

Allan Clayton Jennifer Johnston Robin Tritschler Nicky Spence Benjamin Hulett Benedict Nelson Elizabeth Atherton

## BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913-1976)

	CD 1	67.2
2 3 4 5 6	Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo Sonetto XVI Sonetto XXXI Sonetto XXX Sonetto LV Sonetto LV Sonetto XXXVIII Sonetto XXXVIII Sonetto XXXIII	2.0 1.4 4.0 1.5 1.5 1.2 4.3
8	The Second Lute Song of the Earl of Essex	4.3
9	Chamber Music (V)	1.19
	Allan Clayton tenor	
11 12	A Charm of Lullabies A cradle song The Highland Balou Sephestia's Lullaby A Charm The Nurse's Song	2.16 2.0 1.5: 1.3: 4.0
15	The Birds	1.52
	Jennifer Johnston mezzo-soprano	
16 17	<b>Two songs by Thomas Hardy</b> If it's ever spring again The Children and Sir Nameless	2.3º 3.0
	Robin Tritschler tenor	
18 19 20	Three Soutar Settings Dawtie's Devotion The Gully Tradition	1.2 1.0 1.0

21	Of a' the airts the wind can blaw	1.06
22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Who are these Children?  A Riddle (the earth) A Laddie's Song Nightmare Black Day Bed-time Slaughter Riddle (the child you were) The Larky Lad Who are these Children?	1.06  1.15 0.57 2.31 0.37 1.07 1.34 0.45 0.34 2.31 1.34 4.20 1.45
	Nicky Spence tenor	
	Micky Spelice tellor	
	CD 2	67.37
	CD 2 The Red Cockatoo and other songs	67.37
1	The Red Cockatoo and other songs	<b>67.37</b> 2.42
2	The Red Cockatoo and other songs A Poison Tree When you're feeling	2.42 0.49
2	The Red Cockatoo and other songs A Poison Tree When you're feeling Not even summer yet	2.42 0.49 1.47
2 3 4	The Red Cockatoo and other songs A Poison Tree When you're feeling Not even summer yet The red cockatoo	2.42 0.49 1.47 0.42
2 3 4 5	The Red Cockatoo and other songs A Poison Tree When you're feeling Not even summer yet The red cockatoo Wild with passion	2.42 0.49 1.47 0.42 2.27
2 3 4 5 6	The Red Cockatoo and other songs A Poison Tree When you're feeling Not even summer yet The red cockatoo Wild with passion If thou wilt ease thine heart	2.42 0.49 1.47 0.42 2.27 1.50
2 3 4 5 6 7	The Red Cockatoo and other songs A Poison Tree When you're feeling Not even summer yet The red cockatoo Wild with passion If thou wilt ease thine heart Cradle Song	2.42 0.49 1.47 0.42 2.27 1.50 3.05
2 3 4 5 6	The Red Cockatoo and other songs A Poison Tree When you're feeling Not even summer yet The red cockatoo Wild with passion If thou wilt ease thine heart	2.42 0.49 1.47 0.42 2.27 1.50
2 3 4 5 6 7 8	The Red Cockatoo and other songs A Poison Tree When you're feeling Not even summer yet The red cockatoo Wild with passion If thou wilt ease thine heart Cradle Song Birthday Song for Erwin  from 'Fish in the unruffled lakes'	2.42 0.49 1.47 0.42 2.27 1.50 3.05 1.23
2 3 4 5 6 7 8	The Red Cockatoo and other songs A Poison Tree When you're feeling Not even summer yet The red cockatoo Wild with passion If thou wilt ease thine heart Cradle Song Birthday Song for Erwin	2.42 0.49 1.47 0.42 2.27 1.50 3.05

11	Song	1.00
12 13	From 'Fish in the unruffled lakes' Fish in the unruffled lakes Underneath the abject willow	2.48 1.45
	Robin Tritschler tenor	
14	O why did e'er my thoughts aspire	1.34
17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26	A Poison Tree Proverb IV The Tyger Proverb V	1.09 2.31 0.32 2.17 0.44 4.33 0.47 1.53 0.54 1.52 1.27 3.06 0.59 2.40
	Benedict Nelson baritone	
29	Dans les bois	1.46
30 31 32 33 34	On this Island Let the florid music praise! Now the leaves are falling fast Seascape Nocturne As it is, plenty	3.38 2.01 2.25 4.11 1.42
	Elizabeth Atherton soprano  Malcolm Martineau piano	

## Britten: A lifetime of song - Vol. II

Book ending the first disc in Volume II of Britten's Complete Songs with Piano are the composer's first and last piano song cycles for Peter Pears, the great English tenor who was the principal interpreter of Britten's vocal music and his life's partner for almost forty years. (At the end of his life, when illness prevented his playing the piano, Britten wrote instead for the combination of tenor and harp, including the Burns cycle, A Birthday Hansel, in 1975.)

The **Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo** were written on Long Island, New York, and completed on 30 October 1940. Following a private performance and recording in the United States (where Britten and Pears resided from 1939 until 1942), the duo gave the first public performance of the Michelangelo Sonnets on their return to England, at the Wigmore Hall on 23 September 1942, and repeated them a month later at one of the celebrated National Gallery lunchtime concerts. These early performances, together with the HMV recording they made around the same period, were enthusiastically received and did much to secure the two men's reputation on their homecoming. It could not have escaped anyone's notice that the cycle not only announced as it were their professional partnership, but also, through Michelangelo's love poetry, the nature of their personal relationship – albeit veiled from most British audiences by the use of the Italian language. All seven songs are concerned with various aspects of love, and Britten can hardly have been unaware of Michelangelo's homosexuality when he chose to set them and to dedicate the cycle to Pears as his first overt tribute to the tenor.

Britten's final piano song cycle, **Who are these children?**, dates from 1969 and was composed to mark the 700th National Gallery of Scotland Concert. Although Pears and Britten gave the first complete performance in Edinburgh on 4 May 1971, the cycle had in fact been completed two years earlier, and part of it performed in Cardiff in March 1971. The reason for the unusual delay was Britten's dissatisfaction with the overall shape of the cycle, and before the work was published three songs – 'Dawtie's Devotion', 'The Gully' and 'Tradition' – were jettisoned. These discarded songs, like the rejected Hardy settings from *Winter Words*, 'If it's ever spring again' and 'The Children and Sir Nameless' of 1953, were posthumously published.

Eight of the twelve 'lyrics, rhymes and riddles' are settings of the Scottish dialect poems by William Soutar (1898–1943), offset by four of his 'serious' English poems. Soutar was a socialist and a pacifist, who admired Wilfred Owen, D.H. Lawrence, and his fellow Scot Hugh MacDiarmid. Britten's interest in

Soutar came about through Pears. Britten's own pacifist convictions and his concern for victims of all types find an echo in Soutar's four English poems of protest. The narrative of the song that gives the cycle its title is an *echt* Britten subject. The poem was written after Soutar saw a photograph published in 1941 of a hunt picking its way through a bomb-damaged village, observed by children. The song takes as its musical symbol a pair of horn calls heard on the piano. The dream world of 'Nightmare' is evoked by an alternation of free alignment and unified metre. The relentless accompaniment of 'Slaughter' perhaps recalls the Donne Sonnets of 1945, with the vocal line intoning the horrors described by the poet. In 'The Children' Britten imitates wartime air-raid sirens. While the dialect songs are of slighter proportions, Britten's settings are no less insightful than the English texts, and the composer matches the simplicity of Soutar's language with straightforward musical formulae which retain the poem's essentially naive quality.

