

PROGRAMME

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(1770 – 1827) **Sonata for cello and piano No 5 in D major** 19'
Op 102 No 2
(i) Allegro con brio
(ii) Adagio con molto sentimento d'affetto
(iii) Allegro – Allegro fugato

BENJAMIN BRITTEN
(1913 – 1976) **Songs and Proverbs of William Blake** 22'
Op 74
(i) Proverb I
(ii) London
(iii) Proverb II
(iv) The Chimney Sweeper
(v) Proverb III
(vi) A Poison Tree
(vii) Proverb IV
(viii) The Tyger
(ix) Proverb V
(x) The Fly
(xi) Proverb VI
(xii) Ah! Sun-flower
(xiii) Proverb VII
(xiv) Every Night and Every Morn

INTERVAL

SIR WILLIAM TURNER WALTON
(1902 – 1983) **Two Pieces for Violin and Piano** 6'
(i) Canzonetta
(ii) Scherzetto

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
(1872 – 1958) **Two Vocal Duets** 7'
(i) The Last Invocation
(ii) The Love-Song of the Birds

FRANZ SCHUBERT
(1797 – 1828) **An Schwager Kronos D369** 6'
Wandrer's Nachtlied D768

RICHARD GEORG STRAUSS
(1864 – 1949) **Vier letzte Lieder** 24'
(i) Frühling
(ii) September
(iii) Beim Schlafengehen
(iv) Im Abendrot

Texts & translations for sung works may be found below

ARTISTS

Ailish Tynan *soprano*
Johnny Herford *baritone*
James Baillieu *piano**

Maria Włoszczowska *violin*
Torun Stavseng *cello*
Libby Burgess *piano***

* Britten

** Beethoven, Vaughan Williams, Walton, Schubert, Strauss

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The passing of time is a fundamental human preoccupation. We feel it in our pulse; we measure it in units of minutes, hours, days, years; we count it, we mourn the passing of it, we wish it away. As Philip Larkin wrote, 'Where can we live but days?'. The happening of time is also what sets music apart from many other art forms: sound is created, organised and manipulated in real time to affect its hearer. This programme, drawing the time of the festival to a close, traces a selection of relationships to time.

Galileo's discovery in the sixteenth century of isochronism (the fact that the oscillation period of pendulums of equal length is constant) was adopted over the following centuries by clockmakers, and also in turn by those looking to design metronomes, to measure musical time and speed (the principal challenge being the creation of a sufficiently slow-moving pendulum for slow music). In 1814 the German inventor Dietrich Nikolaus Winkel developed a 'musical chronometer'; however he failed to patent it, and the design was copied by Johann Nepomuk Mälzel, who promptly achieved fame with the success of 'Mälzel's Metronome'. Amongst Mälzel's friends was Beethoven (for whom he had previously designed ear trumpets), who thus became the first major composer to give his pieces metronome markings. And so we open this programme with Beethoven, nodding daily to his anniversary year – his final sonata for cello and piano, the **Sonata No 5 in D major**. A gap of seven years had fallen since the third sonata for this combination, and then the fourth and fifth were written concurrently in 1815, published together as Op 102. These visionary works, along with the Piano Sonata No 28, Op 101, are generally seen to mark the beginning of Beethoven's 'late' creative period, which saw a quite astonishing group of masterpieces. The first movement at first glance exudes the same major-key shining

virtuosity as the third sonata, but it is much more taut and economical, the use of small motifs more dense and sophisticated: and unlike the first and second sonatas, the power balance between the two instruments is absolutely equal. The second movement – the only true slow movement from amongst the five cello sonatas – foreshadows the intimacy and introspection, the other-worldliness, and the transcendent spirituality which we see in the piano sonatas and quartets of the late period. This movement – solemn and profound, perhaps a response to the composer's by-then complete deafness – is described by Steven Isserlis as 'the most beautiful movement ever written for cello and piano... [a] glimpse of eternity.' This gives way to an exuberant fugue, full of cross-rhythms and closely argued, and with a real sense of Beethoven flexing his muscles for his larger contrapuntal works of this period, most obviously the gloriously mad *Große Fuge*. Again, in Isserlis' words:

For all its sense of fun – and it is fun – the fugue also conveys a strong sense of achievement, of defiant finality; after struggles that would have destroyed a lesser being, Beethoven has emerged in heroic triumph and we can hear him exulting as he bids farewell to the cello sonata.

