



My name is Zarbara

barbara bonney malcolm martineau

MY NAME IS BARBARA

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BARBARA BONNEY – soprano MALCOLM MARTINEAU – piano

Barbara Bonney - English & American Songs

An intricate web of connections links the composers on this disc. Friendship, patronage and mutual acquaintance combine to unite the musical spheres of England and America. More significantly, each composer represented here had a special relationship with song. For many of them, including Britten and Quilter, their musical reputations rest to a substantial extent with their vocal writing. In the cases of Copland and Barber, on the other hand, the fame of their orchestral works sometimes, unjustly, overshadows their superlative contributions to the genre. Either way, the importance of poetry and the desire to set it was common to all these musicians, and their different approaches to text-setting are as fascinating as they are varied.

Roger Quilter (1877-1953) is considered a bastion of quintessentially English music, particularly in the field of song. Indeed, Quilter's songs – which number about a hundred in total – represent the bulk of his output, and tap into a rich seam of English poetry, texts by Shakespeare, Tennyson and Herrick being amongst the most frequently set. In the case of the *Seven Elizabethan Lyrics*, op. 12 (written 1907-8), Quilter selected several poems, some anonymous, from the Elizabethan age – though he did not pay overt homage to the music of that era. Rather, the songs are fairly typical of Quilter's distinctive musical language, with its appoggiatura-soaked harmony; a sound-world once described by the composer's friend Percy Grainger as being like 'enriched Schumann'. The cycle mixes the wistful, such as 'Weep you no more' and the idyllic, as in 'Damask roses' and 'Brown is my Love', and bears the dedication: 'To the memory of my friend Mrs Cary-Elwes'. Gervase Elwes was one of the leading tenors of the day, and performed many works by Quilter including this cycle in 1908. The dedicatee, Mrs Alice Cary-Elwes, was Gervase's mother, who had died in March of the previous year.

Rather than developing a specifically 'American' musical identity, as Copland did with his use of folk music, Charles Griffes (1884-1920) drew upon a range of European influences, spanning the fluid impressionism of Ravel and Debussy, the colouristic flair of Rimsky-Korsakov and the

opulence of Richard Strauss. The resultant style has led to him being cited as the first American composer of 'impressionist' music. Griffes looked to poetry for musical inspiration throughout his short life, and set, or based works upon, several texts by 'Fiona Macleod', the pseudonym of Scottish poet William Sharp. Griffes' Op.11 dates from 1918 and is suffused with brooding passion. The mournful 'Lament of Ian the Proud' is followed by the intense sensuality of 'Thy dark eyes to mine', while the influences of Ravel and Rimsky-Korsakov are most apparent in the impassioned final song, 'The rose of the night', the score of which has the following text attached: 'There is an old mystical legend that when a soul among the dead woos a soul among the living, so that both may be reborn as one, the sign is a dark rose, or a rose in flame, in the heart of the night'.

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) and W. H. Auden (1907-1973) produced a number of seminal works together during the 1930s; their fruitful partnership was, in Donald Mitchell's words, 'a historic collaboration without parallel in the history of the arts in England between the First and Second World Wars'. Less celebrated than, for example, *Our Hunting Fathers* (1936), but still a great instance of this meeting of minds, is *On This Island*, op. 11, which was published as 'Vol. 1', suggesting that Britten intended to set a further collection of Auden's poetry.

The work opens with a bold proclamation of 'Let the florid music praise!', both voice and piano mirroring the triumphant tone of Auden's first stanza, with a melismatic sequence for the soprano at 'shine on'. Britten conveys the shift in mood at the second stanza with more reflective material, and the song fades away ambiguously and with little sense of conclusion, as befits the text. 'Now the leaves are falling fast' begins with tranquil descending chords which return to accompany the voice towards the end, sandwiching the more urgent, pulsing material at the heart of the song. 'Seascape' features quick harmonic shifts and spacious, rapid piano writing to conjure up 'The swaying sound of the sea', whereas 'Nocturne', far from being a soporific lullaby as the title might imply, communicates Auden's sense of foreboding through the voice's ascending arpeggios and the piano's trudging rhythm. 'As it is, plenty' is darkly humorous, with Britten relishing Auden's satirical lampooning of the middle-class business man: 'Let his thinning hair / And his hauteur / Give thanks, give thanks.'