Pears's renditions with Julian Bream of lute songs by Dowland and his contemporaries were much admired in the 1950s and 1960s. Britten was drawn into his partner's enthusiasm for the Elizabethans, composing two instrumental works based on Dowland songs as well as evoking the period, though without ever lapsing into parody, in his Coronation opera *Gloriana* (1953), which explores the public and private relationship between Elizabeth I and the impetuous Earl of Essex, played by Pears at the premiere. In the opera's first act, Essex sings two lute songs to entertain the queen. The bittersweet Second Lute Song of the Earl of Essex was arranged by Imogen Holst in the summer of 1953. The text is by Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex; Britten's setting incorporates a phrase from John Wilbye's madrigal with a similar opening line, 'Happy, O happy he'.

While Pears remained his principal interpreter, Britten was nevertheless attracted to write occasionally for other voices. Prior to meeting the tenor, he had composed three major works for the soprano Sophie Wyss (Our Hunting Fathers, On this Island, Les Illuminations), and in later years he was to write solo vocal works for Galina Vishnevskaya (The Poet's Echo), Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (Songs and Proverbs of William Blake) and Janet Baker (Phaedra). In December 1947 he composed **A Charm of Lullabies** for the mezzo-soprano Nancy Evans, who, in the late 1940s, was a member of his inner circle and a leading member of the English Opera Group. She had shared the role of Lucretia at Glyndebourne with Kathleen Ferrier in 1946 and the following year created Nancy in Albert Herring. Her success in these roles, her artistry and commitment to Britten's music, encouraged Britten to compose a relatively lightweight cycle for her in December 1947. While a sequence of lullabies might easily have led to a

somewhat monotonous atmosphere, Britten avoids this trap by varying throughout the types of cradle songs on offer. Thus the soporific rocking accompaniment of the opening Blake setting is far removed from the insistent incantation of Randolph's 'A Charm' or the local colour of Burns's 'The Highland Balou'.

The first voice for which Britten consistently wrote was, of course, that of his beloved mother. Edith Britten was never more than a good amateur musician, but her constant encouragement of her youngest son brought from him a significant quantity of songs, most of which remain unpublished. The present discs include five fascinating examples (Volume I includes six more), the earliest of which date from 1926: Shakespeare's 'Take, O take those lips away' from Measure for Measure (12 November); and Burns's 'Of a' the airts the wind can blaw' (28 November). These are joined by Nerval's 'Dans les bois' (18 June 1928), an exact contemporary of Britten's precocious orchestral settings of Hugo and Verlaine in the Quatre Chansons françaises; Sackville's 'Oh why did e'er my thoughts aspire' (4 January 1929); and he most sophisticated of this group of unpublished items, a setting from Joyce's Chamber Music, 'Lean out of the window, Goldenhair' (3 August 1930), a text already memorably set in 1925 by Britten's teacher, Frank Bridge, and often performed by Pears and Britten. Also to be included among these songs for his mother is a setting of Belloc's 'The Birds', originally composed for soprano and strings in 1929 and subsequently revised in 1930 with piano accompaniment. Dedicated to Mrs Britten on its publication, this charming Christmas song was first publicly performed by Sophie Wyss and the composer in 1936.

The earliest song from the posthumously published collection of miscellaneous songs under the title **The Red Cockatoo & Other Songs** (1994) is 'A Poison Tree', Britten's first setting of a poem by Blake to whose verse he would return many times in future years. The song was composed on 2 March 1935: 'it's not much good – more an exercise than anything,' wrote the composer in his diary. The song remained unpublished in his lifetime. Blake's 'A Poison Tree' was a poem to which Britten returned exactly 30 years later when composing his final Blake songs, the *Songs and Proverbs of William Blake*. As with the later setting, the 1935 'Poison Tree' was written for the baritone voice.

The catchy character of 'When you're feeling like expressing your affection' is not unlike the Auden Cabaret Songs (1937), and it seems likely that the anonymous text is in fact by W.H. Auden, who worked for six months at the GPO Film Unit alongside Britten in 1935–6. The song amusingly extols the virtues of the public telephone service and would have been intended for one of the Unit's publicity films.

The setting of Peter Burra's poem 'Not even summer yet' was composed on 9 October 1937. (On the same day Britten also set Auden's 'As it is, plenty', the final song of *On This Island*). Britten had first met Burra (1909–1937) — who had been at Lancing College with Peter Pears — in Barcelona at the 1936 ISCM Festival, about which Burra wrote as a music critic for *The Times*. It was Burra's tragic early death in an air accident in April 1937 that brought Britten and Pears into a closer relationship: while they knew each other slightly at this period, it was only while sorting out Burra's effects that their relationship blossomed.

Burra's twin sister, the singer Nell Moody, recalled the circumstances of the song's composition: 'After he was killed, a mutual friend Julie Behrend ... suggested that Ben should write the song for me to sing. I sang it first with Gordon Thorne accompanying at a concert in memory of Peter.' The Burra setting was not heard again until 1983.

'The Red Cockatoo' was first performed by Lucy Shelton and Ian Brown at the 1991 Aldeburgh Festival. It had been composed over 40 years earlier, on 24 January 1938, while Britten was lodging with his sister Beth's future parents-in-law at Peasenhall, Suffolk. He wrote in his diary: 'Do a certain amount of work. Clearing up — writing a little music (Po-Chui-i).' Although the setting appears to be unconnected to any larger scheme, this brief song shows Britten's early interest in Arthur Waley's translations of Chinese poetry, an interest perhaps influenced by Mahler's settings of Bethge's *Die chinesische Flöte* in *Das Lied von der Erde*, a work Britten much admired. Almost 20 years later, Waley's translations were to provide Britten with the texts for his tenor and guitar cycle *Songs from the Chinese*.

The Beddoes songs 'Wild with passion' and 'if thou wilt ease thine heart' were composed in April 1942 during Britten and Pears's return from the United States to the UK. During the voyage Britten planned Peter Grimes, finished off the Hymn to St Cecilia, and composed A Ceremony of Carols, finding the texts for the carols in an anthology of poetry bought in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where the boat made its last stop before making the dangerous Atlantic crossing in convoy. The same volume also included the Beddoes poems. 'If thou wilt ease thine heart' contains an early example of Britten using the heterophonic techniques he had recently encountered in Balinese music, and which he was to explore more fully in the 1960s.

Britten left an unfinished attempt at a setting of MacNeice's 'Cradle Song for Eleanor' in the United

States when he departed in 1942. On his return to England he resumed his friendship with MacNeice, with whom he had collaborated on Group Theatre productions in the 1930s. The association was further strengthened in 1942 by MacNeice's marriage to Hedli Anderson, for whom Britten and Auden composed their Cabaret Songs. In a letter to a friend in September 1942 Britten remarked: 'I'm doing separate vocal works with Louis MacNeice, whom we see a great deal of.' Britten's completed setting of 'Sleep, my darling, sleep' probably dates from the autumn of 1942, when Britten and MacNeice also collaborated on a propaganda radio series entitled *Britain to America*, and would have been intended for Hedli Anderson. who by no means restricted herself to cabaret repertoire.

During their collaboration on *The Rape of Lucretia*, librettist Ronald Duncan provided the text for Britten's 'Birthday Song for Erwin', a *pièce d'occasion* to celebrate the 60th birthday of the Austrianborn musician Erwin Stein on 7 November 1945. Stein, a former Schoenberg pupil, first met Britten in Vienna in 1934 at the offices of the music publishers Universal Edition, where Stein was an editor. After the 1938 *Anschluss*, he emigrated to London, where he worked as an editor at Boosey & Hawkes, Britten's publishers since 1935. He soon became one of the composer's closest friends and advisers. 'Birthday Song for Erwin' was first performed by Pears and Britten at Stein's birthday party. Its Lydian-inflected A major was undoubtedly inspired by Duncan's opening line, 'See how the sun/strikes the bronze gong of the earth', and shares an affinity with Britten's *Young Apollo* (1939), cast in the same sundrenched tonality, and his final opera *Death in Venice* (1973).