Both Op 102 sonatas are dedicated to Countess Anna Maria von Erdödy, a Hungarian noblewoman instrumental in securing Beethoven an annuity from members of the Austrian high nobility; she was a generous patron, astute advisor, excellent amateur pianist, and among his closest confidantes and friends. When in 1814 the palace of one of Beethoven's other patrons, Count Razumovsky, burned down, the resident Schuppanzigh Quartet – which had premiered many of Beethoven's works – had to be

disbanded; the cellist, Joseph Linke, one of Beethoven's good friends, took up employment as musical tutor to the Erdödy family, and it appears that on his arrival Anna Maria asked Beethoven to write these sonatas for him (a communication which was intended to heal one of several rifts in friendship between the composer and her). On Linke's death in 1837 he was described in an obituary in the music magazine *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*:

He was a great friend of Beethoven, who wrote much for him. His way of presenting Beethoven's compositions was unique, and I have never heard any other cellists with this interpretation, which according to circumstances could be flattering, aggressive, capricious, passionate etc., in short expressing himself in the moods required, and so rendering Beethoven's essential manner.

Exactly 150 years later, in 1965, Britten was at what could be thought of as an equivalent point in his career; he had a lifetime of success and recognition behind him (albeit intermingled with insecurity, mixed reviews and personal issues), and was on the cusp of what became his own 'late period': in 1970 doctors told him he could work no more without major surgery, and from that point his health declined, his compositions became ever darker, until he died in 1976. During the sixties Britten told the young composer Nicholas Maw, 'Get as much done now as you can, because it gets much, much more difficult as you grow older.' Difficult it may have been, but the results from this period are every bit as compelling as Britten's earlier music. Rewinding to 1958, Britten was asked to write a major work for the consecration of the new Coventry Cathedral, Basil Spence's modernist building adjacent to the ruins of the fourteenth-century cathedral which had been destroyed in 1940's air raids. Premiered in 1962, the work's soloists were intended to be Galina Vishnevskaya (a Russian), Peter Pears (an Englishman) and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (a German), to demonstrate a spirit of unity between these countries (– however at the last minute the Soviet authorities did not permit Vishnevskaya to travel to Coventry for the event, so Heather Harper stepped in, although Vishnevskaya later made the

recording). This work marked the beginning of an association between Fischer-Dieskau and Britten: Britten's *Cantata Misericordium* followed for him and Pears in 1963; there were detailed discussions about the possibility of an opera based on Shakespeare's *King Lear*, in which Fischer-Dieskau would have played Lear alongside Pears as the Fool (though this never came to fruition); and then in 1965 Britten composed a song cycle for Fischer-Dieskau. The ***Songs and Proverbs of William Blake*** were premiered at the Aldeburgh Festival of that year (one of the greatest piano accompanists of the twentieth century, Gerald Moore, wrote in his memoirs about playing at all the main music festivals except for Aldeburgh, because 'as the presiding genius there is the greatest accompanist in the world, my services are not needed'). Britten had asked Pears to select the texts for the cycle; he turned to the English visionary artist and poet, William Blake, selecting seven of the *Songs of Experience*, and interspersing these with extracts from the *Proverbs of Hell* section of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in such an imaginative way that each proverb seems to foreshadow (albeit sometimes enigmatically) the tone or theme of the song that follows. Fischer-Dieskau wrote that he was 'especially taken with the terseness, the British understatement, the intellectual concentration, and the enigmatic smile of these dense, linguistically original sayings.' The texts are full of complex and ambiguous imagery: we see much of Blake's preoccupation with the hypocrisy of the nineteenth-century church; his contempt for the supposed do-gooders and their lack of integrity; his disillusionment with religiosity but his exploration of the concept of God and the Holy Spirit and the power of what exists beyond what we know. In compositional terms, the proverbs offset declamatory vocal lines, based always around the same four-note melodic fragment, against chiming piano octaves and scurrying flourishes up or down the keyboard; the two parts are often written in independent rhythm and employ the Curlew sign (as seen in the church parables, including, of course, *Curlew River*) to indicate how the two performers should listen and reconvene. The songs themselves demonstrate Britten's extraordinary ability to characterise the various scenes and characters that we encounter, from the homeless exploited little chimney sweep hopping around in the snow