Britten wrote On This Island in 1937. Two years later he was on Long Island with Peter Pears, in September receiving a letter from Aaron Copland (1900-1990) lamenting the onset of World War Two and urging Britten to avoid conscription for the sake of preserving his music:

'Dear Benjie

I've been wondering where you are in this miserable world! I keep marvelling how it has all turned out just exactly as you feared it would. The question is: do you have to go back? I mean – does the Conscription go into immediate effect. Because if not – I think you absolutely owe it to England to stay here. Whatever anyone may think now, I'm sure the future will justify your looking upon your own case as a special one. After all anyone can shoot a gun – but how many can write music like you?

Copland's own song-writing would culminate in masterworks such as the *Twelve Songs of Emily Dickinson*. His *Four Early Songs* (1918-22) represent some of his first forays into the genre, and use three texts by Aaron Schaffer, alongside 'Alone', which sets an Arabic text translated by Edward Powys Mathers – Copland's last use of Eastern sources. Exotic but sombre, 'Alone' was written in 1922 (and orchestrated the following year), but was not performed until 1985; the four songs were published as a set in 1989.

The poetry of W. H. Auden inspired not only Britten but also Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) – *The Age of Anxiety* was the basis for his Second Symphony. Copland had a close relationship with Bernstein; during the latter's third summer at Tanglewood, the older composer paid for a rented Steinway grand to be installed in his new apartment. Bernstein was earning money accompanying dancers and coaching singers, and the incessant practising provoked his flatmate, artist Edys Merrill, to declare, 'I hate music!' Rather than acting as a deterrent, this inspired Bernstein's song-cycle *I Hate Music!* subtitled *Five Kids Songs for Soprano and Piano*. Completed in 1942 and published in 1943, the set is dedicated to Merrill, and is influenced by jazz – a style that would feature recurrently in Bernstein's compositions. Mezzo-soprano Jennie Tourel gave the cycle's first performances, initially as an encore and then during her New York debut at Town Hall, 13 November 1943, accompanied by the composer.

Samuel Barber (1910-1981) was taught to sing by his aunt, herself a distinguished contralto. Though his ubiquitous *Adagio for Strings* is the work most commonly invoked at the mention of

Barber's name, his music for voices was of greater significance during his career. Barber himself sang the baritone solo when *Dover Beach* was premiered, and his opera *Vanessa*, with a libretto by his lifelong friend Gian-Carlo Menotti, won the Pulitzer Prize. For *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* Barber set poetry by James Agee, whose 'Sure on this shining night' is third of the Op. 13 songs completed in 1940. Like Griffes, Barber has been likened to Schubert on account of his ability to write concise, expressive songs, and the clear word-setting and emotional immediacy of his Op. 13 may be said to justify this comparison. 'A nun takes the veil', with its clean harmonic progressions, was, along with several of his songs, later transcribed by Barber for choir, in this case as *Heaven-Haven* – the original title of Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem.

Despite the fact that the songs on this disc were written within a fairly short period, their variety demonstrates the extraordinary range of musical styles proliferating during the 20th century. What unifies the songs is the sensitivity of each composer to the text, so that the poetry is given a new momentum through the addition of layers of musical interpretation. In Auden's words: 'A verbal art like poetry is reflective; it stops to think. Music is immediate, it goes on to become.'

Joanna Wyld 2005

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Roger Quilter

1 Weep you no more

Anonymous, 16th century

Weep you no more, sad fountains; What need you flow so fast? Look how the snowy mountains Heaven's sun doth gently waste! But my sun's heavenly eyes View not your weeping, That now lies sleeping, Softly now, softly lies Sleeping.

Sleep is a reconciling, A rest that peace begets; Doth not the sun rise smiling When fair at e'en he sets? Rest you, then, rest, sad eyes! Melt not in weeping, While she lies sleeping, Softly now, softly lies Sleeping.

2 My life's delight

Thomas Campion (1567-1620)

Come, O come, my life's delight! Let me not in languor pine: Love loves no delay, thy sight The more enjoyed, the more divine. O come, and take from me The pain of being deprived of thee.

Thou all sweetness dost enclose, Like a little world of bliss: Beauty guards thy looks: the rose In them pure and eternal is. Come then! and make thy flight As swift to me as heavenly light!

3 Damask roses

Anonymous

Lady, when I behold the roses sprouting, Which clad in damask mantles deck the arbours, And then behold your lips where sweet love harbours.

My eyes present me with a double doubting; For, viewing both alike, hardly my mind supposes Whether the roses be your lips or your lips the roses.

4 The faithless shepherdess

Anonymous

While that the sun with his beams hot Scorchèd the fruits in vale and mountain, Philon, the shepherd, late forgot, Sitting beside a crystal fountain, In shadow of a green oak tree, Upon his pipe this song played he: Adieu, Love, adieu, Love, untrue Love, Untrue Love, untrue Love, adieu, Love! Your mind is light, soon lost for new love.

