LRSM in Music Performance – Singing: Baritone Recital Programme

'Bright is the ring of words', No. 8	from '*Songs of Travel*'	R. Vaughan Williams (R. L. Stevenson)
'Youth and Love', No. 4	from '*Songs of Travel*'	R. Vaughan Williams (R. L. Stevenson)
'Prison', No. 1, Op. 83	Fauré 60 Melodies	Gabriel Fauré (Paul Verlaine)
'Chanson épique', No. 2	from '*Don Quichotte à Dulcinée*'	Maurice Ravel (Paul Morand)
'Fear no more the heat o' the sun', No. 3	from '*Let us Garlands Bring*', Op. 18	Gerald Finzi (Shakespeare)
'The rain it raineth every day', No. 3	'*Clown's Songs from Twelfth Night*', Op. 65	Charles Stanford (Shakespeare)
'Le temps a laisse son Manteau (Rondel I)', No. 1	from '*Trois Chansons de France*'	Claude Debussy (C. D'Orleans)
'Nocturne', No. 2, Op. 43	Fauré 60 Melodies	Gabriel Fauré (Auguste Comte)
'Dein Angesicht', No. 2, Op. 127	Schumann 90 Selected Songs	Robert Schumann (Heinrich Heine)
'Verrat', No. 5, Op. 105	Brahms 70 Songs	Johannes Brahms (Karl Lemcke)
'Wie bist du, meine Königin', No. 9, Op. 32	Brahms 70 Songs	Johannes Brahms (Georg F. Daumer)
Aria: 'Quoniam tu solus sanctus', No. 11	from '*Mass in B Minor*', BWV 232	J. S. Bach (*Ordinarium Missae)*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, Ralph (1872 – 1958)

‘Bright is the ring of words’, No. 8 from ‘*Songs of Travel*’

Bright is the ring of words,
When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs,
When the singer sings them.

Still they are carolled and said,
On wings they are carried,
After the singer is dead,
And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies,
In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
The swains together.

And when the west is red,
With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings,
And the maid remembers.

(R. L. Stevenson, 1850 – 1894)

A bright tonic chord, spanning five octaves of C, heralds this philosophical reflection on the transcendent nature of music. A seminal departure from his choral and orchestral work, this piece forms part of a song cycle written a year after Vaughan Williams began touring the countryside to collect British folksong.

Parallel chords and a homophonic accompaniment emphasise the determination with which the protagonist began his travels. A transition to the Neapolitan of C shifts the focus to questions of legacy – a subject of great importance to the composer as he sought to re-establish the nation’s own distinctive musical identity.

Vaughan Williams cleverly alternates between triple and common time to accommodate the poem’s mixed meter, with hemiolas adding to the song’s speech-like quality. As the “embers” – evocative of the ‘Roadside Fire’ – die out, a familiar refrain reminds the “maid” of the man who left her. A final inverted tonic leaves us with a sense of what might have been.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, Ralph (1872 – 1958)

'Youth and Love', No. 4 from '*Songs of Travel*'

To the heart of youth the world is a highway side.
Passing forever he fares, and on either hand,
Deep in the gardens golden pavilions hide,
Nestle in orchard bloom, and far on the level land
Call him with lighted lamp in the eventide.

Thick as stars at night when the moon is down
Pleasures assail him. He to his nobler fate
Fares; and but waves a hand as he passes on,
Cries but a wayside word to her at the garden gate,
Sings but a boyish stave and his face is gone, is gone.

(R. L. Stevenson, 1850 – 1894)

The growing sense that something fundamental was being lost in the wake of the industrial revolution underlies the difficult choice facing the wanderer in '*Songs of Travel*'. On one hand, the call of the road seems irresistible, evoked by an alternating pattern of quavers and triplets, and frequent fanfares referencing 'The Vagabond'. On the other hand, the call of the fair maid "with lighted lamp" presents its own temptations. Throughout the cycle, Vaughan Williams uses flat keys to signify this more settled, city life – while sharp keys denote nature.