(*The Chimney-Sweeper*), to the carefree little fly (*The Fly*), buzzing insistently, to the awe-inspiring growling tiger (the famous poem *Tyger, Tyger, Burning Bright*, the tiger quite wild in Blake's own painting that accompanies the poem). As we wander from scene to scene in this tableaux of observations on the nature of humanity, we see the miserable streets of London, infiltrated with poverty, disease and profanity, pitied by the rich and powerful but ultimately ignored (*London*); we see the devastating effect of anger left untackled (*A Poison Tree*), one of Britten's most extraordinarily powerful songs; we see the weariness and frustration of those gradually moving towards heaven (*Ah! Sun-flower*), mirroring that of the tall flower straining towards the light but ultimately bound to the earth; and finally (*Every Night and Every Morn*, the only text taken from a different source, *Auguries of Innocence*), we see the unremitting trudging of life and work, ultimately blown apart in a shattering climax of God's revelation at the Day of Judgement.

Until the arrival of the railways necessitated standardisation, it was common for towns to have their own time, dependent on their longitudinal location: the 360 degrees of the earth are divided into 24 time zones, each spanning about 15 degrees – but within each segment there is scope for local variation. The city of Oxford is located 1° 15' 24" West of Greenwich – so Oxford Time is 5 minutes and 2 seconds behind Greenwich Mean Time. To this day, the great bell Old Tom at Christ Church tolls at 9:05pm (101 times – the curfew for the original 101 students of the college), and the cathedral there still functions on 'Christ Church time', five minutes behind the standard watches and Apple devices around it. One chorister to grow up singing in that cathedral (despite his father having spent the train fare at the pub, and his mother having to borrow money from the greengrocer instead, meaning they missed the auditions and had to plead still to be heard...), and then to return there as undergraduate, was William Walton, who became one of the major British composers of the twentieth century. His **Two Pieces for violin and piano** date from the late 1940s, and are dedicated to 'Vivien and Larry' – Sir Laurence and Lady Vivien Olivier (Vivien Leigh), regular guests at the Waltons' home, and for a while tenants of the Waltons' Belgravia cottage (Walton being the composer

of film scores for many Olivier films). The first movement is based on a troubadour song *Amours me fait commencer une chanson*, by Thibaut de Champagne (1201-1253) – whose rule as Count of Champagne and King of Navarre was troubled politically, but whose skill and reputation as a purveyor of romantic songs was undisputed. The second movement was originally intended as a short central movement to Walton's Violin Sonata, which in the end comprises only two, both substantial, movements; that work was the result of Walton's chance meeting on a train with Yehudi Menuhin's wife, who offered to pay for the immediate treatment required to tackle the cancer of Lady Alice Wimborne, Walton's close romantic companion of fourteen years, causing Walton to offer to write the work for Menuhin in return. Alice sadly died in 1948 while that work was in composition, and he was devastated – and yet, only weeks later, he met Susana Gil Passo; they married before the year was out, and remained so until his death in 1983. Whereas the sonata is heavier and perhaps more grief-stricken, the Two Pieces (1948-1950) are largely infused with the lightness and optimism of a new chapter.

