zu dir,
Ach, mach mir auf die Tür,
Mach mir auf die Tür!

She

Mein Tür ist verschlossen,
Ich lass dich nicht ein;
Mutter, die rät mir klug,
Wärst du herein mit Fug,
Wärs mit mir vorbei!

He

So kalt ist die Nacht,
So eisig der Wind,
Dass mir das Herz erfriert,
Mein Lieb erlöschen wird;
Öffne mir, mein Kind!

She

Löschet dein Lieb,
Lass sie löschen nur!
Löschet sie immerzu,
Geh heim zu Bett, zur Ruh,
Gute Nacht, mein Knab!

Anonymous

interval 20 minutes

Motionless mild air

Motionless mild air,
nature deep at rest,
through the still garden night
only the fountain splashes,
but my soul swells
with a more ardent desire,
life surges in my veins
and yearns for life.
Should not your breast too
heave with more passionate longing?
Should not the cry of my soul
quiver deeply through your own?
Softly on ethereal feet
glide to me, do not delay!
Come, ah! come, that we might
give each other heavenly satisfaction!

Futile serenade

Good evening, my sweetheart,
good evening, my child!
I come because I love you,
ah! open up your door to me,
open up your door!

My door's locked,
I won't let you in;
mother gave me good advice,
if you were allowed in,
all would be over with me!

The night's so cold,
the wind's so icy,
my heart is freezing,
my love will go out;
open up, my child!

If your love goes out,
then let it go out!
if it keeps going out,
then go home to bed and go to sleep,
good night, my lad!

Translations © Richard Stokes

Modest Mussorgsky (1839–81)**The Nursery****S Nyaney**

Rasskazhi mne, Nyanyushka,
 Rasskazhi mne, milaya,
 Pro tovo, pro buku strashnovo;
 Kak tot buka po lesam brodil,
 Kak tot buka v les detey nosil,
 I kak griz on ikh beliyе kostochki,
 I kak deti te krichali, plakali.

Nyanyushka! Ved za to ikh,
 Detey-to, buka syel,
 Chto obideli nyanyu staruyu,
 Papu s mamoy neposlushali;
 Ved za to on syel ikh
 Nyanyushka?

Ili vot chto;
 Rasskazhi mne luchshe pro tsarya s tsaritsey,
 Chto za morem zhili v teremu bogatom.
 Yeshchyo tsar vsyo na nogu khromal;
 Kak spotknetsya tak grib virastet.
 U tsaritsi-to vsyo nasmork bil,
 Kak chikhnyot styokla vdrebezgi!

Znayesh, Nyanyushka,
 Ti pro buku-to uzh ne rasskazivay.
 Bog s nim, s bukoy!
 Rasskazhi mne, Nyanya,
 Tu smeshnuyu-to!

V uglu

Akh ti, prokaznik!
 Klubok razmotal,
 Pruki rasteryal!
 Akh-ti! Vse petli spustil!
 Chulok ves zu brizgal chernilami!
 V ugol! V ugol!
 Poshol v ugol! Prokaznik!
 Ya nichevo ne sdela, Nyanyushka,
 Ya chulochek ne trogal, Nyanyushka!
 Klubochek razmotal kotyonochek,

I prutochki razbrosal kotyonochek.
 A Mishenka bil painka,
 Mishenka bil umnista.
 A Nyanya zlaya, staraya,
 U Nyani nosik-to zapachkanniy;
 Misha chistenkiy, prichosanniy,

A u Nyani chepchik, na boku.
 Nyanya Mishenku obidela,

With Nanny

Tell me please, Nanny, tell me,
 all about the dreadful bogey-man:
 how the bogey-man roamed about the woods,
 how he carried children off into the forest,
 and how he gnawed at their little white bones,
 and how the children cried
 and screamed aloud!

Nanny dear! Surely the reason
 the bogey-man ate the children
 is because they were bad to their old nanny,
 they didn't listen to their daddy and mummy;
 wasn't that why he ate them,
 Nanny dear?

Or perhaps, instead,
 you could tell me about the King and Queen,
 who lived beside the sea in a splendid castle?
 Yet the King was very lame, and wherever
 he stumbled mushrooms grew up.
 And the Queen always had a cold in the head,
 and when she sneezed the glasses were smashed
 to bits!

You know, Nanny dear,
 don't tell me anything about the bogey-man.
 Let's forget all about him!
 Tell me a story, Nanny,
 that will make me laugh!