Britten would have learned much about the artistry of the German baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau from Pears, who sang with him at various Bach festivals in Europe during the 1950s. In 1961, when working on the *War Requiem*, Britten invited Fischer-Dieskau to take part in the premiere, tailoring the baritone part to his particular voice; two years later he conceived the baritone part in *Cantata Misericordium* for him. The association between singer and composer prospered: Britten discussed the possibility of writing an operatic version of *King Lear* for Fischer-Dieskau, and he was attracted by the possibility of a chamber vocal piece for the consort the baritone had formed with his cellist wife Irmgard Poppen.

An invitation to appear at the 1965 Aldeburgh Festival spurred Britten on to write a song cycle for Fischer-Dieskau. He told the singer in January 1965: 'My new piece – which looks at the moment like being just with piano ... is going to be big and serious – words by Blake – do you like the idea?' He later wrote: 'I am glad that you have made friends with the idea of the "Blake Songs". Because I am fond of

them and worked hard on them. Peter organized a wonderful arrangement for me – six or seven songs, interspersed with very dramatic statements, wonderful to declaim (sung – not spoken). Very serious! It is hard to capture such weighty words in music; so far I am not entirely dissatisfied ... for a long time I could not come up with the proper idea. Now I feel that it is right for you.'

The words were selected from Blake's *Songs of Experience*, *Auguries of Innocence* and *Proverbs of Hell*. Britten completed the cycle on 6 April 1965, dedicating it 'To Dieter – the past and the future' (an oblique reference to the singer's cellist wife, who had died in childbirth a few years earlier). The cycle received its first performance on 24 June 1965 at the Aldeburgh Festival.

In **Songs and Proverbs of William Blake** Britten alternates extracts from the *Proverbs of Hell* with six of the *Songs of Experience* and a final poem from *Auguries of Innocence*. As in the *Donne Sonnets* (1945), Britten sustains a single emotional mood, with musical links and references being made between the recitative-like Proverbs and the songs. His preoccupation with non-aligned melodic lines — an innovation fully explored in the church parable *Curlew River* (1964) — is much in evidence in the Proverbs, which act as a ritornello. The songs demonstrate the composer's consummate mastery at creating atmosphere: for example, the overlapping rhythms of the piano part in 'London' conjure up the poet's 'wander[ing] thro' each chartered street'; while the organic growth of 'A Poison Tree' evokes the dark narrative of Blake's text.

The present discs conclude with **On this Island**, five settings of poems by W.H. Auden from 1937, which comprise Britten's first song cycle with piano. Britten and Auden had met in 1935 while working on a documentary film for the GPO Film Unit, and the composer immediately fell under the poet's spell. The publication in 1936 of Auden's major collection of poems, *Look, Stranger!*, inspired Britten to set several of them in May and October of the following year. From the neo-baroque 'Let the florid music praise!' to the cabaret-like final song, 'As it is, plenty', *On this Island* announced Britten as a master of song with an innate flair for the setting of English.

One of three further Auden settings on the present recording – 'The sun shines down' – belongs to 1937 but was not included as part of *On this Island*. The two remaining Auden settings post-date *On this Island*: 'Fish in the unruffled lakes' was written in January 1938, and 'What's on your mind' in 1941. Both were probably intended for a second volume of Auden settings which remained unrealized: when *On* 

this Island first appeared it was described as 'Volume I', implying there was at least a further group to be published. In the event, only 'Fish in the unruffled lakes' was published in Britten's lifetime, as an independent item in 1947.

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Malcolm Martineau was born in Edinburgh. He regularly appears with Sir Thomas Allen, Susan Graham, Simon Keenlyside, Magdalena Kožená, Dame Felicity Lott, Thomas Quasthoff, Michael Schade and Bryn Terfel. He has presented his own series at St John's, Smith Square, the Wigmore Hall and at the Edinburgh Festival. He accompanied in masterclasses at the Britten-Pears School, Aldeburgh for Dame Joan Sutherland, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Suzanne Danco and Ileana Cotrubas. His many recordings include Schubert, Schumann and English song recitals with Bryn Terfel, Schubert and Strauss recitals with Simon Keenlyside, recitals with Angela Gheorghiu, Barbara Bonney, Susan Graham and Magdalena Kožená, and the complete folk songs of Beethoven and Britten. He was a given an honorary doctorate at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in 2004 and appointed International Fellow of Accompaniment in 2009.

**Allan Clayton** (tenor) was a chorister at Worcester Cathedral before going up to St John's College, Cambridge on a choral scholarship, and then postgraduate studies on the opera course at the Royal Academy of Music. He was a member of the BBC New Generation Artists scheme from 2007–9 and received the John Christie Award after his highly successful debut in the title role of *Albert Herring* at the 2008 Glyndebourne Festival. He was also nominated for both the 2009 RPS Young Artist award and the 2009 South Bank Show Breakthrough Award. On stage, Allan has most recently sung the role of Camille in Opera North's production of *The Merry Widow*, while concert engagements have included his well-received debut with the New York Philharmonic in performances of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. He will sing the roles of Lysander (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and Castor (*Castor and Pollux*) for English National Opera during 2011 and will appear at the Bregenz Festival for a performance of Haydn's *Creation*.

Jennifer Johnston (mezzo-soprano) read law at Cambridge University and practiced as a barrister, before graduating from the Royal College of Music's opera course with distinction. She was a member of both the National Opera Studio, where she was sponsored by Opera North, and the Britten-Pears Young Artists Programme. She is a Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist and a BBC New Generation

Artist. During the summer of 2006, she made her debuts at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and the Salzburg Festival. Other operatic engagements have included Dido for Opéra de Lille, Suzuki (Madama Butterfly), Irene (Tamerlano), Mercédès (Carmen) and Hansel (Hänsel und Gretel), all for Scottish Opera, Mrs Herring (Albert Herring) for the Aldeburgh Festival, and Lucretia (The Rape of Lucretia) for the Dartington Festival. She is a member of the Prince Consort, with whom she has given recitals at the Wigmore Hall and at residency and at Aldeburgh, and has released a disc of Brahms and Hough for Linn Records. Recent concert and recital engagements include working with Bernard Haitink, Leonard Slatkin and Malcolm Martineau at the Aldeburgh Festival and the Edinburgh International Festival, and with the BBC Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, The English Concert and Akademie für Alte Musik.

Irish tenor **Robin Tritschler** graduated from the Royal Irish Academy of Music and the Royal Academy of Music, London. The recipient of many awards, he has worked regularly in recital with Simon Lepper, Roger Vignoles, Malcolm Martineau and Graham Johnson and has appeared with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hong Kong Philharmonic and at the Aldeburgh Festival. He appeared at La Monnaie, Brussels, sang in the world premiere of Roger Waters' *Ça Ira* in Poland and sang Rodrigo (*Otello*), Count Almaviva (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Marzio (*Mitridate*), Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) and Narraboth (*Salome*) on contract with the Welsh National Opera. He returned to WNO as a guest for Jaquino (*Fidelio*) and Belmonte (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*). Robin's upcoming opera engagements include Ferrando (*Cosi fan tutte*) and Benedict (*Béatrice et Bénédict*) for the WNO, and he will appear in recital with Graham Johnson in Washington, Antwerp and at the Wigmore Hall.