Vaughan Williams' **Two Vocal Duets** of 1903 stem from an interesting time in his career. Although he had turned thirty, and was an active part of a circle of musicians from his Cambridge and Royal College of Music days, he had only published his first work a year earlier (the song *Linden Lea*), and had not yet come to prominence as a composer. As he started to emerge from this 'lengthy apprenticeship' (studying with Parry, Wood and Stanford), the major influences on his work – often cited – were folksong and historic English church hymnody. But an interesting additional strand coming into play was the influence of Walt Whitman, who had died a decade earlier. It was Vaughan Williams' Cambridge classmate, the philosopher Bertrand Russell, who had introduced him to Whitman's poetry, and in Whitman's work Vaughan Williams found a familiar struggle to reconcile traditional Christian teachings with the scientific and societal shifts of the time (Vaughan Williams' great uncle on his mother's side was Charles Darwin; as a child, the composer once asked his mother what *The Origin of Species* meant, and she famously responded, 'The Bible says that God made the world in six days, Great Uncle Charles thinks

it took longer: but we need not worry about it, for it is equally wonderful either way'. This spectre over his formative years doubtless played into his own struggles with faith). The choice of *The Last Invocation* seems apt: on the one hand it hopes for a gentle passing from life to death, yet on the other it is conflicted by a love of life and of those being left behind – almost a Gerontius-like grappling with that journey (Elgar's great work of that name being only three years earlier than this song). Meanwhile *The Love-Song of the Birds* extracts from Whitman's elegy *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking* (one of eleven poems forming *Sea Drift*) a rapturous song by two mocking birds, which in context interrupt a scene of a Long Island beach in May (called by its original Indian name 'Paumanok'); their song is a contained unit of text set off from the poet's narrative by italics, and here set alone. These are the first of many settings of Whitman by Vaughan Williams, and might be seen as sketches for the mighty *Sea Symphony*, on which he began work in the same year (not premiered until 1910). In 1904, the same year as his *Songs of Travel* and *House of Life*, the Two Vocal Duets were performed a handful of times, in Reading and London, originally in a version with string quartet as well as piano, and then in the version heard tonight. Reviews comment mostly on the under-rehearsed quality of the performances, and perhaps it was this which did for their reputation, as Vaughan Williams withdrew them from circulation in 1904, and it was only in 1996 that his widow Ursula allowed access to these songs, along with a selection of other suppressed works (including the Piano Quintet heard last year). The original singers of the duets, both regular performers of Vaughan Williams' work, were Beatrice Spencer and Arthur Foxton Ferguson; the latter studied with Julius Stockhausen, the baritone who premiered Brahms' *German Requiem*, close friends with that composer. Although Vaughan Williams later that decade went to study with Ravel, and subsequently achieved real success with a compositional voice that incorporated French lightness of texture, much of his earlier work owes far more to that Germanic sound-world with which he was closely connected.

The years from 1773 to 1776 formed perhaps the most productive period in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's life: at this time in his

mid twenties, poems, plays and other works poured out, and the semi-autobiographical *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (*The Sorrows of Young Werther*) captured the imagination of a generation. **An Schwager Kronos** hails from that period, written in a coach on his way back to Frankfurt from Darmstadt, and depicts time itself – Father Time, if you will – as a coachman, in charge of our destinies ('Schwager' literally means brother-in-law, but historically was used as a familiar term for all mail-coach drivers). The driving quaver piano accompaniment in Schubert's setting, from fifty years after the poem was written, steers the listener through the chapters of life – from carefree youth, to stonier young adulthood, through romantic highs and lows, and without losing energy right to the end. In Graham Johnson's words:

The gates of hell hold no terrors for this wild and reckless traveller, for he has tasted life in all its glory and even this last experience is one which he will savour and embrace... On a page like this, thanks to Schubert's ability to capture the poet's tone of voice, the young Goethe himself materialises before our ears – a man for all time who has beaten the coachman at his own game, a man to change the world, a man to defy convention, a sinner and bon viveur (and all the better for that), but above all a leader and a young composer's hero. The song's dedicatee is of course the poet, and how could it be otherwise?