In the corner

Oh, you little rascal!
 You've unwound my ball of wool,
 and you've lost my needles!
 Oh dear! You've dropped all the stitches!
 And the stocking's all splattered with ink!
 Into the corner! Into the corner!
 Go stand in the corner! You rascal!
 I didn't do anything, Nanny dear.
 I didn't touch the little stocking, Nanny dear.
 It was the kitten who unwound your little ball of
 wool,
 and the kitten who pulled your little needles out.
 But little Misha has been a good boy,
 little Misha has been a clever boy.
 And Nanny is old and bad,
 and Nanny has a dirty nose.
 Misha is a clean little boy, and his hair is neatly
 combed,
 but Nanny's cap is all crooked.
 Nanny has been bad to little Misha,

Napresno v ugol postavila;
Misha bolshe ne budet lyubit' svoyu Nyanyushku
Vot chto!

Zhuk

Nyanya, nyanyushka!
Chto sluchilos, Nyanya, dushenka!
Ya igral tam na pesochke za besedkoy,
Gde beryozki,
Stroil domik iz luchinockek klenovikh, tekh,

Chto mne Mama, sama Mama nashchipala.
Domik uzh so vsem postroil
Domik so krishkoy,
Nastoyashchiy domik. Vdrug!

Na samoy krishke zhuk,
Sidit ogromniy,
Chorniy, tolstiy takoy.
Usami shevelit
Strashno tak
I pryamo na menya vsyo smotrit!

Ispugalsya ya!
A zhuk gudit, zlitsya,
Krilya rastopiril skhvatiit' menya khochet.
I natelel, v visochek menya udaril!

Ya pritailsya, Nyanyushka,
Prisel, boyus poshevelnutsya!
Tolko glazok odin chut-chut otrkil!
I chto zhe?
Poslushay, Nyanyushka.

Zhut lezhit, slozhivshi lapki,
Kverkhu nosikom, na spinke,
I uzh ne zlitsya,
I usami ne shevelit,
I ne gudit uzh,
Tolko krilshki drozhat!
Chto zh on, umer?
Il pritvorilsya?
Chto zh eto,
Chto-zhe, skazhi mne, Nyanya,
S zhukom-to stalos?

Menya udaril,
A sam svalilsay!
Chto zh eto s nim stalos, s zhukom-to?

Skukloy

Tyapa, bay, bay, Tyapa,
Spi, usni, ugomon tebya vozmi!
Tyapa, spat' nado Tyapa, spi, usni!
Tyapa, buka syest,

to make him stand in the corner for nothing.
And Misha won't love his Nanny any more,
so there!

The beetle

Nanny, Nanny dear!
Here's what happened, Nanny darling!
I was playing out there in the sand behind
the summer-house, near the birch trees,
and I was building a little house out of little strips
of maple –
the bits that Mama herself picked out for me.
The little house was just finished,
a little house with a roof as well –
a real little house. But – then!

Right on the roof of my house
sat a beetle,
huge, and black, and very fat.
He bristled his moustaches –
it was awful –
and he glared straight at me!

I was terrified! Then the beetle buzzed,
and lost his temper;
he spread his wings,
and made straight for me!

I kept very still, Nanny dear,
I cowered there, afraid to move an inch!
Only one eye I opened a very little,
and what do you think?
Listen, Nanny dear!

The beetle was lying with his legs folded,
with his feet in the air, on his back,
and he wasn't angry any more,
and he wasn't bristling his moustaches,
and he wasn't even buzzing,
only his little wings were quivering.
Do you think he was dead?
Or just stunned a little?
What do you think, Nanny,
tell me please,
what has happened to the beetle?

He came and hit me,
but he knocked himself out!
What has happened to him, to that beetle?

With the doll

Dolly, bye-bye, Dolly,
go to sleep, settle down quietly!
Dolly, you have to sleep, Dolly go to sleep!
The bogey-man will eat Dolly,

Seriy volk vozmyot,
V yomniy les snesyot!

Tyapa, spi, usni,
Chto vo sne uvidish,
Mne pro to rasskazhesh;
Pro ostrov chudniy,
Gde ni zhnut, ni seyut,
Gde tsvetut i zreyut grushi nalivniye,
Den i noch poyut ptichki zolotiye!

Bay, bay, bayu, bay, bay, bay, Tyapa!