Hailed recently in the press as 'Scotland's Top Tenor', **Nicky Spence** is a young artist at English National Opera, having trained at the GSMD and the National Opera Studio under the tutelage of John Evans. Winner of the National Bruce Millar Opera Prize, Nicky sings in repertoire ranging from Handel and Mozart to Donizetti, Britten and Jonathan Dove. A Concordia Foundation Artist, Britten-Pears Young Artist, Georg Solti and Samling Scholar, his other awards include the Kathleen Ferrier Young Singers Award, the Concordia Barthel Prize, Sybil Tutton Award, Dewar Prize, a Young Classical Performer of the Year nomination at the Classical Brit Awards and a place in the final of the Gold Medal at the Guildhall School.

Since leaving Oxford University, where he was a choral scholar at New College with a degree in music, **Benjamin Hulett** (tenor) has worked with many of Britain's leading choirs and orchestras. He is much in demand across a wide range of genres and has been hailed by the national press as one of the most promising young tenors of today. Most recently he has appeared in concert with Philippe Herreweghe, Sir Andrew Davis, Sir Roger Norrington, Christopher Hogwood, Ivor Bolton and Harry Bicket. He was a principal artist with the Hamburgische Staatsoper, where roles included Oronte (Alcina), Flute (A Midsummer Night's Dream), Jaquino (Fidelio), the Four Servants (Les Contes d'Hoffmann), Tamino (Die Zauberflöte) and Ferrando (Così fan tutte). He made his debuts with the Bavarian State Opera as Oronte, at the Theater an der Wien in the world premiere of Johannes Kalitzke's Die Besessenen and at the Salzburg Festival in Elektra. He sang Arbace with Europa Galante and Fabio Biondi and made a return to the Hamburgische Staatsoper as a guest artist for Tamino and Narraboth (Salome). Recent engagements include Peter Quint (The Turn of the Screw) for Opera North, and his debuts with the Deutsche Staatsoper, Berlin (Henze's Phaedra), at the Baden-Baden Festival (Salome) and at the 2011 Edinburgh Festival.

Hailed by Rupert Christiansen in the Daily Telegraph's 'Opera Highlights' as Best Newcomer, **Benedict Nelson** (baritone) studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the National Opera Studio. He has won numerous prizes including second prize at the Kathleen Ferrier Awards and the Guildhall Gold Medal, Highlights of the 2010–11 season included an acclaimed Valentin in a new production of Gounod's Faust for English National Opera, Demetrius (A Midsummer Night's Dream, also a new production) for ENO, Tarquinius (The Rape of Lucretia) for Opéra Angers-Nantes, his Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra debuts, Ping (Turandot) at ENO, The Tender Land at Opéra de Lyon and the world premiere of The Lion's Face at the Linbury Studio. ROH, A protégé of Sir Thomas Allen and a Samling scholar, Benedict has performed under conductors including Sir Neville Marriner, David Parry, Bernard Labadie, Sir Roger Norrington and Thomas Zehetmair. Other recent engagements include his BBC Symphony Orchestra debut under Jiří Bělohlávek singing Brahms's German Requiem, his debut recital at the Cheltenham Festival, Britten songs at Snape Maltings with Malcolm Martineau, Silvano (Un ballo in maschera) for Opera Holland Park and concerts with the Classical Opera Company. In the 2011-12 season Benedict's engagements include Belcore (L'elisir d'amore) for English National Opera and the title role in Billy Budd in a brand new production by David Alden also for FNO

Elizabeth Atherton studied at Trinity College Cambridge and RSAMD with Patricia MacMahon. She has won several prestigious prizes including the Maggie Teyte Prize. She was an Associate Artist at Welsh National Opera and has also performed numerous roles at Opera North. Other opera performances include appearances at Grange Park, English Touring Opera, the Royal Albert Hall and at the Aldeburgh, Bregenz, Buxton and Holland festivals. Concert highlights include performances with BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Symphony, BBC Scottish Symphony, London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of Sinfonica di Milano, Orchestre de Paris, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The Sixteen, Northern Sinfonia and Royal Scottish National Orchestra with conductors including Richard Hickox, Andrew Davies, Jiří Bělohlávek, Sir Charles Mackerras, Mikhail Pletnev, Antonio Pappano, Sir Neville Marriner, Pierre Boulez, David Willcocks and Thierry Fischer. In recital she has appeared at Wigmore Hall, Leeds Lieder Festival, Purcell Room, Aldeburgh Festival, St David's Hall, King's Place and ROH Linbury Studio. She has recorded discs for Hyperion and EMI and a recital disc with Roderick Williams and lain Burnside for Just Accord.

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## Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564)

1 Si come nella penna e nell'inchiostro e l'alto e l' basso e l' mediocre stile, e ne marmi l'immagrin ricca e vile, secondo che la trar l'ingegnio nostro; così, signior mie car, nel petto vostro, quante l'orgoglio è forse ogni atto umile; ma io sol quel c'a me proprio è e simile ne traggo, come fuor nel viso mostro. Chi semina sospir, lacrime e doglie, (l'umor dal ciel terreste,shietto e solo, a' vari semi vario si converte), però pianto e dolor ne miete e coglie; chi mira alta beltà con si gran duolo, ne ritrà 'doglie e pene acerbe e certe.

#### Sonnet XXXI

2 A che più debbi' omai l'intensa voglia sfogar con pianti o con parole meste, se di tal sorte 'l ciel, che l'alma veste, tard'o per tempo, alcun mai non ne spoglia? A che 'l cor lass' a più morir m'invoglia, s'altri pur dee morir? Dunque per queste luci l'ore del fin fian men molestre, ch'ogn' altro ben val men ch'ogni mia doglia. Però se 'l colpo, ch'io ne rub' e 'nvolo, Schifar non poss'; almen, s'e destinato, ch entrera 'infra la dolcezza e 'l duolo? Se vint' e pres' i' debb'esser beato, maraviglia non è se nud' e solo, resto prigion d'un Cavalier armato.

#### Sonetto XXX

3 Veggio co' bei vostri occhi un dolce lume, che co' miei ciechi già veder non posso; porto co' vostri piedi un pondo addosso, che de' mie zoppi non e già costume. Volo con le vostr' ale serza piume; col vostr'ingegno al ciel sempre son mosso; dal vostr'arbitrio son pallido e rosso, freddo al sol, caldo alle più fredde brume.

## Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo

#### Sonnet XVI

Just as there is a high, a low, and a middle style in pen and ink, and as within the marble are images rich and poor, according as our fancy knows how to draw them forth: so within your heart, dear love, there are perhaps, as well as pride, some humble feelings: but I draw thence only what is my desert and like to what I show outside on my face. Whoever sows sighs, tears and lamentations (Heaven's moisture on earth, simple and pure, adapts itself differently to different seeds), reaps and gathers grief and sadness: whoever looks on high beauty with so great a grief, reaps doubtful hopes and sure and bitter pain.

#### Sonnet XXXI

Why must I go on venting my ardent desire in tears and melancholy words, if Heaven that dresses the soul in grief, never, soon or late, allows relief?
Why should my weary heart long for death since all must die? So to these eyes my last hours will be less painful, all my grief being greater than any joy. If, therefore, I cannot avoid these blows, nay, even seek them, since it is my fate, who is the one that stands always between joy and grief? If to be happy I must be conquered and held captive, no wonder then that I, unarmed and alone, remain the prisoner of a Cavalier in arms.