It is one of the great 'what ifs', or 'if onlys', that Schubert and Goethe did not meet; clearly both giants in their respective fields, the poet so inspired the composer, who set eighty of his poems to music – but did not respond to the bundle of Schubert's songs sent to him by the composer, or to the dedications made to him. Perhaps his most famous poem of all time is the second **Wandrer's Nachtlied**, written in 1780 high in the Thuringian hills, where he had climbed to view the sunset. The writing of this poem on the wall of a hunting chalet there is taught as something of a national legend to schoolchildren in Germany. Again, in the words of Graham Johnson:

Some fifty-one years later, on 27 August 1831, at the age of 82, Goethe returned

to this spot. On visiting the same chalet he recognised his own handwriting, now faded on the wall, and pondered the significance of the passing of time. When Goethe himself recounted this incident to his friend, the Berlin composer Karl Friedrich Zelter, his observations were dryly philosophical; he reflected on how much had happened in the intervening time, how much life had changed – in effect, how much water had passed under the bridge. But on that day, the poet had been in the company of the civil servant Johann Christian Mahr who left a much more emotional description of the incident: ‘Goethe read these lines and tears flowed down his cheeks. Very slowly he drew a snow-white handkerchief from his dark brown coat, dried his eyes and spoke in a soft, mournful tone: ‘Yes, wait! Soon you too will be at rest!’

Preoccupation with the passing of time, and with the closing of life, was slow to come to Richard Strauss: although he lived through two world wars – and through vast changes to society, technology and music – his existence was somehow detached from that, and his art somehow untouched by it, in an almost escapist way, perhaps. In 1947, however, Strauss came across the poetry of Hermann Hesse (the 1946 recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature) and also Eichendorff’s poem *Im Abendrot*, telling of a couple at the end of their long life together, facing death hand in hand – and he was deeply struck by these words. At this time he and the soprano Pauline de Ahna had been married for 53 years (despite the often turbulent nature of their relationship); they were a real power couple of the music world, and she had been the inspiration behind so much of his music, both in opera and amongst his 200 songs. Her voice was long faded by the time he set these texts, but was surely the one he had in mind as he wrote this farewell to life and love, returning to the lush Romanticism that had been his signature as a young musician.

Frühling is a hymn to young life, filled with soaring vocal lines and surging harmonies, whilst *September* turns to themes of parting, the end of summer mirroring the mortality of all creatures. *Beim Schlafengehen* finds a quasi-religious intensity of feeling, the violin solo of the orchestral version representing the soul rising in light, and then finally in *Im Abendrot* the subject matter becomes explicitly about death – but not as a grim prospect, rather as a peaceful release. The ‘transfiguration motif’ from Strauss’s 1889 tone poem *Tod und Verklärung* (*Death and Transfiguration*) appears – here, as there, an emblem of spiritual triumph over death. The orchestral version of these songs features the French horn prominently – the instrument Strauss’ father played in the Munich opera house for almost fifty years; the destruction of that building by bomb damage in 1943 was one of the rare moments where Strauss’ dry wit failed him:

The burning of the Munich Hoftheater, as it was called during the Imperial era, consecrated to the first performances of *Tristan* and *Meistersinger*, where 73 years ago I heard Freischütz for the first time, where my good father sat for 49 years in the orchestra as first horn, where... I experienced the keenest sense of fulfillment as the composer of ten operas produced there – this was the great catastrophe of my life. For that there can be no consolation in my old age, no hope.

Aged 84, Strauss worked on virtually nothing else but these songs during the summer of 1948; the effort of writing this music, and the effect of several mild heart attacks, weakened him, and in September he died at home in his sleep. Pauline had been an invalid for some time, and she died the following May, just nine days before the premiere of his – or perhaps we should say ‘their’ – ***Four Last Songs***.

Programme notes: Libby Burgess

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

SONGS AND PROVERBS OF WILLIAM BLAKE

Text: **William Blake** (1757 – 1827)

PROVERB I

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

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 Infants 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 appalls,
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 Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

PROVERB II

Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion.

THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER

A little black thing among the snow,
Crying 'weep 'weep in notes of woe!
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 and dance and sing
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God and his Priest and King
Who make up a heaven of our misery.