Nasongryadushchiy

Gospodi, pomiluy Papu i Mamu
I spasi ikh Gospodi!
Gospodi, pomiluy brattsa Vasenku
I brattsa Mishenku.
Gospodi, pomiluy Babushku starenkuyu,
Poshli ti yey dobroye zdorovitse –
Babushke dobrenkoy,
Babushke starenkoy; Gospodi!
I spasi, bozhe nash: tyoty Katyu,
Tyoty Natashu, tyoty Mashu, tyoty Parashu,

Tyotey Lyubu, Varyu i Sashu,
I Olyu, i Tanyu, i Nadyu;
Dyadey Petyu i Kolyu,
Dyadey Volodyu, i Grishu, i Sashu,
I vsekh ikh, Gospodi,
Spasi, i pomiluy.
I Filku, i Vanku, i Mitku, i Petku,
I Dashu, Pashu, Sonyu, Dunyushku ...
Nyanya, a Nyanya!
Kak dalshe, Nyanya?
Vish ti, prokaznitsa kakaya!
Uzh skolko raz uchila:
Gospodi, pomiluy i menya greshnuyu!
Gospodi, pomiluy i menya greshnuyu!
Tak? Nyanyushka?

Poyekhhalnapalochke

Hey! Hop, hop, hop! Hop, oe!
Hey, prodi! Hey! Hey! Hey, prodi!
Hop, hop, hop! Hop, hop! Hop, hop, hop!
Hop, hop! Hey! Hey, hey! Hey, hey!
Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
Tpru! Sto!

Vasya, a Vasya!
Slushay prikhodi igrat' sevodnya;
Talko ne pozhdno!

and the grey wolf will seize her
and carry her off into the dark forest!

Dolly, go to sleep!
And what you see in your dreams,
you can tell me all about it:
about the magic island,
where no-one reaps or sows,
and where the juiciest pears flower and ripen,
and where golden birds sing all day and night.

Bye, bye, ba-yoo, bye, bye, bye, Dolly!

Prayer at bedtime

God bless Daddy and Mummy,
and keep them safe, O Lord.
God bless brother Vasenka
and brother Mishenka.
God bless my dear old Grandma,
give good health
to my dearest Grandma,
my old Grandma, O Lord.
And keep safe, O Lord, auntie Katya,
auntie Natasha, auntie Masha, auntie Parasha,
and all
my aunts – Lyuba and Varya and Sasha,
and Olya and Tanya and Nadya;
uncle Petya and uncle Kolya and all
my uncles – Voldya and Grisha and Sasha;
and all of them, O Lord,
keep safe and bless.
And Filka and Vanka and Mitka and Petka
and Dasha, Pasha, Sonya, Dunyushka ...
Nanny, oh Nanny!
What else, Nanny?
Look at you, what a little rascal!
How many times have I told you:
O Lord, forgive me my sins!
O Lord, forgive me my sins!
Like that? Nanny dear?

Hobby-horse rider

Hey! Clop, clop, clop! Clip-clop!
Hey, giddy-up! Hey! Hey! Hey, giddy-up!
Clop, clop, clop! Clip-clop!
Clop, clop, clop! Clip-clop! Hey! Hey!
Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
Woal! Stop!

Vasya, hey Vasya!
Will you come and play with me today?
Only don't be late!

Nu ti hop! Hop, hop!
Proshchay, Vasya!
Ya v Yukki poyekhal ...
Tolko k vecheru ...
Nepremenno budu ...
Mi ved rano, ochen rano
Spat' lozhimsya ...
Prikhodi zh smotri!

Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
Hey! Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
Prodi! Hey! Hey, prodi! Hey, hey, prodi!
Hey, hey! Razdavlyu! Oyi!

Oy, bolno! Oy, nogu!
Oy, bolno! Oy, nogu! ...

Milyi moy, moy malchik, chto za gore!
Hu polno plaket';
Prodyot, moy drug postoyka,
Bstan na nozhki pryamo,
Vot tak, ditya!
Posmotri, kakaya prelest!
Vidish! V kustakh na-levo?
Akh, chto za ptichka divnaya!
Chto za perishki!
Vidish? Nu chto?
Proshlo?

Proshlo!
Ya v Yukki syezdil, Mama;
Teper ... domoy ... toropitsya nado ...
Hop, hop!

Gosti budut ... Hop!
Toropitsya nado ...

Kot Matros

Ay, ay, ay, ay, Mama, milaya Mama!
Pobezhala ya za zontikom, Mama,
Ochen ved zharko,
Sharila b komode i v stole iskala,
Net, kak narochno!
Ya vtoropyakh k oknu no!
Podbezhal, mozhet bit',
Zontik tam pozabila ...
Vdrug vizhu, na okne-to,
Kot nash Matros,
Zabravshis na kletku, skrebet!
Snegir drozhit,
Zabilsya v ugol, pishchit.

Zlo menya vzyalo!
E, brat do ptichek Oho,
Ti lakom!

Now, giddy-up! Clip-clop!
Goodbye, Vasya!
I'm off to Yuky ...
but towards evening ...
I shall certainly be back ...
since it's early, very early,
when they put us to bed ...
come and you'll see!

Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
Hey! Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
Giddy-up! Hey! Hey, giddy-up! Giddy-up!
Hey, hey! I'll knock them all down! Oh!