So long as I was in your sight I was your heart, your soul, your treasure; And evermore you sobb'd and sigh'd Burning in flames beyond all measure: Three days endured your love to me And it was lost in other three! Adieu, Love, adieu, Love, untrue Love, Untrue Love, untrue Love, Untrue Love, untrue Love, adieu, Love! Your mind is light, soon lost for new love.

5 Brown is my Love

Anonymous

Brown is my Love, but graceful,
And each renownèd whiteness,
Matched with her lovely brown, loseth its brightness;
Fair is my Love, but scornful,
Yet have I seen despisèd
Dainty white lilies, and sad flowers well prizèd.

6 By a fountainside

Ben Jonson (1572-1637) from Cynthia's Revels, Act I Scene 2

Slow, slow, fresh fount, keep time with my salt tears: Yet slower, yet; O faintly, gentle springs: List to the heavy part the music bears, Woe weeps out her division when she sings. Droop herbs and flowers, Fall grief in showers,
Our beauties are not ours;
Or, I could still,
Like melting snow upon some craggy hill,
Drop, drop, drop, drop,
Since nature's pride is, now, a withered daffodil.

7 Fair house of joy

Att. Tobias Hume (c1569-1645)

Fain would I change that note
To which fond Love hath charm'd me
Long, long to sing by rote,
Fancying that that harm'd me:
Yet when this thought doth come
'Love is the perfect sum
Of all delight!'
I have no other choice
Either for pen or voice
To sing or write.

That say thy sweet is bitter, When thy rich fruit is such As nothing can be sweeter. Fair house of joy and bliss, Where truest pleasure is, I do adore thee:
I know thee what thou art, I serve thee with my heart, And fall before thee.

O Love! they wrong thee much

Charles T Griffes THREE POEMS OF FIONA MACLEOD

Fiona Macleod aka William Sharp (1855-1905)

8 The lament of Ian the Proud

What is this crying that I hear in the wind!
Is it the old sorrow and the old grief
Or is it a new thing coming,
A whirling leaf about the grey hair of me who
am weary and blind?

I know not what it is, but on the moor above the shore

There is a stone which the purple nets of heather bind,

And thereon is writ: she will return no more, O blown whirling leaf, and the old grief And wind crying to me who am old and blind!

9 Thy dark eyes to mine

Thy dark eyes to mine, Eilidh,
Lamps of desire!
O how my soul leaps
Leaps to their fire!
Sure, now, if I in heaven
Dreaming in bliss,
Heard but a whisper,
But a lost echo,
Even of one such kiss,
All of the soul of me would leap afar,
If that called me to thee.

Aye, I would leap A falling star.

10 The rose of the night

The dark rose of thy mouth Draw nigher, draw nigher! Thy breath is the wind of the south, A wind of fire! The wind and the rose and darkness O Rose of my Desire! Deep silence of the night Hush't like a breathless lyre, Save the sea's thunderous might. Dim, menacing, dire; Silence and wind and sea They are thee. O Rose of my Desire! As a wind eddying flame Leaping higher and higher Thy soul, Thy secret name Leaps thro' Death's blazing pyre! Kiss me. Imperishable Fire.

O Rose of my Desire!

Dark Rose

Aaron Copland FOLIR FARLY SONGS

Aaron Schaffer (1893-1957) except "Alone"

11 Night

My heart is placid as the lake Which softly flows 'neath starlit skies. And, as I walk, faint melodies of night, Of things but half awake, Stand soothing to its very deeps; It thrills and starts while mankind sleeps. The gentle murmur of the lake Is silvered by a fountain's play. A nightbird sings its tuneful lay Full of the night's vast joy and ache. A low wind sighs thru ghostly trees

Which shiver in the dancing breeze.

12 A summer vacation

Days of joy, how have ye fled?
Joy immortal, are ye dead?
Is there nothing that can hold you?
Can my limp arms not enfold you?
Days of floating on the stream,
Softly lapped as in a dream,
With the white clouds swimming slowly
In an ether pure and holy!

13 My heart is in the East

While I in western lands do pine,
My heart is in the East!
How can I taste of food and wine
When thou art sore oppress'd?
How can I vows and oaths repay
While Edom Zion holds,
While Arab's bond my land doth sway,
His chain me tight enfolds?
Th'abundance of this Spanish land
It is but nought to me,
If I midst brimming tears
Thy strand, Thy ruined strand could see.