This can be heard in the rapturous textual painting of the night sky, with arpeggiation in the piano redolent of the stars in 'Let Beauty Awake'. A suspension on the dominant shepherds us towards the inexorable conclusion, as the theme from the 'Roadside Fire' rings out seven times in the accompaniment. Yet, once again, with triplets wavering from the tonic and an inversion on the final chord, lingering doubts seem to remain.

FAURÉ, Gabriel (1845 – 1924)

‘Prison’, No. 1, Op. 83

Le ciel est, par dessus le toit,	The sky above the roof is
Si bleu, si calme!	So blue, so calm!
Un arbre, par dessus le toit,	A tree, above the roof,
Berce sa palme;	Waves its branches.
La cloche, dans le ciel qu’on voit,	The bell, in the sky that is seen,
Doucement tinte.	Softly rings.
Un oiseau, sur l’arbre qu’on voit,	A bird, on the tree that is seen,
Chante sa plainte.	Sings its lament.
Mon Dieu, mon Dieu la vie est là,	My God, my God, life is out there,
Simple et tranquille!	Simple and tranquil.
Cette paisible rumeur-là,	That peaceful sound
Vient de la ville.	comes from the city.
Qu’as tu fait, ô toi que voilà,	What have you done, you there,
Pleurant sans cesse,	Crying endlessly,
Dis, qu’as-tu fait, toi que voilà,	Say what have you done, you there,
De ta jeunesse?	With your youth?
(Paul Verlaine, 1844 – 1896)	(translation by Stanley Appelbaum)

Verlaine spent 555 days in a Belgian prison after a drunken altercation in which he shot his lover, Rimbaud. The sense of time slipping through his fingers finds expression here in the relentless clock chimes on the third beat of every third bar in the first half of this *chanson*. Studying Shakespeare and ‘*Don Quixote’* in his prison cell, Verlaine went on to be celebrated as the ‘prince of poets’ in 1894. He died two years later, prompting Fauré to publish this setting – the last of sixteen Verlaine poems he worked on.

It was about this time that Fauré began adopting the stylistic approach of the Symbolists, distilling sensory experience into purer forms. In his ‘*Art poétique*’ Verlaine describes lines “dissolving better into the air… We want shades, not plain colour, nothing but shades!” Fauré translates this musically through tonal ambiguities, diminished chords, and careful rhythmic declamation of a *parlando* melodic line. Downbeat displacements, for example, reflect the weak first syllable of each line characteristic of French speech.

RAVEL, Maurice (1875 – 1937)

‘Chanson Épique’, No. 2 from ‘*Don Quichotte à Dulcinée*’

Bon Saint Michel qui me donnez loisir	Saint Michael, come! My lady bring to me,
De voir ma Dame et de l’entendre,	Unto my soul her presence lending,
Bon Saint Michel qui me daignez choisir	Saint Michael, come! Her champion let me be,
Pour lui complaire et la défendre,	With knightly grace her fame defending.
Bon Saint Michel, veuillez descendre	Saint Michael, come! To earth descending,
Avec Saint Georges sur l’autel,	With good Saint George before the shrine
De la Madonne, au bleu mantel.	Of the Madonna with face divine.
D’un rayon du ciel, bénnissez ma lame.	May the light of heav’n on my sword be lying,
Et son égale en pureté,	Give to my spirit purity,
Et son égale en piété,	And lend my heart sweet piety,
Comme un pudeur et chasteté:	And lift my soul in ecstasy,
Ma Dame,	undying.
O grands Saint Georges et Saint Michel,	O good Saint George and Saint Michael, hear me!
L’ange qui veille sur ma veille,	An angel watches ever near me,
Ma douce Dame si pareille	My own beloved, like, so like to you,
A vous, Madonne au bleu mantel! Amen.	Madonna, maid divine! Amen.
(Paul Morand, 1888 – 1976)	(translation by Edward Lockton)

Ravel celebrates his roots in this, his last ever score. The accompaniment follows the ostinato of a traditional Basque dance called the Zortzico in 5/4 – evocative of his Piano Trio in A minor. The action takes place in Spain, where Ravel’s mother was born.