PROVERB III

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

A POISON TREE

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 and 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

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

THE TYGER

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, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and 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

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

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 and sing:
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing.

If thought is life
And strength and breath
And the want
Of thought is death;

Then am I
A happy fly,
If I live,
Or if I die.

PROVERB VI

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

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

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

Every Night and every Morn
Some to Misery are Born.
Every Morn and 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 and 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.

~ ~ ~

TWO VOCAL DUETS

Texts: **Walt Whitman** (1819 – 1892)

THE LAST INVOCATION

At the last, tenderly,
From the walls of the powerful, fortress'd house,
From the clasp of the knitted locks --
from the keep of the well-closed doors,
Let me be wafted.

Let me glide noiselessly forth;
With the key of softness unlock the locks -- with a whisper,
Set ope the doors, O Soul!

Tenderly! be not impatient!
(Strong is your hold, O mortal flesh!
Strong is your hold, O Love.)

THE LOVE-SONG OF THE BIRDS

Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together.

Two together!
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

~ ~ ~

AN SCHWAGER KRONOS

Text: **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**
(1749 – 1832)

Spute dich, Kronos!
Fort den rasselnden Trott!
Bergab gleitet der Weg:
Ekles Schwindeln zögert
Mir vor die Stirne dein Zaudern.
Frisch, holpert es gleich,
Über Stock und Steine den Trott
Rasch ins Leben hinein!

Nun schon wieder
Den eratmenden Schritt
Mühsam berghinauf,
Auf denn, nicht träge denn
Strebend und hoffend hinan!

Weit, hoch, herrlich
Rings den Blick ins Leben hinein;
Vom Gebirg zum Gebirge
Schwebet der ewige Geist,
Ewigen Lebens ahndevoll.

Seitwärt des Überdachs Schatten
Zieht dich an
Und ein Frischung verheissender Blick
Auf der Schwelle des Mädchens da
Labe dich! – Mir auch, Mädchen,
Diesen schäumenden Trank,
Diesen frischen Gesundheitsblick!

Ab denn, rascher hinab!
Sieh, die Sonne sinkt!
Eh sie sinkt, eh mich Greisen
Ergreift im Moore Nebelduft,
Entzahnte Kiefer schnattre
Und das schlotternde Gebein,

Trunknen vom letzten Strahl
Reiss mich, ein Feuermeer
Mir im schäumenden Aug'
Mich geblendeten Taumelnden
In der Hölle nächtliches Tor.

Töne, Schwager, in's Horn,
Rassle den schallenden Trab,
Dass der Orkus vernehme: wir kommen,
Dass gleich an der Tür
Der Wirt uns freundlich empfangen.

TO COACHMAN CHRONOS

Translation: Richard Wigmore

Make haste, Chronos!
Break into a rattling trot!
The way runs downhill;
I feel a sickening giddiness
at your dallying.
Quick, away, never mind the bumping,
over sticks and stones, trot
briskly into life!

Now once again
breathless, at walking pace,
struggling uphill;
up then, don't be sluggish,
onwards, striving and hoping.

Wide, lofty and glorious
is the view around into life;
from mountain range to mountain range
the eternal spirit glides,
bringing promise of eternal life.

A shady roof
draws you aside
and the gaze of a girl
on the step, promising refreshment.
Refresh yourself! For me too, girl,
that foaming draught,
that fresh, healthy look.

Down then, down faster!
Look, the sun is sinking!
Before it sinks, before the mist
seizes me, an old man, on the moor,
toothless jaws chattering,
limbs shaking,

Snatch me, drunk with its last ray,
a sea of fire
foaming in my eyes,
blinded, reeling
through hell's nocturnal gate.

Coachman, sound your horn,
rattle noisily on at a trot.
Let Orcus know we're coming.
So that the innkeeper is at the door
to give us a kind welcome.

WANDRERS NACHTLIED II

Text: **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**
(1749 – 1832)

Über allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh',
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.
Warte nur, balde
Ruhest du auch.

