

# VOCAL RECITAL

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22 JULY 2014

## Diploma in Music Performance

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### Programme

Chosen from DipABRSM 2005 Syllabus: Singing – Baritone and Bass – Repertoire list  
1207 words (excluding title page, headings, vocal texts and translations)

<b>J. S. Bach</b>	Aria: ‘Gebt mir meinen Jesum wieder’ from ‘ <i>Matthäus-Passion</i> ’, Part 2
<b>Purcell</b>	‘Wondrous machine’ from ‘ <i>Ode on St Cecilia’s Day</i> ’
<b>Mendelssohn</b>	Recitative: ‘Draw near, all ye people’; and Aria: ‘Lord God of Abraham’ from ‘ <i>Elijah</i> ’, Part 1
<b>Mozart</b>	Aria: ‘In diesen heil’gen hallen’ from ‘ <i>Die Zauberflöte</i> ’, Act 2
<b>Handel</b>	Air: ‘Honour and arms scorn such a foe’ from ‘ <i>Samson</i> ’, Part 2

### Intermission

<b>Brahms</b>	‘Auf dem kirchhofe’, Op. 105, No. 4
<b>Fauré</b>	‘Adieu’, No. 3 from ‘ <i>Poème d’un Jour</i> ’
<b>Gurney</b>	‘Severn Meadows’
<b>Vaughan Williams</b>	‘Let beauty awake’, No. 2 from ‘ <i>Songs of Travel</i> ’
<b>Finzi</b>	‘It was a lover and his lass’, No. 5 from ‘ <i>Let us Garlands Bring</i> ’

‘Gebt mir meinen Jesum wieder’ from ‘*Matthäus-Passion*’, Part 2, BWV 244

Gebt mir meinen Jesum wieder,  
Seht, das Geld, den Mörderlohn,  
wirft euch der verlorne Sohn  
zu den Füßen nieder.

– Christian Henrici (‘Picander’)

Give me back this my Jesus to me,  
See the price, this murder’s wage,  
Thrown by this the fallen son,  
At your feet before you.

– Z. Philip Ambrose

Judas, “seized with remorse” (Matthew 27:1–10), has just returned the 30 silver pieces with which he betrayed Jesus. Here, one of Christ’s followers pleads with the Church elders to return ‘his’ Jesus to him, in an aria with references – both in key and in the librettist’s repetition of “seht” – to the Passion’s opening Chorale. Bach mitigates the inherent tragedy of the situation with the brightness of G major reminding us of Jesus’ promise of salvation, echoed by the violin countersubject. The aria demonstrates a close relationship with the concerto principle, while Bach’s North German influences are woven over this Italian structure through the angularity of his melodic lines. The Passion followed 50 days (Quinquagesima) of musical silence in Lutheran churches over Lent.

‘Wondrous machine’ from ‘*Ode on St Cecilia’s Day*’, Z.328

Wondrous machine,  
To thee the warbling lute  
though used to conquest,  
must be forced to yield.  
With thee unable to dispute.

– Nicholas Brady

Written 3 years before Purcell’s tragically young death, this famous ode pays homage to the “great patroness of us and Harmony” on her annual feast day, in an age when music was regarded as a science revealing the underlying harmony of the universe. In this madrigal-like piece, “the warbling lute must be forced to yield” to the “wondrous notes” of the “noble Organ”, inspired as they were by “some Angel of the sacred quire”. A contrapuntal contest ensues, driven by a ground bass predominantly on the tonic that builds tension and a sense of inevitability. The battle is intensified by antiphonal exchanges between oboe and singer. Purcell’s method of setting English words is particularly lively and irregular. The dotted rhythms imitate the French style of lute playing popular at the time.

Recitative: ‘Draw near, all ye people’; and Aria: ‘Lord God of Abraham’ from ‘*Elijah*’, Part 1, Op. 70

Draw near, all ye people, come to me!

Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel;  
this day let it be known that Thou art God,  
and I am thy servant!

O shew to all this people that I have done these things according to Thy word!  
O hear me, Lord, and answer me!  
O shew this people that Thou art Lord God,  
and let their hearts again be turned.

– William Bartholomew

Mendelssohn was a Classicist with an inclination for Romanticism. He revived Bach’s ‘*St Matthew Passion*’ in 1829, in the face of great opposition. Having been exposed to the likes of Goethe and Hegel as a child, Mendelssohn deplored the prevailing extravagance and frivolity of the time and saw music as “heil’ge Kunst” (a sacred art). Like Handel, Mendelssohn felt most at home in England where his work was best appreciated. Mendelssohn had contemplated an ‘*Elijah*’ as early as 1836 after the premiere of ‘*St Paul*’. In Christian doctrine Elijah points the way to Christ, the fulfilment of Jewish prophecy. The opening recitative – from 1 Kings 18:30 – sets the scene for Elijah, who takes his turn to pray over the sacrifice on Mount Carmel. The oratorio emulates the spirit of Bach and Handel.