#### Sonnet XXX

With your lovely eyes I see a sweet light that yet with my blind ones I cannot see; with your feet I carry a weight on my back which with my lame ones I cannot; with your wings I, wingless, fly; with your spirit I move forever heavenward; at your wish I blush or turn pale, cold in the sunshine, or hot in the coldest midwinter.

Nel voler vostro è sol la voglia mia, i mie' pensier nel vostro cor si fanno, nel vostro fiato son le mie parole. Come luna da sè sol par ch'io sia; chè gli occhi nostri in ciel veder non sanno se non quel tanto che n'accende il sole.

## Sonetto LV

Tu sa, ch'io so, signor mie, che tu sai ch'i veni per goderti più da presso; e sai ch'i' so, che tu sa' c'i' son desso: a che più indugio a salutarci omai? Se vera è la speranza che mi dai, se vero è i' buon desio che m'è concesso, rompasi il mur fra l'uno e l'altro messo; che doppia forza hann' i celati guai. S'i amo sol di te, signor mie caro, quel che di te più ami, non ti sdegni; che l'un dell'altro spirto s'innamora, quel che nel tuo bel volto bramo e 'mparo, e mal compres' è degli umani ingegni, chi' uvol veder, convien che prima mora.

## Sonetto XXXVIII

5 Rendete agli occhi miei, o fonte o fiume, l'onde della non vostra e salda vena. Che più v'innalza, e cresce, e con più lena che non è l' vostro natural costume. E tu, folt'air, che 'l celeste lume tempri a' tristi occhi, de' sospir miei piena, rendigli al cor mio lasso e rasserena tua scura faccia al mio visivo acume. Renda la terra i passi alle mie piante, ch'ancor l'erba germogli che gli è tolta; e 'l suono Ecco, glà sorda a' miei lamenti; gli sguardi agli occhi mie, tue luci sante, ch'io possa altra bellezza un'altra volta amar, po' che di me non ti contenti.

#### Sonetto XXXII

6 S'un casto amor, s'una pietà superna, s'una fortuna infra dua amanti equale, s'un'aspra sorte all'un dell'altro cale, s'un spirto, s'un voler duo cor governa; s'un'anima in duo corpi é fatta etterna, My will is in your will alone, my thoughts are born in your heart, my words are on your breath. Alone, I am like the moon in the sky which our eyes cannot see save that part which the sun illumines.

## Sonnet LV

Thou know'st, beloved, that I know thou know'st that I am come nearer to enjoy thee more; and thou know'st that I know thou know'st that I am still the same. Why, then, do I hesitate to greet thee? If the hope thou givest me is true, if true the strong desire that is granted me, the wall between us crumbles, for secret griefs have double force. If I love in thee, beloved, only what thou lovest most, do not be angry; for so one spirit is enamoured of another that which in thy lovely face I yearn for and seek to grasp, is but ill understood by human kind, and be that would see it first must the

## Sonnet XXXVIII

Give back to my eyes, you fountains and rivers, the waves of those strong currents that are not yours, which make you swell and grow with greater power than is your natural way. And thou, heavy air, that dims the heavenly light to my sad eyes, so full of my sighs art thou, give them back to my weary heart and lighten thy dark face to my eye's keen sight. Earth, give me back my footsteps that the grass may sprout again where it was trod; and Echo, yet deaft on my laments, give back thy sound; and you blest pupils give back to my eyes their glances; that I another time may love another beauty, since with me you are not satisfied.

#### Sonnet XXXII

If love be chaste, if pity heavenly, if fortune equal between two lovers; if a bitter fate is shared by both, and if one spirit, one will rules two hearts; if in two bodies one soul is made eternal,

ambo levando al cielo e con pari ale; s'amor c'un colpo e d'un dorato strale le viscer di duo petti arda e discerna; s'amar l'un l'altro, e nessun se medesmo, d'un gusto e d'un diletto, a tal mercede, c'a un fin voglia l'uno e l'altro porre; se mille e mille non sarien centesmo a tal nodo d'amore, a tanta 'fede; esol l'isdegno il può rompere e sciorre.

## Sonetto XXIV

7 Spirto ben nato, in cui si specchia e vede nelle tuo belle membra oneste e care quante natura e'i ciel tra no' puo' fare, quand'a null'altra suo bell'opra cede; spirto leggiadro, in cui si spera e crede dentro, come di fuor nel viso appare, amor, pietà, mercè, cose si rare che mà furri in beltà con tanta fede; l'amor mi prende, e la beltà mi lega; la pietà, la mercè con dolci sguardi ferma speranz'al cor par che ne doni. Qual uso o qual governo al mondo niega, qual crudeltà per tempo, o qual più tardi, c'a si bel viso morte non perdoni?

raising both to heaven on the same wings; if at one stroke and with a gilded arrow love burns and pierces two hearts to the core; if in loving one another, forgetting one's self, with one pleasure and one delight there is such reward that both wills strive for the same end; if thousands and thousands do not make one hundredth part to such a bond of love, to such constancy, can, then, mere anger break and dissolve it?

#### Sonnet XXIV

Noble soul, in whose chaste and dear limbs are reflected all that nature and heaven can achieve with us, the paragon of their works: graceful soul, within whom one hopes and believes Love, Pity and Mercy are dwelling, as they appear in your face; things so rare and never found in beauty so truly: Love takes me captive, and Beauty binds me; Pity and Mercy with sweet glances fill my heart with a strong hope.
What law or earthly government, what cruelty now to come, could forbid Death to spare such a lovely face?

Translated by Peter Pears and Elisabeth Mayer

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#### CD 1

## Second Lute Song from 'Gloriana'

Words from Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex
[\*Gloriana libretto by William Plomer]

8 Happy were he could finish forth his fate in some unhaunted desert, most obscure from all societies, from love and hate of worldly folk; then might he sleep secure; then wake again, and give God ever praise, content with hips and haws and bramble-berry; in contemplation spending all his days, and change of holy thoughts to make him merry; where, when he dies, his tomb may be a bush, where harmless robin dwells with gentle thrush.

## Chamber Music (V)

James Joyce (1882–1941)

Lean out of the window,
Goldenhair,
I heard you singing
a merry air.

My book is closed; I read no more, watching the fire dance on the floor.

I have left my book,
I have left my room,
for I heard you singing
through the gloom,
singing and singing
a merry air.
lean out of the window,
Goldenhair.

## A Charm of Lullabies

#### 1. A cradle song

William Blake (1757–1827)

Sleep, sleep, beauty bright,
dreaming o'er the joys of night;
sleep, sleep, in thy sleep
little sorrows sit and weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face soft desires I can trace, secret joys and secret smiles, little pretty infant wiles.

O! the cunning wiles that creep in thy little heart asleep. When thy little heart does wake then the dreadful lightnings break,

from thy cheek and from thy eye, o'er the youthful harvests nigh. Infant wiles and infant smiles Heaven and Earth of peace beguiles.

## 2. The Highland Balou Robert Burns (1759–1796)

11 Hee Balou, my sweet wee Donald, picture o' the great Clanronald! Brawlie kens our wanton Chief what gat my young Highland thief. (Hee Balou!)

Leeze me on thy bonnie craigie! And thou live, thou'll steal a naigie, travel the country thro' and thro', and bring hame a Carlisle cow!

Thro' the Lawlands, o'er the Border, weel, my babie, may thou furder! Herry the louns o' the laigh Countrie, syne to the Highlands hame to me!

## 3. Sephestia's Lullaby

Robert Greene (1558–1592)

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee; when thou art old there's grief enough for thee.

Mother's wag, pretty boy, Father's sorrow, father's joy; when thy father first did see such a boy by [him]<sup>1</sup> and me, he was glad, I was woe; fortune changèd made him so, when he left his pretty boy, last his sorrow, first his joy.