Oh, it's sore! Oh, my foot!
Oh, it's sore! Oh, my foot!

My darling one, my little boy, how terrible!
But don't cry any more;
it'll soon be better, my little horseman;
stand up straight on your feet –
that's it, little one!
Look, how pretty! Do you see?
On the bushes, there on the left?
Oh, what a beautiful bird!
Such little feathers!
You see? How's your foot?
Better?

Better!
I've been to Yuky, Mama;
now ... home ... I have to hurry ...
Clip-clop!

My friends will be there ... clip-clop!
I have to hurry ...

Matros the cat

Oh, oh, oh, oh, Mama, dearest Mama!
I ran to find your parasol, Mama,
since the sun's so hot;
I rummaged around in the chest of drawers,
and looked on the table –
what a business!
I hurried over to the window – perhaps
it was there I left the parasol ...
Then suddenly I saw, over by the window,
our cat Matros,
perched upon the birdcage, snarling!
The bullfinch was trembling,
cowering in a corner and cheeping.

It made me very angry!
brother, you think the little bird
will be a dainty dish!

Net! Postoy, popalsya,
Vish ti kot!

Kak ni v chom ne bivalo,
Stoyu ya, smotryu v storonku,
Tolko glazom odnim pod mechayu,
Stranno chto-to!
Kot spokojno v glazu mne smotrit,
A sam uzh lapu v kletku zanosit;
Tolko chto dumal skhvatit' snegirya ...

A ya yeve khlop!
Mama! Kakaya tverdaya,
Kletka paltsam tak bolno, Mama, Mama!
Vot v samikh konchikakh,
Vot tu, tak noyet, noyet tak ...
Net! Kakov kot-to, Mama ... a?

Texts by the composer

Dmitry Shostakovich (1906–75)

Satires, Op 109

1 Kritiku

Kogda poët, opisivaya damu, načnyot:
'Ya šla po ulice. V boka vpilsya korset', –

Zdes; 'Ya' ne ponimay, konečno, pryamo –

Čto, mol, pod damoyu skrivyayetsya poët.
Ya istinu tebe po-družeski otkroyu:
Poët – mužčina i daže s borodoyu.

2 Probuždeniye vesni

Včera moy kot vzglyanul na kalendar'
I khvost truboyu podnyal momental'no.
Potom podral na lestnicu, kak vstar',
I zavopil teplo i vakkhanah'no:
'Vesenniy brak! Graždanskiy brak!
Spešite, koški, na čerdak!'

I kaktus moy – o, čudo iz čudes! –
Zalitiy čaem i kofeynoy guščey,
Kak noviy Lazar', vzyal da i voskres
I s každīm dnyom pret iz zemli vsyo puščē.

Zelyoniy šum ... Ya poražon:
'Kak mnogo dum navodit' on!'

Uže s paneley smyorzšuyusya gryaz',

Rugayas', skalivayut dvorniki likhiye,
Uže ko mne zabrel segodnya 'knyaz',
Vzyl tyopliy šarf i liži begoviye ...

No! Just wait! I'll get you, cat,
you'll see!

I acted as if nothing was wrong,
I turned away,
but still kept one eye on him.
It was a funny thing!
The cat looked at me quite calmly,
but still pushed his paw into the birdcage;
and just when he thought he would seize the
bullfinch

I gave him a smack!
Mama, what a hard birdcage that is,
it hurt my fingers so badly, Mama, Mama.
There, right at the tips,
just there, it hurts, it hurts so ...
No! What do you think of that cat, Mama ... eh?

To a critic

When a poet, describing a lady, begins:
'I was walking down the street. My corset was
pinching my side,'
in this case the 'I' should not, of course, be taken
literally –
it's not that the lady in question is in fact the poet.
I'll let you into a secret:
the poet is a man, and even has a beard.

The awakening of spring

Yesterday my cat looked at the calendar
and instantly lifted up his tail like a trumpet.
Then he made off up the staircase, as of old,
and cried out in Bacchic exultation:
'Who's for a spring marriage?! A civil marriage!
Hurry, my pretties, hurry to my attic!'

And my cactus, o wonder of wonders!
Swimming in tea and coffee grounds,
like a new Lazarus, was suddenly resurrected,
and with each day it reared up more and more
swollen from the earth.
A green sensation ... And I blurted out:
'How many thoughts it provokes!'

Already the frozen mud is being chipped from
the pavements,
by the caretakers, cursing,
and already today a 'prince' dropped in,
and took off his warm scarf and skis ...

‘Vesna, vesna! poyu, kak bard, –
Nesite zimnyy khlam v lombard.’