‘In diesen heil’gen Hallen’ from ‘*Die Zauberflöte*’, Act 2, K620

In diesen heil’gen Hallen  
kennt man die Rache nicht,  
und ist der Mensch gefallen,  
führt Liebe ihn zur Pflicht.  
Dann wandelt er an Freundes Hand,  
vergnügt und froh in’s bess’re Land.

Within these sacred halls,  
One knows not revenge.  
And should a person have fallen,  
Love will guide him to duty.  
Then wanders he on the hand of a friend,  
Cheerful and happy into a better land.

In diesen heil’gen Mauern,  
wo Mensch den Menschen liebt,  
kann kein Verräter lauern,  
weil man dem Feind vergibt.  
Wen solche Lehren nicht erfreu’n,  
verdient nicht, ein Mensch zu sein.

Within these hallowed walls,  
Where human loves the human,  
No traitor can lurk,  
Because one forgives the enemy.  
Whomsoever these lessons do not please,  
Deserves not to be a human being.

– Emanuel Schikaneder

– Lea F. Frey

In this aria, the magician Sarastro reassures Pamina that he has no desire for revenge against her mother – his antithesis – the Queen of the Night. Instead he advocates forgiveness and brotherhood, acting as an agent for spiritual development along the path to enlightenment. The political significance of this didactic opera would not have been lost on its audience. Sarastro points the way to “a better land”, typifying public interest in reform across the Austrian Empire. The aria is steeped in Masonic symbolism, and numerology pervades both structure and verse. The balanced phrasing and simple harmonic vocabulary are highly distinctive of the Classical period and give a strong sense of narrative. Mozart died 3 months after this opera premiered.

‘Honour and arms scorn such a foe’ from ‘*Samson*’, Part 2, HWV 57

Honor and arms scorn such a foe.  
Though I could end thee at a blow,  
Poor victory, to conquer thee,  
Or glory in thy overthrow.

Vanquish a slave that is half slain!  
So mean a triumph I disdain.

– Newburgh Hamilton

Handel began composing this oratorio immediately after the success of his ‘*Messiah*’ in September 1741, completing the entire work by 29 October. The libretto is based upon Milton’s ‘*Samson Agonistes*’. Samson’s blindness would have resonated with Handel, whose own mother had been struck blind. In this da capo aria, Harapha the giant scorns Samson’s challenge to a fight. Handel plays to his British audience, emulating Purcell’s use of space, and incorporating popular imperial themes such as honour through victory at a time when God and King were mutual objects of praise. Rhetorical devices such as octave leaps help to convey the message.

‘Auf dem kirchhofe’, Op. 105, No. 4

Der Tag ging regenschwer und sturmbewegt,  
ich war an manch’ vergess’nem Grab’ gewesen,  
verwittert Stein und Kreuz, die Kränze alt,  
die Namen überwachsen, kaum zu lesen.

Der Tag ging sturmbewegt und regenschwer,  
auf allen Gräbern fror das Wort: Gewesen.  
Wie sturmestot die Särge schlummerten,  
auf allen Gräbern taute still: Genesen.

– Detlev von Liliencron

The day was cold with rain and dark with storm.  
By many lone forgotten graves I wandered.  
A mass of crumbling stones, wreaths long dead,  
the names that once were carved there,  
now obscured or gone.

The day was dark with storm and cold with rain,  
On every grave these om’nous words: ‘Tis ended.  
The storm has passed and all is calm once more.  
On ev’ry grave a stillness lies: Redeemed.

– Florence Easton

This strophic *lied* typifies the growing meditative and introspective nature of Brahms’s later works. Here he reflects upon life’s transience. His greatest works often grew from holidays in the countryside, and whilst North German influences prevailed, this affinity with the mountains, lakes, and fostered his Romanticism. Brahms was renowned for his stormy friendships, brusqueness, and volatility – themes all too apparent in this song. Indeed, his use of C minor is reminiscent of the ‘*Sturm und Drang*’ of his First Symphony with its autobiographical subtext. This piece opens with foreboding rolling arpeggios, evoking the churchyard storm. As the storm clears, the tempo changes and the piece modulates to C major – “all is calm once more”.

Adieu, No. 3 from 'Poème d'un Jour', Op. 21

Comme tout meurt vite, la rose  
Déclose,  
Et les frais manteaux diaprés  
Des prés;  
Les longs soupirs, les bien aimées,  
Fumées!

On voit dans ce monde léger,  
Changer,  
Plus vite que les flots des grèves,  
Nos rêves,  
Plus vite que le givre en fleurs,  
Nos cœurs!