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee; when thou art old there's grief enough for thee.

The wanton smiled, father wept, mother cried, baby leapt; more he crow'd, more we cried, nature could not sorrow hide: He must go, he must kiss child and mother, baby bliss, for he left his pretty boy, father's sorrow, father's joy.

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee, when thou art old there's grief enough for thee.

#### 4 A Charm

Thomas Randolph (1605–1635)

13 Quiet!

Sleep! or I will make Erinnys whip thee with a snake, and cruel Rhadamanthus take thy body to the boiling lake, where fire and brimstones never slake; thy heart shall burn, thy head shall ache, and ev'ry joint about thee quake; and therefor dare not yet to wake! Quiet, sleep! Quiet, sleep!

Quiet!

Quiet!
Sleepl or thou shalt see
the horrid hags of Tartary,
whose tresses ugly serpants be,
and Cerberus shall bark at thee,
and all the Furies that are three—
the worst is called Tisiphone—
shall lash thee to eternity;
and therefor sleep thou peacefully.
Quiet, sleepl
Quiet, sleepl
Ouiet!

## 5. The Nurse's Song

John Phillip (fl. 1561)

14 Lullaby baby, lullaby baby,

Thy nurse will tend thee as duly as may be. Lullaby baby!

Be still, my sweet sweeting, no longer do cry; sing lullaby baby, lullaby baby.

Let dolours be fleeting, I fancy thee, I... to rock and to lull thee I will not delay me.

Lullaby baby, lullabylabylaby baby, Thy nurse will tend thee as duly as may be, lullabylabylaby baby.

The gods be thy shield and comfort in need! The gods be thy shield and comfort in need! Sing Lullaby baby, Iullabylaby baby.

They give thee good fortune and well for to spee and this to desire... I will not delay me. This to desire... I will not delay me.

Lullaby lullabylaby baby, Thy nurse will tend thee as duly as may be. Lullabylabylabylaby baby.

## The hirds

15 When Jesus Christ was four years old, the angels brought Him toys of gold, which no man ever had bought or sold.

> And yet with these He would not play. He made Him small fowl out of clay, and blessed them till they flew away.

Tu creasti, Domine.<sup>1</sup>
Jesus Christ, thou child so wise,
bless mine hands and fill mine eyes,
and bring my soul to Paradise.

<sup>1</sup>Translation: Thou hast created them. O Lord.

## Two Songs by Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

## If it's ever spring again

16 If it's ever spring again, spring again, I shall go where went I when down the moor-cock splashed, and hen, seeing me not, amid their flounder, standing with my arm around her; if it's ever spring again, spring again, I shall go where went I then.

> If it's ever summer-time, summer-time, with the hay crop at the prime, and the cuckoos – two – in rhyme, as they used to be, or seemed to, we shall do as long we've dreamed to, if it's ever summer-time, summer-time, with the hav, and bees achime.

## The Children and Sir Nameless

17 Sir nameless, once of Athelhall, declared: "These wretched children romping in my park trample the herbage till the soil is bared, and yap and yell from early morn till dark! Go keep them harnessed to their set routines: Thank God I've none to hasten my decay; for green remembrance there are better means than offspring, who but wish their sires away."

Sir Nameless of that mansion said anon:

To be perpetuate for my mightiness sculpture must image me when I am gone.'

— He forthwith summoned carvers there express to shape a figure stretching seven-odd feet (for he was tall) in alabaster stone, with shield, and crest, and casque, and sword complete: when done a statelier work was never known.

Three hundred years hied; church restorers came, and, no one of his lineage being traced, they thought an effigy so large in frame

best fitted for the floor. There it was placed, under the seats for schoolchildren. And they kicked out his name, and hobnailed off his nose; and, as they yawn through sermon-time, they say, "Who was this old stone man beneath our toes?"

## **Three Soutar Settings**

## Dawtie's Devotion

18 Keep me leal\*, and keep me weel, and keep me bricht and bonnie; be day and be night and cannel-licht, and awa' frae the bogey-mannie.

> A bitie bake, and a bitie cake, and a bitie for daddy and mammie; and at leerie-law† and at beddie-baw I'll aye be your ain wee lammie.

\*true tcock-crow

## The Gullv\*

19 And wudna onie lad be gled that he'd been born as Bengie noo was gled on his ain birthday morn:

> to hae on his birthday morn, richt there in his lufe† sae ticht, the bonnie heft† o'horn and the blade sae glinty bricht?

He tried it on a raip: he tried it on a stick: and wow! It gar'd ye gape to see it wark sae snick.

He thocht he'd hae a try at Grannie's muckle chair: and maybe, by and by, he'll try his hurdies there.

\*knife †fist thandle

#### Tradition

20 'Heh! young folk arena what they were', wheeng'd the auld craw to his cronie: 'Sic galivantin here and there, sic wastrie and aye wantin mair: their menners far frae bonnie.

Eh me! It's waur and waur they get in gumption and decorum: and sma' respec' for kirk or state.' Wi' that the auld craw wagg'd his pate as his father did afore him.

William Soutar (1898-1943)

## Of a' the airts the wind can blaw

Robert Burns 1759-1796

21 Of a' the airts the wind can blaw, I dearly like the west, for there the bonie lassie lives, the lassie I lo'e best:

There's wild-woods grow, and rivers row, and mony a hill between: but day and night my fancy's flight is ever wi' my lean.

I see her in the dewy flowers, I see her sweet and fair: I hear her in the tunefu' birds, I hear her charm the air: there's not a bonie flower that springs, by fountain, shaw, or green; there's not a bonie bird that sings, but minds me o' my Jean.

## Britten: Who are these Children?

William Soutar

#### 1. A Riddle

22 There's pairt o' it young and pairt o' it auld: there's pairt o' it het and pairt o' it cauld: there's pairt o' it bare and pairt o' it claid: there's pairt o' it quick and pairt o' it dead. (Answer: the earth)

## 2. A Laddie's Song

23 Ol it's owre the braes abūne' our toun whan the simmer days come in; whaur the blue-bells grow, and the burnies row,<sup>2</sup> and gowdan<sup>3</sup> is the whin.<sup>4</sup> The gowk<sup>2</sup> sings frae the birken-schaw,<sup>6</sup> and the laverock' far aboon<sup>8</sup> the bees bummer<sup>9</sup> by, the peesies<sup>10</sup> cry, and the launchin linn lowps<sup>11</sup> down.

<sup>1</sup>hillsides above <sup>2</sup>streams roll down <sup>3</sup>golden <sup>4</sup>gorse <sup>5</sup>cuckoo <sup>6</sup>birch copse <sup>7</sup>lark <sup>8</sup>above <sup>9</sup>hum <sup>10</sup>plovers <sup>11</sup>sparkling waterfall leaps

## 3. Nightmare

24 The tree stood flowering in a dream: beside the tree a dark shape bowed: as lightning glittered the axe-gleam across the wound in the broken wood. The tree cried out with human cries: from its deepening hurt the blood ran: the branches flowered with children's eyes and the dark murderer was a man. There came a fear which sighed aloud: and with its fear the dream-world woke: yet in the day the tree still stood bleeding beneath the axe-man's stroke.

## 4. Black Day

25 A skelp<sup>1</sup> frae his teacher for a' he cudna spell: a skelp frae his mither for cowpin<sup>2</sup> owre the kail.<sup>3</sup> a skelp frae his brither for clourin<sup>4</sup> his braw<sup>5</sup> hat: and a skelp frae his faither for the Lord kens what.