Siyayet solniško. Ey-bogu, ničego!
Vesennyaya lazur’ spugnula dim i kopot’,

Moroz uže n ščiplet nikogo,
No mnogim nečego, kak i zimoyu, lopat’ ...
Derev’ya ždut ... Gniyot voda,
I p’yanikh bol’še, čem vseгда.

Sozdateľ! moy! Spasibo za vesnu!
Ya dumal, ona ne vozvratitsya,
No ... day sbežat’ v lesnyuy tišinu
Ot zlobi dnya, kholeri i stolic!

Vesenny veter za dver’mi ...
V kogo b vlyubit’sya, čort voz’mi?

3 Potomki

Naši predki lezli v kleti
I šeptališ tam ne raz:
‘Tugo, bratci’ ... Vidno, deti
Budut žit’ vol’gotney nas.’

Deti virosli. I éti
Lezli v kleti v groznij čas
I vzdikhali: ‘Naši deti
Vstretyat solnce posle nas.’

Ninče tak že, kak voveki,
Utešeniye odno:
Naši deti budut v Mekke,
Yesli nam ne suždeno.

Daže sroki predskazali:
Kto – let dvesti, kto – pyat’sot,

A poka leži v pečali
I miči, kak idiot.

Razukrašenniye duli,
Mir umit, pričosan, mil ...
Let črez dvesti! Čorta v stule!
Razve ya Mafusail?

Ya, kak filin, na oblomkakh
Perelomannikh bogov.
V nerodivšikhsvya potomkakh
Net mne brat’ev i vragov.

Ya khoču nemnožko sveta
Dlya sebya, poka ya živ;

‘Spring, spring!’; I sing like a bard,
‘take the rubbish of winter off to the pawnshop.’

The sun is shining. Ah, Lord, it’s nothing!
The azure spring may have scared away the
smoke and soot,
the frost may no longer pinch anyone,
but many, as in winter, have nothing to eat ...
The trees are waiting ... the water is putrid,
and there are more drunkards than ever.

My Creator! Thank you for spring!
I thought it would never return, yet ...
let me run away to the silence of the woods,
away from the evil of the day, from cholera and
the city!
There’s a spring breeze at the door ...
Who is there to fall in love with, damn it?

Descendants

Our ancestors crawled into their shelters
and whispered there more than once:
‘It’s hard for us, brothers ... Surely our children
will live more free-and-easy lives than we do.’

Their children grew up. And they too crawled
into their shelters in terrible times
and sighed: ‘Our children
will greet the sun when we are gone.’

Now, just as then,
there is but one consolation:
that our children will be in Mecca
even if we are not destined to be.

Even our time on earth is foretold –
some have two hundred years, some five
hundred –
so for now why not just curl up in grief
and mumble like an idiot.

The decorated ones have blown away,
the world is all washed, combed, and nice ...
in two hundred years’ time! What the devil!
Am I really Methusalah?

I am like an eagle owl, on the debris
of broken gods.
Among unborn descendants
I have neither brothers nor enemies.

I want a little light
for myself, while I am yet alive;

Ot portnogo do poéta –
Vsem ponyaten moy priziv ...

A potomki ... Pust' potomki,
Ispolnyaya zrebiy svoiy
I klyanya svoiy potyomki,
Lupyat v stenku golovoy!

4 Nedorazumeniye

Ona bila poëtessa,
Poëtessa bal'zakovskikh let.
A on bil prosto povesa,
Kurčaviy i pilkiy brunet.

Povesa prišol k poëtesse;
V polumrake dišali dukhi,
Na sofe, kak v toržestvennoy messe,
Poëtessa gnusila stikhi:

'O, sumey ognedišaščey laskoy
Vskolikhnut' moyu sonnuyu strast'.
K pene beder za aloy podvyazkoy

Ti ne boysya ustami pripast'.

Ya sveža, kak dikhan'e levkoya ...
O, spletyom že istomnosti tel! ...'

Prodolženiye bilo takoye,
Čto kurčaviy brunet pokrasnel.

Pokrasnel, no opravilysa bistro
I podumal: bila – ne bila!
Zdes' ne dumskiye reči ministra,

Ne slova tut nužni, a dela.

S nesderžannoy siloy Kentavra
Poëtessu povesa privlyok,
No vizglivo vul'garnoye: 'Mavra!
Okhladilo kipučiy potok.

'Prostite! ...' vskočil on. 'Vi sami ...'
No v glazakh yeyo kholod i mest'.

'Vi smeli k poryadočnoy dame,
Kak dvornik, s obyatyami lezt'?'