WANDERER'S NIGHT SONG II

Translation: Richard Stokes

Over every mountain-top
Lies peace,
In every tree-top
You scarcely feel
A breath of wind;
The little birds are hushed in the wood.
Wait, soon you too
Will be at peace.

~ ~ ~

VIER LETZTE LIEDER

FRÜHLING

Text: **Hermann Hesse** (1877 – 1962)

In dämmrigen Grüften
Träumte ich lang
Von deinen Bäumen und blauen Lüften,
Von deinem Duft und Vogelsang.

Nun liegst du erschlossen
In Gleiß und Zier,
Von Licht übergossen
Wie ein Wunder vor mir.

Du kennst mich wieder,
Du lockst mich zart,
Es zittert durch all meine Glieder
Deine selige Gegenwart.

SEPTEMBER

Text: **Hermann Hesse** (1877 – 1962)

Der Garten trauert,
kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen.
Der Sommer schauert
still seinem Ende entgegen.

Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt
nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum.
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt
in den sterbenden Gartentraum.

Lange noch bei den Rosen
bleibt er stehen, sehnt sich nach Ruh.
Langsam tut er die großen
müdgewordnen Augen zu.

FOUR LAST SONGS

SPRING

Translation: Michael Hamburger

In half-light I waited,
dreamed all too long
of trees in blossom, those flowing breezes,
that fragrant blue and thrushes' song.

Now streaming and glowing
from sky to field
with light overflowing
all these charms are revealed.

Light gilds the river,
light floods the plain;
spring calls me: and through me there quiver
life's own sweetness returned again!

SEPTEMBER

Translation: Michael Hamburger

These mournful flowers,
rain-drenched in the coolness are bending,
while summer cowers,
mute as he waits for his ending.

Gravely each golden leaf
falls from the tallest Acacia tree;
summer marvels and smiles to see
his own garden grow faint with grief.

Ling'ring still, near the roses long he stays,
longs for repose;
languid, slow to the last,
his weary eyelids close.

BEIM SCHLAFENGEHENText: **Hermann Hesse** (1877 – 1962)

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,
Soll mein sehnliches Verlangen
Freundlich die gestirnte Nacht
Wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.

Hände, laßt von allem Tun,
Stirn vergiß du alles Denken,
Alle meine Sinne nun
Wollen sich in Schlummer senken.

Und die Seele unbewacht
Will in freien Flügen schweben,
Um im Zauberkreis der Nacht
Tief und tausendfach zu leben.

IM ABENDROTText: **Joseph von Eichendorff**
(1788 – 1857)

Wir sind durch Not und Freude
Gegangen Hand in Hand,
Vom Wandern ruhen wir
Nun überm stillen Land.

Rings sich die Täler neigen,
Es dunkelt schon die Luft,
Zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen
Nachträumend in den Duft.

Tritt her, und lass sie schwirren,
Bald ist es Schlafenszeit,
Dass wir uns nicht verirren
In dieser Einsamkeit.

O weiter, stiller Friede!
So tief im Abendrot
Wie sind wir wandermüde—
Ist dies etwa der Tod?

ON GOING TO SLEEP

Translation: Michael Hamburger

Now the day has wearied me,
all my gain and all my longing
like a weary child's shall be
night whose many stars are thronging.

Hands, now leave your work alone;
brow, forget your idle thinking,
all my thoughts, their labour done,
softly into sleep are sinking.

High the soul will rise in flight,
freely gliding, softly swaying,
in the magic realm of night,
deeper laws of life obeying.

AT DUSK

Translation: Michael Hamburger

Here both in need and gladness
we wandered hand in hand;
now let us pause at last
above the silent land.

Dusk comes the vales exploring,
the darkling air grows still,
alone two skylarks soaring
in song their dreams fulfil.

Draw close and leave them singing,
soon will be time to sleep,
how lost our way's beginning!
This solitude, how deep.

O rest so long desired!
We sense the night's soft breath
now we are tired, how tired!
Can this perhaps be death?