The Knight, Don Quichotte, is praying for strength to win the affections of Dulcinée – comparing her to the Virgin Mary as he vows to protect her honour. In ternary form, the A section melody gently undulates along a conjunct *recitando* line, with the tessitura gradually rising to the heavens. Ravel’s chromaticism and obscured tonalities reveal Fauré’s influence as his teacher, which Ravel would pass on to Vaughan Williams.

With the “light” on Don Quichotte’s sword, the B section suddenly switches from Dorian mode into F major, and a more *cantabile*, disjunctive melody. Thickening chords drive us to the climax of “Ma Dame”, incorporating Ravel’s hallmark sevenths – followed by a return to recitative.

FINZI, Gerald (1901 – 1956)

‘Fear no more the heat o’ the sun’, No. 3 from ‘*Let us Garlands Bring’*, Op. 18

Fear no more the heat o’ the sun,
Nor the furious winter’s rages;
Thou thy worldy task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta’en they wages:
Golden lads and girls all must
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o’ the great,
Thou art past the tyrant’s stroke:
Fear no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou has finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renowned be thy grave!

(William Shakespeare, 1564 – 1616)

First performed in 1942 for Vaughan Williams’ seventieth birthday, this was the first song Finzi composed in this cycle of 5 Shakespearian songs begun almost 13 years earlier. The dirge appears in Act IV, Scene II of ‘*Cymbeline*’, in which two brothers take it in turns to sing over the body of Fidele. This would have had great meaning to Finzi, who by the age of 17 had lost his father and all 3 brothers. His belief that a composer should be “moved by a poem and wish to identify himself with it” lends intimacy to his work.

Finzi uses a lower tessitura for the lines sung by Guiderius in the first and third stanzas, compared to those delivered by Arviragus in the second stanza and second phrase of the third stanza. The piano mirrors the narrative voices by alternating parts between the left and right hand. “All lovers young… come to dust” anticipates the ‘Lover and his Lass’ that concludes Finzi’s cycle.

STANFORD, Charles Villiers (1852 – 1924)

‘The rain it raineth every day’, No. 3 from ‘*Clown’s Songs from Twelfth Night*’, Op. 65

When that I was but a tiny little boy,
With a hey ho the wind and the rain,
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth ev’ry day.

But when I came to man’s estate,
With a hey ho the wind and the rain,
‘Gainst knave and thief men shut their gate,
For the rain it raineth ev’ry day.

But when I came, alas! to wive,
With a hey ho the wind and the rain,
By swagg’ring I could never thrive,
For the rain it raineth ev’ry day

(William Shakespeare, 1564 – 1616)

In a song from ‘*Twelfth Night*’, Feste – the archetypal Fool – muses upon the vicissitudes of life. Stanford omits the colourful fourth stanza, “with tosspots”. Feste’s dry remark that “foolery does walk about the orb like the sun, it shines everywhere” may have more than one meaning, for playing the fool has enabled him to weather the storms of life, bouncing back from each setback – just as the shipwrecked brothers and the imprisoned Malvolio have done.

This matters because Stanford, like Finzi, sees song-writing “as miniature painting… the poem should always remain the principal consideration” (1922). Thus, we hear the unrelenting patter of rain in the accompaniment, falling in quavers from the treble part into the bass, while the harmony modulates as unpredictably as life itself. In the first stanza alone, we journey through D minor; its relative major – F; before inflecting to the supertonic, G minor. The strophic melody meanwhile, skips along in a *scherzo*-like fashion.