<sup>1</sup>beating <sup>2</sup>upsetting <sup>3</sup>broth <sup>4</sup>bashing <sup>5</sup>fine

#### 5. Bed-time

26 Cuddle-doun, my bairnie; the dargie<sup>1</sup> day is dûne: yon's a siller sternie<sup>2</sup> ablow the siller mûne: like a wabster<sup>3</sup> body hingin on a threed, far abûne my laddie and his wee creepie-bed.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>doleful <sup>2</sup>silver star <sup>3</sup>spider <sup>4</sup>truckle

## 6. Slaughter

27 Within the violence of the storm the wise men are made dumb: young bones are hollowed by the worm: the babe dies in the womb

Above the lover's mouth is pressed the silence of a stone death rides upon an iron beast and tramples cities down. and shall the multitudinous grave our ennity inter; these dungeons of misrule enslave our bitterness and fear? All are conquered; and in vain the laurel binds the brow: the phantoms of the dead remain and from our faces show.

## 7. A Riddle

28 It was your faither and mither, yet it wasna weddit: it was your sister or brither though nane were beside it. Wit and wisdom it lent ye, yet is wasna laired.<sup>3</sup> and though it dee' d<sup>2</sup> or it kent<sup>3</sup> ye it was never buried.

(Answer: the child you were)

1 learned 2 died 3 knew

## 8. The Larky Lad

29 The larky lad frae the pantry skipp't through the muckle ha'; he had sma' fear o' the gentry, and his respec' was sma'. He cockit his face richt merry; and as he jiggit on his mou' was round as a cherry like he whistled a braw tune. And monie a noble body glower'd doun frae his frame o'gowd on the plisky' pantry-laddie wha was sae merry and royd. 2

<sup>1</sup>mischievous <sup>2</sup>rude

## 9. Who are these Children?

30 With easy hands upon the rein, and hounds at their horses' feet, the ladies and the gentlemen ride through the village street. Brightness of blood upon the coats and on the women's lips: brightness of silver at the throats and on the hunting whips.

Is there a dale more calm, more green under this morning hour, a scene more alien than this scene within a world at war? Who are these children gathered here out of the fire and smoke that with remembering faces stare upon the foxing folk?

## 10. Supper

31 Steepies' for the bairnie sae moolie' in the mou': parritch for a strappan lad to mak his beard grow. Stovies' for a muckle man to keep him stout and hale: a noggin for the auld carl' to gar' him sleep weel. Bless the meat, and bless the drink,

and the hand that steers the pat: and be guid to beggar-bodies whan they come to your yett.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>bread sops <sup>2</sup>soft <sup>3</sup>potatoes <sup>4</sup>fellow <sup>5</sup>make <sup>6</sup>gate

## 11. The Children

32 Upon the street they lie beside the broken stone:

the blood of children stares from the broken stone. Death came out of the sky in the bright afternoon: darkness slanted over the bright afternoon.

Again the sky is clear

but upon the earth a stain: the earth is darkened with a darkening stain:

a wound which everywhere corrupts the hearts of men:

the blood of children corrupts the hearts of men.

Silence is in the air: the stars move to their places:

silent and serene the stars move to their places:

but from earth the children stare with blind and fearful faces:

and our charity is in the children's faces.

## 12. The Auld Aik

33 The auld aik's' doun: the auld aik's doun: twa hunner year it stüde, or mair, but noo it's doun, doun. The auld aik's doun: the auld aik's doun: we were sae shair it wud aye be there, but noo it's doun, doun.

1<sub>Oak</sub>

# Songs from The Red Cockatoo & Other Songs (1935–60)

#### A Poison Tree

William Blake (1757–1827)

I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I water'd it in fears, night & morning with my tears; and I sunned it with smiles, and with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night, till it bore an apple bright. and my foe beheld it shine, and he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole when the night had veil'd the pole, In the morning glad I see my foe outstretch'd beneath the tree.

# When you're feeling like expressing your affection W.H. Auden (1907–1973)

2 When you're feeling like expressing your affection for someone night and day, take up the 'phone and ask for your connection, we'll give it right away.
Eve or Adam, anyone you ask for we'll find somehow.
Sir or Madam, if you get a taste for Paris, Berlin, Moscow, enter any telephone kiosk O, have your say, press button A, here's your number now.

## Not even summer yet

Peter Burra (1909–1937)

Not even summer yet
can make me quite forget
that still most blessed thing,
the early spring,
I watch'd the red-tipp'd trees
burst into greeneries;
saw the blossom come
like sea dissolv'd in foam.
But in the lover's ways,
the summer of his days
is come from such a spring
as Poets cannot sing!

#### The red cockatoo

Arthur Waley (1889–1969)
4 Sent as a present from Annam –

are as a present monomination are dockatoo.
Colour'd like the peach-tree blossom, speaking with the speech of men.
And they did to it what is always done to the learned and eloquent.
They took a cage with stout bars and shut it up inside.

## Wild with passion

Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803-1849) 5 Wild with passion, sorrow-beladen. bend the thought of thy stormy soul on its home, on its heaven, the loved maiden: and peace shall come at her eyes' control. Even so night's starry rest possesses with its gentle spirit these tamed waters, and bids the wave, with weedy tresses embower the ocean's pavement stilly where the sea-girls lie, the mermaid daughters, whose eves, not born to weep. more palely-lidded sleep. than in our fields the lily: and sighing in their rest more sweet than its breath: and quiet as its death upon a lady's breast.

## If thou wilt ease thine heart

Beddoes

6 If thou wilt ease thine heart of love and all its smart, then sleep, dear, sleep; and not a sorrow hang any tear on your eyelashes; lie still and deep, sad soul, until the sea-wave washes the rim o' th' sun tomorrow. in eastern sky. But wilt thou cure thy heart of love and all its smart, then die, dear, die; 'tis deeper, sweeter, than on a rose bank to lie dreaming with folded eye; and then alone, amid the beaming of love's stars, thou'lt meet her in eastern sky.

#### Cradle Song

Louis MacNeice (1907-1963)
Sleep, my darling, sleep;
the pity of it all
is all we compass if
we watch disaster fall.
Put off your twenty-odd
encumbered years and creep
into the only heaven,
the robbers' cave of sleep.

The wild grass will whisper, lights of passing cars will streak across your dreams and fumble at the stars; Life will tap the window only too soon again, life will have her answer – do not ask her when.

When the winsome bubble shivers, when the bough breaks, will be the moment but not here or now. Sleep and asleep, forget the watchers on the wall awake all night who know the pity of it all.

## Birthday Song for Erwin

Ronald Duncan (1914–1982)

See how the sun
strikes the bronze gong of earth,
making the linnet lift
like sparks of sound
rising to the echol
For on this day a man was born.
Music his element,
and friendship his echo.

from Fish in the unruffled lakes (1937-41)
W.H. Auden

## The sun shines down

The sun shines down on the ships at sea, it shines on you and it shines on me whatever we are or are going to be.

Tomorrow if everything goes to plan, tomorrow morning you'll be a man: let wishes be horses as fast as they can. The dogs are barking,the crops are growing, but nobody knows how the wind is blowing: gosh, to look at we're no great catch; history seems to have struck a bad patch.

We haven't the time – it's been such a rush – except to attend to our own little push: the teacher setting examinations, the journalist writing his falsifications,

the poet reciting to Lady Diana while the footmen whisper 'Have a banana', the judge enforcing the obsolete law, the banker making the loan for the war.

the expert designing the long-range gun to exterminate everyone under the sun, would like to get out but can only mutter: – 'What can I do? It's my bread and butter.'

In your house tonight you are flushed and gay; twenty-one years have passed away; tomorrow morning's another day.