A vous l'on se croyait fidèle,  
Cruelle,  
Mais hélas! les plus longs amours  
Sont courts!  
Et je dis en quittant vos charmes,  
Sans larmes,  
Presqu'au moment de mon aveu,  
Adieu!

– Charles Grandmougin

Like everything that dies quickly,  
the blown rose,  
the fresh multi-coloured cloaks [of flowers]  
on the meadows.  
Long sighs, those we love,  
gone like smoke!

One sees in this frivolous world,  
Change.  
Quicker than the waves on the beach,  
Our dreams,  
Quicker than frost on the flowers,  
Our hearts!

One believes oneself faithful to you,  
Cruel,  
But alas! the longest of love affairs  
Are short!  
And I say on quitting your charms,  
Without tears,  
Close to the moment of my avowal,  
Adieu!

– Douglas Watt-Carter

Following a chance encounter (“rencontre”) with a “gentle passer by”, this *mélodie* comes at the end of a three-part song cycle about one man’s fleeting love interest. Grandmougin’s versification is typical of popular women’s magazines of the day, and Fauré makes light of this saccharine prose. The ever-changing style of accompaniment, from gentle crotchets to hurried triplets, reflects the lover’s fickle interest as he feigns regret over their parting. A brief transition to E minor while he imparts hollow words of sadness is quickly overcome. This rather deft, if not manipulative, exit strategy is prophetic of Fauré’s own dalliances with women. The song is dedicated to the host of one of Paris’ famous salons, which Fauré often frequented.

‘Severn Meadows’

Only the wanderer  
Knows England’s graces,  
Or can anew see clear  
Familiar faces.

And who loves Joy as he  
that dwells in shadows?  
Do not forget me quite  
O Severn meadows.

This song is a rare example of Gurney setting one of his own poems to music. Written in the trenches in March 1917 – aged 26 – Gurney was able to contrast the horrors of war on the front line against the beauty of England’s rolling landscape, thereby transcending his existence through verse. He longed for Gloucestershire and “the rightness of a former day” when he would take ‘The Dorothy’ out to sail on the River Severn with a close friend. The song is dedicated to another Dorothy, whom he met at the Royal College of Music. Gurney was shot in the shoulder a month after writing this piece. His work was later championed by Gerald Finzi.

‘Let Beauty awake’, No. 2 from ‘*Songs of Travel*’

Let Beauty awake in the morn from beautiful dreams,  
Beauty awake from rest!  
Let Beauty awake  
For Beauty’s sake,  
In the hour when the birds awake in the brake  
And the stars are bright in the west!

Let Beauty awake in the eve from the slumber of day,  
Awake in the crimson eve!  
In the day’s dusk end  
When the shades ascend,  
Let her wake to the kiss of a tender friend,  
To render again and receive!

– Robert Louis Stevenson

Normally performed as part of a song cycle, this atavistic folk-song relates the journey of a wandering ‘Vagabond’ who has “lived and loved”. ‘Beauty’ symbolises not only the object of his pastoral romance, but the confluence of the sun and moon at dawn and dusk – the arpeggiated accompaniment shimmering like the light. The ambiguity of the home key gives the song an ethereal effect. The song is redolent of public mood before the Great War and is a fine example of the Romantic tendency to employ triple metre and pulse when expressing tender sentiments. Vaughan Williams began collecting folk-songs in 1902, drawing on the ancient rhythms of the countryside in a bid to define English Nationalism and liberate its music from the “fetters of Teutonism”, much as Fauré had done for the French.

‘It was a lover and his lass’, No. 5 from ‘*Let us Garlands Bring*’, Op. 18

It was a lover and his lass,  
    With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino  
That o’er the green cornfield did pass  
    In spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding:  
    Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,  
    With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
These pretty country folks would lie,  
    In spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding:  
    Sweet lovers love the spring.

This carol they began that hour,  
    With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
How that life was but a flower  
    In spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding:  
    Sweet lovers love the spring.

And therefore take the present time,  
    With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
For love is crowned with the prime  
    In spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding:  
    Sweet lovers love the spring.

– William Shakespeare

Dedicated to Vaughan Williams for his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, this folk-song is the last in a cycle of five that took Finzi over 10 years to complete. The sensitive word-setting, intricate rhythms, changing time signatures, and syncopation are characteristic of Finzi’s style, with a nod to Vaughan Williams’ use of the flattened seventh. The Shakespearian verse is taken from Act 5, Scene 3 of ‘*As You Like It*’, in which Touchstone calls on a page to sing to him in the Forest of Arden – a pastoral paradise. Having fallen in love with a country girl, Touchstone has made peace with the rustic life he previously tired of – much akin to Finzi’s own relocation in 1933.