DEBUSSY, Claude (1862 – 1918)

‘Le temps a laissé son Manteau (Rondel I)’, No. 1 from ‘*Trois Chansons de France*’

Le temps a laissé son manteau,	The season has cast off its coat
De vent de froidure et de pluye,	of wind, cold and rain,
Et s’est vestu du broderye,	And dressed up in embroidery
De soleil raiant, cler et beau.	of glistening sunshine, clear and beautiful.
Il n’y a beste, ne oiseau,	There isn’t an animal or bird
Qui en son jargon ne chante ou crye:	That in its own language doesn’t sing or shout:
“Le temps a laissé son manteau”.	"The season has cast off its coat".
Rivière, Fontaine et ruiseau,	Rivers, fountains and brooks
Portent en livrée jolye,	Wear pretty clothing,
Gouttes d’argent d’orfaverie,	Drops of silver from the smith,
Chacun s’habille de nouveau,	Everyone gets dressed in new clothes:
Le temps a laissé son manteau.	The season has cast off its coat.
(Charles Duc D’Orleans, 1394 – 1465)	(translation by Lisa Yannucci)

Charles de Valois was a political prisoner in England for 25 years, so it is perhaps apt for him to write about breaking free from the “cold and rain”. Debussy’s father – like Verlaine – was a Communard, spending a year in prison during 1871. Yet, out of disaster sprung hope, for a fellow prisoner introduced young Debussy to a piano teacher – Antoinette Mauté.

The timing of this piece, however – as his marriage with Lilly was breaking down – may reveal a rather more awkward meaning behind the words. Within two months of its publication in May 1904, Debussy would elope with Emma Bardac, Fauré’s former muse – causing a very public rift between him and Ravel.

Jettisoning standard tonality, Debussy’s fascination with nature and affinity with the Symbolist movement is apparent. “There is no theory”, he said in 1889, “you only have to listen. Pleasure is the law!” The rolling modal chords under “soleil raiant” anticipate his quasi-symphony ‘*La Mer*’ in their impressionistic evocation of water shimmering in the sunlight. Pairs of repeated bars in the accompaniment, and the long pedal on D from “Portent en livrée” are hallmarks of Debussy’s style.

FAURÉ, Gabriel (1845 – 1924)

‘Nocturne’, No. 2, Op. 43

La nuit sur le grand mystère,	Night half-opens its blue casket
Entr’ouvre ses écrins bleus:	Onto the great mystery:
Autant de fleurs sur la terre,	As many flowers on the earth
Que d’étoiles dans les cieux!	As stars in the heaven!
On voit ses ombres dormantes	We see its sleeping shades
S’éclairer à tous moments,	Light up at every moment,
Autant par les fleurs charmantes,	As much from the charming flowers,
Que par les astres charmants.	As from the charming stars.
Moi, ma nuit au sombre voile,	But my own Night with its sombre veil,
N’a pour charme et pour clarté,	Lacks charm and brightness,
Qu’une fleur et qu’une étoile,	Except for one flower and one star:
Mon amour et ta beauté!	My love and your beauty!
(Auguste Comte, 1798 – 1857)	(translation by Peter Low)

Like Brahms, Fauré slipped away for several months each year to a lakeside retreat where he remarked he could find the “calm, space, and anonymity” he needed to write. This *mélodie* is illustrative of Fauré’s exposure to medieval and renaissance modal music at École Niedermeyer, which he often wove into his work. A recurring tonic pedal on the second beat of the bar weakens the preceding tones, creating its own “great mystery” over the syntactical connections between chords. Indeed, just as there is but “one flower and one star” for our narrator, Fauré chooses this moment to use the only functional dominant in the entire piece.

Fauré uses ties over the bar to accommodate French prosody, and sets Comte’s poem ‘Éblouissement’ in a rounded binary form to convey the dialectic between flowers and stars, love and beauty. Dazzling Phrygian passages in the accompaniment “light up at every moment”, while a shift into Dorian mode – chosen for its symmetrical tone structure in a nod to the Parnassian movement – marks the “sombre” night.