If we can't love, though miles apart, if we can't trust with all our heart if we can't do that, then we're in the cart.

## What's in your mind?

10 What's in your mind, my dove, my coney; do thoughts grow like feathers, the dead end of life; is it making of love or counting of money, or raid on the jewels, the plans of a thief?

Open your eyes, my dearest dallier; let hunt with your hands for escaping me; go through the motions of exploring the familiar; stand on the brink of the warm white day.

Rise with the wind,my great big serpent; silence the birds and darken the air; change me with terror, alive in a moment; strike for the heart and have me there.

## Song

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

11 Take, o take those lips away, that so sweetly were forsworne, and those eyes: the breake of day, lights that doe mislead the Morne; but my kisses bring againe, bring againe, seales of love, but seal'd in vaine, seal'd in vaine.

> [Britten sets the last two lines: But my kisses bring againe seales of love, but all in vain.]

(Measure for Measure, Act IV Scene 1)

from 'Fish in the unruffled lakes'

# Fish in the unruffled lakes 12 Fish in the unruffled lakes

the swarming colours wear, swans in the winter air a white perfection have, and the great lion walks through his innocent grove; lion, fish and swan act, and are gone upon Time's toppling wave.

We till shadowed days are done, we must weep and sing duty's conscious wrong, the Devil in the clock, the Goodness carefully worn for atonement or for luck; we must lose our loves, on each beast and bird that moves turn an envisor look.

Sighs for folly said and done twist our narrow days; but I must bless, I must praise that you, my swan, who have all gifts that to the swan impulsive Nature gave, the majesty and pride, last night should add your yoluntary love.

## Underneath the abject willow

13 Underneath an abject willow, lover, sulk no more: act from thought should quickly follow. What is thinking for? Your unique and moping station proves you cold; Stand up and fold your map of desolation.

Bells that toll across the meadows from the sombre spire toll for these unloving shadows love does not require. All that lives may love; why longer bow to loss with arms across? Strike and you shall conquer.

Geese in flocks above you flying, their direction know, brooks beneath the thin ice flowing, to their oceans go. Coldest love will warm to action: walk then, come, into your satisfaction.

## O why did e'er my thoughts aspire

Charles Sackville (1638–1706)

14 O why did e'er my thoughts aspire to wish for that, no Crown can buyl Tis Sacrilege, but to desire what she in honour will deny, as Indians do the Eastern skies, I at a distance must adore the brighter Glories of her eyes; and never dare pretend to more.

# Songs and Proverbs of William Blake op.74 (1965) William Blake (1757–1827)

## Proverb I

15 The pride of the peacock is the glory of God. The lust of the goat is the bounty of God. The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God. The nakedness of woman is the work of God.

#### London

16 I wander thro' each charter'd street, near where the charter'd Thames does flow and mark in every face I meet marks of weakness, marks of woe.

> In every cry of every Man, in every Infant's cry of fear, in every voice, in every ban, the mind-forg'd manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweeper's cry every black'ning Church appals, and the hapless Soldier's sigh runs in blood down Palace walls. But most thro' midnight streets I hear how the youthful Harlot's curse blasts the new-born Infant's tear and blights with plaques the Marriage hearse.

#### Proverb II

17 Prisons are built with stones of Law, brothels with bricks of Religion.

## The Chimney-sweeper

18 A little black thing among the snow, crying 'weepl weepl' in notes of woel Where are thy father and mother? say? They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath, and smil'd among the winter's snow they clothed me in the clothes of death, and taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy & dance & sing they think they have done me no injury, and are gone to praise God & his Priest & King who make up a heaven of our misery.

## Proverb III

19 The bird a nest, the spider a web, man friendship.

#### A Poison Tree

20 I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I water'd it in fears, night & morning with my tears; and I sunned it with smiles, and with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night, till it bore an apple bright. and my foe beheld it shine, and he knew that it was mine. And into my garden stole when the night had veil'd the pole, in the morning glad I see my foe outstretch'd beneath the tree.

## Proverb IV

21 Think in the morning. Act in the noon. Eat in the evening. Sleep in the night.

## The Tyger

22 Tyger! Tyger! burning bright in the forests of the night: what immortal hand or eye could frame thy fearful symmetry?

> In what distant deeps or skies burnt the fire of thine eyes? On what wings dare he aspire? What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art, could twist the sinews of thy heart? And when thy heart began to beat, what dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain? in what furnace was thy brain? What the anvil? what dread grasp dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears, and water'd heaven with their tears, did he smile his work to see? Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright in the forests of the night: what immortal hand or eye dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

## Proverb V

23 The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction. If the fool would persist in his folly, he would become wise. If others had not been foolish, we should be so.

## The Fly

24 Little Fly, thy summer's play my thoughtless hand has brush'd away.

Am not I
a fly like thee?
Or art not thou
a man like me?

For I dance and drink & sing: till some blind hand shall brush my wing.

If thought is life and strength & breath and the want of thought is death;

then am I a happy fly, if I live, or if I die.

## Proverb VI

25 The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock; but of wisdom, no clock can measure. The busy bee has no time for sorrow. Eternity is in love with the productions of time.

## Ah, Sun-flower

26 Ah, Sun-flower! weary of time, who countest the steps of the Sun; seeking after that sweet golden clime, where the traveller's journey is done:

> Where the Youth pined away with desire, and the pale Virgin shrouded in snow, arise from their graves and aspire where my Sun-flower wishes to go.

## Proverb VII

27 To see a World in a Grain of Sand, and a Heaven in a Wild Flower, hold Infinity in the palm of your hand, and Eternity in an hour.

## Every Night and every Morn

28 Every Night and every worn
28 Every Night & every Morn
some to Misery are Born.
Every Morn & every Night
some are Born to sweet delight.
Some are Born to sweet delight,
some are Born to Endless Night.
We are led to Believe a Lie
when we see not Thro' the Eye,
which was Born in a Night, to perish in a Night,
when the Soul Slept in Beams of Light.
God Appears & God is Light
to those poor Souls who dwell in Night,
but does a Human Form Display
to those who Dwell in Realms of Day.

## Dans les bois

29 Au printemps l'oiseau naît et chante : n'avez-vous pas oui sa voix ?... Elle est pure, simple et touchante, la voix de l'oiseau – dans les bois !

> L'été, l'oiseau cherche l'oiselle ; il aime – et n'aime qu'une fois! Qu'il est doux, paisible et fidèle, le nid de l'oiseau – dans les bois!

Puis quand vient l'automne brumeuse, il se tait... avant les temps froids. Hélas! qu'elle doit être heureuse la mort de l'oiseau – dans les bois! In the woods

In the spring the bird is born, and sings; have you not heard his voice? It is pure, simple and touching, the bird's voice – in the woods!

In the summer, the bird looks for a mate; he loves – and loves only once! How gentle, peaceful and faithful it is, the bird's nest – in the woods!

And then, when the misty autumn comes, he falls silent – before the cold sets in.

Alas – how happy it must be, the bird's death – in the woods!

Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855)

## On this Island op.11 (1937)

WH Auden

## Let the florid music praise!

30 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; time will bring their hour: their secretive children walk through your vigilance of breath to unpardonable death, and my yows break hefore his look

## Now the leaves are falling fast

31 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 angel will not come.

Cold, impossible, ahead lifts the mountain's lovely head whose white waterfall could bless travellers in their last distress.

## Seascape

32 Look, stranger, at this island now the leaping light for your delight discovers, stand stable here and silent he that through the channels of the ear may wander like a river the swaving 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

33 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 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.

## As it is, plenty

34 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.

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