14 Alone

Edward Powys Mathers (1892-1939) based on an Arabic text by John Duncan

I shall never see your tired sleep In the bed that you made beautiful, Nor hardly ever be a dream That plays by your dark hair. Yet I think I know your turning sigh And your trusting arms' abandonment, For they are the picture of my night, My night that does not end.

Benjamin Britten ON THIS ISLAND

Wystan Hugh Auden (1907-1973)

15 Let the florid music praise!

Let the 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 unlov'd have had power, The weeping and striking, Always, 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

16 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. Whisp'ring neighbours, left and right, Pluck us from the real delight; And the active hands must freeze Lonely on the sep'rate 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 angels will not come.

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

7 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,
through the water saunter.

18 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 toward 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 lie 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.

19 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.

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 sees as it is

The loss as major

And final, final, final, final, final

Leonard Bernstein I HATE MUSIC!

Words by the composer (1918-1990)

20 My name is Barbara

My mother says that babies come in bottles; but last week she said they grew on special baby bushes.

I don't believe in the storks, either! They're all in the zoo, busy with their own babies! And what's a baby bush, anyway!? My name is Barbara.

21 Jupiter has seven moons

But we have only one!

Jupiter has seven moons or is it nine? Saturn has a million, billion, trillion sixty-nine; And ev'ry one is a little sun, with six little moons of its own!

Just think of all the fun we'd have if there were nine!

Then we could be just nine times more romantic!

Dogs would bay 'til they were frantic!

We'd have nine tides in the Atlantic!

The man in the moon would be gigantic! But we have only one! Only one!

22 I hate music!

I hate music!

But I like to sing: la dee da da dee; la dee da dee.

But that's not music, not what I call music. No. sir.

Music is a lot of men in a lot of tails, making lots of noise like a lot of females;

Music is a lot of folks in a big dark hall, where they really don't want to be at all; with a lot of chairs, and a lot of airs, and a lot of furs and diamonds!

Music is silly!

But I like to sing: la dee da da dee: la dee da dee: la dee da dee.

23 A big Indian and a little Indian (Riddle song)

A big Indian and a little Indian were walking down the street.

The little Indian was the son of the big Indian; But the big Indian was not the father of the little Indian:

You see the riddle is, if the little Indian was the son of the big Indian,

But the big Indian was not the father of the little Indian, who was he?

I'll give you two measures:

His mother!

24 I'm a person too

I just found out today that I'm a person too, like you:

I like balloons; lots of people like balloons: But ev'ryone says "Isn't she cute? She likes balloons!"

I'm a person too, like you!
I like things that ev'ryone likes:

I like soft things and movies and horses and warm things and red things: don't you?

I have lots of thoughts; like what's behind the sky; And what's behind what's behind the sky: But ev'ryone says, "Isn't she sweet? She wants to know ev'rything!" Don't you?

Of course I'm very young to be saying all these things in front of so many people like you: But I'm a person too!

Though I'm only ten years old:

I'm a person too, like you!

Samuel Barber FOUR SONGS op. 13

25 A nun takes the veil

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)
"Heaven-Haven – A nun takes the veil"

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow

And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea.

26 The secrets of the old

William Butler Yeats (!865-1939)

I have old women's secrets now That had those of the young; Madge tells me what I dared not think When my blood was strong, And what had drowned a lover once Sounds like an old sone.

Though Margery is stricken dumb
If thrown in Madge's way,
We three make up a solitude;
For none alive today
Can know the stories that we know
Or say the things we say:

How such a man pleased women most Of all that are gone, How such a pair loved many years And such a pair but one, Stories of the bed of straw Or the bed of down.

27 Sure on this shining night

James Agee (1909-1955) 'Description of Elysium' from Permit Me Voyage

Sure on this shining night Of starmade shadows round, Kindness must watch for me This side the ground. The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole

Sure on this shining night I weep for wonder Wandering far alone Of shadows on the stars.

28 Nocturne

Frederic Prokosch (1906-1989) from The Carnival

Close my darling both your eyes, Let your arms lie still at last. Clam the lake of falsehood lies And the wind of lust has passed,

Waves across these hopeless sands Fill my heart and end my day, Underneath your moving hands All my aching flows away.

Even the human pyramids
Blaze with such a longing now:
Close, my love, your trembling lids,
Let the midnight heal your brow.

Northward flames Orion's horn, Westward the Egyptian light. None to watch us, none to warn But the blind eternal night.



Malcolm Martineau photo: Sussie Ahlburg