SCHUMANN, Robert (1810 – 1856)

‘Dein Angesicht’, No. 2, Op. 127

Dein Angesicht, so lieb und schön,	Your face so lovable and fair
Das hab ich jüngst im Traum gesehn,	Appeared to me in a recent dream,
Es ist so mild und engelgleich,	So mild, it looks, and angel-like,
Und doch so bleich, so schmerzenreich.	And yet so pale, so full of pain.
Und nur die Lippen, die sind rot;	And only your lips are red;
Bald aber küßt sie bleich der Tod.	But death shall soon kiss them pale.
Erlöschen wird das Himmelslicht,	Out will go the heavenly light
Das aus den frommen Augen bricht.	That gleams from your innocent eyes.
(Heinrich Heine, 1797 – 1856)	(translation by Richard Stokes)

Written in 1840, Schumann’s ‘*liederjahr*’ in which he and Clara would finally wed after a 6-year clandestine courtship – Heine’s barbed wit is gently deployed here in an expression of love and concern for Clara’s wellbeing. Schumann’s letters reveal he hung paintings of her in his home like ‘altar pieces’ (20 March 1838). On 13 April however, a new lithograph of Clara prompted him to say: “one could think you were very pale, even sickly, but you aren’t, are you?... Stay as you are… schön und lieb und englisch”.

Schumann’s shock is emulated in a musical double-take that knocks the melody out of sync with the piano on “und doch so bleich”, until the singer can metaphorically catch their breath. The gently rocking accompaniment nevertheless dives into E major with “schmerzenreich” – a softening of Heine’s mood-breaking “schmerzenbleich”. The inference of F minor and sudden offbeat diminished seventh anticipates the ‘kiss of death’. Schumann’s technique of imprecisely doubling the vocal line in the piano during “Himmelslicht” confirms his anguish.

BRAHMS, Johannes (1833 – 1897)

‘Verrat’, No. 5, Op. 105

Ich stand in einer lauen Nacht,
an einer grünen Linde,
der Mond schien hell,
der Wind ging sacht,
der Gießbach floß geschwinde,
geschwinde.

Die Linde stand vor Liebchens Haus,
die Türe hört ich knarren.
Mein Schatz ließ sacht ein Mannsbild’raus
“Laß morgen mich nicht harren;

laß mich nicht harren, süßer Mann,
wie hab ich dich so gerne!
Ans Fenster klopfe leise an,
mein Schatz ist in der Ferne, ja Ferne!”

Laß ab vom Druck und Kuß, Feinslieb,
Du Schöner im Sammetkleide,
Nun spute dich, du feiner Dieb,
ein Mann harrt auf der Heide, ja Heide.

Der Mond scheint hell, der Rasen grün
ist gut zu unsrem Begegnen,
du trägst ein Schwert und nickst so kühn,
Dein Liebschaft, dein Liebschaft
will ich segnen, dein Liebschaft,
dein Liebschaft will ich segnen, ja segnen!

Und als erschien der lichte Tag,
Was fand er auf der Heide?
Ein Toter in den Blumen lag
zu einer Falschen Leide, ja Leide.

(Karl Lemcke, 1831 – 1913)

I stood, one warm Night,
by a green Linden-tree;
the Moon shone brightly,
the Wind blew gently,
the Torrent flowed swiftly.

The Linden-tree stood before my Darling's House,
and I heard the Door creak.
My Sweetheart quietly let out a Man's form:
“Tomorrow don't keep me waiting;

don't keep me waiting, sweet Man,
how I love you!
Knock gently on the Window,
for my Sweetheart is Far away!”

Cease your hugging and Kissing, Dear,
and You, you Handsome lad in Velvet,
you fine thief, make haste now,
for a Man is waiting for you on the Heath.

The Moon shines brightly, the green Grass
is just right for our Encounter.
You wear a sword and nod so audaciously;
Come, let me bless your Wooing!

And when the light of Day appeared,
what did it find on the Heath?
A dead Man lay in the Flowers
to the grief of a False Woman.

(translation by Emily Ezust)

Brahms favoured poems that had never been set to music, freely adapting them to his own composition style – here in a modified ternary and varied strophic form, influenced by the folk tradition. It is one of the few songs Brahms notated in the bass clef, opening with a narrative ballad driven along by offbeat – then parallel – chords. The occasional call and response anticipates the arrival of a second narrative voice, sung in a higher tessitura over E minor, offering us the female perspective in this story of 'betrayal'. Brahms accommodates the anacruses by starting each phrase on an upbeat, varying the pace of declamation for expressive purposes, for example, during the woman's breathless invitation.