Vot činnaya Mavra. I zadom
Ukhodit ispuganniy gost',
V peredney rasteryannim vzglyadom
On dolgo iskal svoyu trost'.

from the tailor to the poet
all can understand my call ...

And my descendants ... May my descendants,
fulfilling their destiny
and cursing their darkness,
bang their heads on the wall!

Misunderstanding

She was a poetess,
a poetess from the age of Balzac.
And he was just a rake,
a passionate, curly, dark-haired man.

This rake went round to see the poetess;
in the half-dark they breathed the air,
and on the sofa, as in a feast-day Mass,
the poetess intoned these verses:

'O, may you with a fire-breathing caress
stir up my sleepy passion.
To the flesh of my thighs beyond the scarlet
suspenders
do not be afraid to press your lips.

I am fresh, like the scent of carnations ...
O, let us then mingle the weariness of our
bodies! ...'

The result was
that the curly, dark-haired man blushed.

He blushed, but quickly recovered
and thought: whether she was or not,
we don't need any ministerial parliamentary
speeches here,
not words, but actions.

With the irresistible force of a centaur
the rake drew the poetess to him,
but his shrill, vulgar cry of 'Mavra!
cooled her ardour.

'Forgive me ...' he leaped up. 'You yourself ...'
But in her eyes there was now only coldness and
honour:

'You dared to assail a respectable lady,
like some doorkeeper, with your embraces?'

What a decorous Mavra. And walking
backwards the startled guest left.
In the lobby, with a bewildered look,
he long sought his walking-stick.

S licom belee, magnesii
Šol s lestnicī pilkiy bryunet.

Ne ponyal on novoy poézii
Poëtessi bal'zakovskikh let.

5 Kreycerovasonata

Kvartirant sidit na čemodane
I zadumčivo rassmatrivayet pol:
Te že styl'ya, i krovat', i stol,
I takaya že obivka na divane,
I takoy že 'bigus' na obed, –
No na vsyom kakoy-to noviy svet ... Ukh!

Bleščut ikrī polnoy prački Fyokli.

Peregulsya sil'nīy stan vo dvor.
Kak nestroyniy, šalovliviy khor,
Vereščat namīlenniye styokla,
I zaplati golubikh nebes
Obeščayut fīsyaci čudes.

Kvartirant, kvartirant ...

Kvartirant sidit na čemodane.
Styokla vīmīti, opyat' toska i tiš'.

Fyokla, Fyokla, čo že ti molčiš'?
Bud' khoť ti rešitel'noy i yarkoy:
Podoydi, voz'mi yego za čub
I ožgi ognym vesennikh gub ... Ukh!

Kvartirant i Fyokla na divane.
O, kakoy toržestvenniy moment!
'Ti – narod, a ya ... intelligent, –

Govorit on yey sredi lobzaniy. –
Nakonec-to, zdes' sečas vdvoym,
Ya tebya, a fi menya – poymyom!

Sasha Chyorny (Alexander Glikberg, 1880–1932)

With a face bluer than magnesium
the passionate dark-haired man went down the
stairs.

He did not understand the new poetry
of the poetess of the age of Balzac.

Kreutzer Sonata

The lodger is sitting on his suitcase
and pensively examining the floor:
it's the same chairs, bed and table,
and the same upholstery on the couch,
and the same ragout to eat,
but everything somehow has a new colour ...
Ugh!

The calves of Fyokla, the plump laundress, are
shining.
The powerful figure has leant over into the yard,
like a mistuned, naughty choir,
glassware squeals as it is washed,
and patches of blue skies
promise thousands of miracles.

The lodger, the lodger ...

The lodger is sitting on his suitcase.
The glassware has been washed up, once again
all is melancholy and quiet.
Fyokla, Fyokla, why are you silent?
Just be decisive and clear:
go up to him, take him by the forelock
and set him alight with the fire of your vernal lips ...
Ugh!

The lodger and Fyokla are on the couch.
O, what a festive moment!
'You are of the people, whereas I am an
intellectual,'
he says to her, between kisses.
'Finally, we are here now the two of us,
I you and you me – let us take one another!'

Translation by David Fanning © DG

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)**Village Scenes****1 Prihrabaní**

– Ej ! Hrabaj želen, hrabaj
To zelenô seno!
– Ej ! Ja by ho hrabala,
Nemám nakoseno.
Ej ! Hrabala, hrabala,
Čerta nahrabala;
Ej ! Od veľ'kého spania
Hrable dolámala.

2 Prineveste

Letia pávy, letia,
Drobnô peria tratia,
Devča si ho sbiera
Mesto svojho peria.
Sbieraj siho, sbieraj, ej,
Veď' ti treba bude,
Janikovo líčko
Na ňom líhat' bude.