Caught in the act, the cuckolded man challenges the lover to "make haste" to the heath, accompanied by a polyrhythmic passage of descending triplets. Amidst the high drama, octave leaps on "Liebschaft" and "segnen" suggest the thrusting sword, while horn calls presage the fatal blow, falling on a violent diminished seventh.

BRAHMS, Johannes (1833 – 1897)

‘Wie bist du, meine Königin’, No. 9, Op. 32

Wie bist du, meine Königin,	How blissful you are, my Queen,
durch sanfte Güte wonnevoll!	When you are gentle and Good!
Du lächle nur, Lenzdüfte wehn	Merely smile, and spring Fragrance wafts
durch mein Gemüte, wonnevoll, wonnevoll!	Through my Spirit blissfully!
Frisch aufgeblühter Rosen Glanz,	The brightness of freshly blooming Roses,
Vergleich ich ihn dem deinigen?	Shall I compare it to yours?
Ach, über alles, was da blüht,	Ah, soaring over all, that blooms,
Ist deine Blühte, wonnevoll, wonnevoll!	Is your Bloom, blissful!
Durch tote Wüsten wandle hin,	Wander through dead Wastelands,
Und grüne Schatten breiten sich,	And green Shadows will be spreading,
Ob fürchterliche Schwüle dort	Even if fearful Sultriness
ohn Ende brüte, wonnnevoll, wonnevoll, wonnevoll!	Broods there without End, blissfully!
Laß mich vergehn in deinem Arm!	Let me die in your arms!
Es ist in ihm ja selbst der Tod,	It is in them that Death itself,
Ob auch die herbste Todesqual	Even if the sharpest Pain
Die Brust durchwüte, wonnevoll, wonnevoll!	Rages in my Breast, is blissful!
(Georg Friedrich Daumer, 1800 – 1875)	(translation by Emily Ezust)

Written in 1864 – some 22 years earlier than ‘Verrat’ – this strophic AABA setting embraces pastoral themes typical of German lied. The familiar trope of the wandering traveller, akin to Schubert’s ‘*Winterreise*’, returns in what is the final lied in a cycle of 9 that combines multiple poets to form a coherent narrative. The use of triplets and flattened sevenths is common in Romantic song, supported here by semiquaver runs evoking wafting fragrances. A crepuscular B section in the third stanza meanders through E major and C# minor. The song climaxes with a colourful Neopolitan phrase.

The words are particularly poignant in light of the attempted suicide of his friend Robert Schumann a decade earlier. Some scholars suggest the song is about Clara Schumann, with whom Brahms had fallen in love, writing in 1859 that “I am under her spell. Often I must forcibly restrain myself from just quietly putting my arms around her”. In 1887, he urged her to destroy their letters.

BACH, Johann Sebastian (1685 – 1750)

Aria: 'Quoniam tu solus sanctus', No. 11 from '*Mass in B Minor*', BWV 232

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,	For you alone are the Holy One,
tu solus Dominus,	You alone are the Lord,
tu solus Altissimus,	You alone are the Most High,
Jesu Christe.	Jesus Christ.
(*Ordinarium Missae,*	(Ordinary Mass)
'Missale Romanum', 1570)	

Appearing in the penultimate section of the *Gloria*, this Aria – sung to a *polonaise* honouring the Polish-born, and newly crowned, Elector of Saxony Augustus III – was presented as part of Bach's bid to become court composer in 1733. Dresden was renowned for its bassoonists, so Bach incorporates two here, along with a hunting horn (its only appearance in the entire Mass) in a pared-down orchestration symbolic of the Holy Trinity.

In 2008, the urtext was subjected to x-ray spectrographic analysis, enabling scholars to discern additions made by C.P.E. Bach from the original. This Aria is from the revised Bärenreiter publication that reflects those findings, the most notable of which being the coloratura passage in bars 82 – 83. Phrases are sung in 8-bar groups until the appearance of "Jesu Christe", when the pattern is arrested. A shift to B minor in bar 77 reminds us of Christ's suffering in the *Kyrie*.

Bach completed the *Missa tota* in 1749, shortly before his death.