3 Svatba

A ty Anča krásna,
Už vo voze kasňa,
Na kasni periny:
Už t'a vyplatili.

A z tejto dediny
Na druhú dedinu
Ideme opáčiť'
Novotnú rodinu.

Kasňa je z javora,
Perina z pápera,
A to švarnô devča
Už nemá frajera,

Ked' nemá frajera,
Ale bude muža,
Nebude prekvitat',
Ako v poli ruža.

Ruža som ja, ruža,
Pokým nemám muža,
Ked'budem mať' muža,
Spadne so mna ruža.

Teraz sa ty, Anča,
Teraz sa oklameš:
My pôjdeme domov
A ty tu ostaneš.

Heya hoya ho;
Ohey hey, hoy a ho,

Haymaking

Rake it now, rake it now,
rake up the new mown hay!
Ai! I'd gladly rake it now,
if you had mown some more.
Don't you stop raking now,
you have not done your work;
all because from sleepiness,
you went and broke your rake.

At the bride's

Proud the peacocks flutter,
ai! Shimm'ring fall their feathers,
a pretty maiden takes them,
fills the clean white pillows.
Take them, maiden, take them,
ai! You'll soon need these feathers,
for upon these pillows
will your lover's head rest, ai, just wait.

Wedding

Annie, in your boxes
on the wagon carried,
there's fine clothes and bedding,
all for when you're married. Aiya!

To the bridegroom's village,
fast as we are able,
there we'll drive, see his place,
get to know his people.

Finest maple casket,
pillow stuffed with feathers,
Annie, pretty maiden,
now you have no lover.

Now she has a husband;
though she's lost a lover,
she shall not, like a rose,
fade away and wither.

I'm a rose, a rose,
but only when I'm single.
When I have a husband,
petals drop and shrivel.

Say farewell, dear Annie,
say farewell and leave them:
they go, full of joy,
you must not go with them.

Heya hoy a ho;
ohey hey a, hoy a ho,

Heya hoya heya ho, heya
Heya ho!

4 Ukoliebavka

Beli žemi, beli
Moj syn premilený!
Číma budeš chovať,
Ej, na moje starie dni?

– Budem, manko, budem,
Kým sa neožením;
Aked' sa ožením,
Ej, potom vás oddelím.

– Búvaj že mi, búvaj,
Ľen ma neunúvaj!
Čo ma viac unúvaš,
Menej sa nabúvaš.

Belej že sa, belej
Na hori zelenej,
Na hori zelenej,
V košielki bielenej.

Košelôčka biela,
Šíla ju Mariška,
Šíla ju hodbábom
Pod zeleným hájom.

Beli že mi, beli
Moj andelik biely,
Len mi neuletej,
Ej, do tej čiernej zemi!

5 Tanecmládenčov

Poza búčky, poza peň,
Pod'že bratu, pod'že sem!
Poza búčky a klady,
Tancuj šuhaj za mladý!

Štyri kozy, piaty cap,
Kto vyskočí, bude chlap!
Jab y som bol vyskočil,
Ale som sa potočil.

Hojže, hojže, od zeme!
Kto mi kozy zaženie?
A ja by ích bol zahnal,
Ale som sa vlka bál.

Anonymous

heya hoya heya ho, heya
heya ho!

Lullaby

Darling, slumber, slumber,
darling little baby!
When your mother grows old,
will you then take care of her?

I will take care of you, Mother,
while I'm single;
but when I am married,
soon I'll go off and leave you.

Mmm, slumber, slumber, darling,
don't give me more trouble,
soon you'll quietly slumber,
mmm, darling, keep quiet, be still.

Mmm, go into the green wood,
wear your white shirt,
let your little white shirt twinkle,
mmm, through the dark green branches.

Mmm, your white shirt that twinkles,
our old Mary sewed it
for you in the green fields.
Mmm, she embroidered it with silk.

Darling, slumber, slumber,
baby, wee white angel,
don't you ever leave me,
darling, never fly away!

Lads' dance

Little oak tree grow up strong,
dance, young fellow, dance along!
Little oak tree breaks in two,
dance, while life is free and new!

Hey, old goat, old Billy, dance,
if you can, stand up and prance!
I tried prancing ere I could,
tripped and tumbled, 'twas no good.

Now my lad, the time has come,
get the goats and drive them home!
Yes, I'd gladly drive them if
old wolf hadn't scared me stiff.

About the performers

Mathias Bohrer/DG



Magdalena Kožená

Magdalena Kožená mezzo-soprano

Magdalena Kožená was born in Brno and studied voice and piano at the city's conservatory and later with Eva Blahová at Bratislava's Academy of Performing Arts. She has been awarded several major prizes both in the Czech Republic and internationally, culminating in the Sixth International Mozart Competition in Salzburg in 1995.

She was signed by DG in 1999 and released her first album of Bach arias on its Archiv label. Her debut recital recording, an album of songs by Dvořák, Janáček and Martinů, appeared on DG's yellow label in 2001 and won her Gramophone's Solo Vocal Award. She was named Artist of the Year by Gramophone in 2004 and has won numerous other accolades since, including an ECHO Award, Record Academy Prize, Tokyo, and Diapason d'Or. In 2017 she began a long-term relationship with Pentatone, and her first album with the label, *Il Giardino dei Sospiri*, was released last week.

She has worked with many of the world's leading conductors, including Claudio Abbado, Pierre Boulez, Gustavo Dudamel, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Bernard Haitink, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Mariss Jansons, Charles Mackerras and Sir Roger Norrington. Her list of distinguished recital partners includes the pianists Daniel Barenboim, Yefim Bronfman, Malcolm Martineau, Sir Andrés Schiff and Dame Mitsuko Uchida, with whom she has performed at such

prestigious venues as Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, Alice Tully Hall and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, as well as at the Aldeburgh, Edinburgh and Salzburg festivals. She works regularly with leading period-instrument ensembles, including the English Baroque Soloists, the Gabrieli Consort and Players, Il Giardino Armonico, Les Musiciens du Louvre, La Cetra Barockorchester Basel, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Venice Baroque Orchestra and Le Concert d'Astrée. She is also in demand as soloist with the Berlin, Czech and Vienna Philharmonic orchestras and the Cleveland, Philadelphia and Royal Concertgebouw orchestras.

Her operatic roles include Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) at the Salzburg Festival in 2002, to which she returned in 2013 as Idamante (*Idomeneo*), a role she has also sung for the Glyndebourne Festival and in Berlin and Lucerne. She made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, as Cherubino (*The Marriage of Figaro*) in 2003 and has since been a regular guest there.

More recent highlights include a *Héroïnes baroques* tour with Emmanuelle Haïm and Concert d'Astrée last year, and a flamenco and Spanish Baroque tour of Europe in 2017 with Private Musick and Antonio El Pipa with his flamenco company.

Magdalena Kožená began this season by joining the Baroque ensemble Collegium 1704 on a tour of the Czech Republic. In December she made her role debut as Phèdre (*Rameau's Hippolyte et Aricie*) at the Deutsche Staatsoper under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle. Other engagements this season include *Messiah* with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Robin Ticciati, a recital tour with Mitsuko Uchida, *Das Lied von der Erde* with Rattle and the Czech Philharmonic, and Bach's *St John Passion* with both the Berlin Philharmonic and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

She was appointed a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government in 2003 for her services to French music.



Yefim Bronfman

Yefim Bronfman piano

Yefim Bronfman is internationally recognised as one of today's most acclaimed pianists. He stands among a handful of artists regularly sought by festivals, orchestras, conductors and recital series. His commanding technique, power and exceptional lyrical gifts are consistently acknowledged by the press and audiences alike.

His current season began with a European tour with the St Petersburg Philharmonic in celebration of the 80th birthday of Yuri Temirkanov. This was followed by a Scandinavian tour with the Royal Concertgebouw. He also gives concerts in Europe with the Orchestre National de France, London Philharmonic Orchestra, WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Berlin Philharmonic, and a tour with the Vienna Philharmonic.

In the USA he returns to orchestras in Cleveland, New York, Los Angeles, Houston, St Louis, Cincinnati, San Francisco and Dallas, and in recital can be heard at Carnegie Hall and in Berkeley, Stanford, Aspen, Madrid, Geneva, Cologne, Leipzig, Munich, Berlin, Naples and Rome, as well as the current tour with mezzo-Magdalena Kožená.

He has given numerous solo recitals in the leading halls of North America, Europe and the Far East, including acclaimed debuts at Carnegie Hall in 1989 and Avery Fisher Hall in 1993. In 1991 he gave a series of joint recitals with Isaac Stern in Russia, marking Yefim Bronfman's first public performances there since his emigration to Israel at the age of 15. That same year he was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize. In 2010 he was honoured as the recipient of the Jean Gimbel Lane prize in piano performance from Northwestern University.

Born in Tashkent in the Soviet Union, Yefim Bronfman emigrated to Israel with his family in 1973, where he studied with pianist Arie Vardi, head of the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University. In the United States, he studied at the Juilliard School, Marlboro School of Music, and the Curtis Institute of Music, under Rudolf Firkušný, Leon Fleisher, and Rudolf Serkin. In 2015 he received an honorary doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music.

He became an American citizen in July 1989.