PROGRAM

ROBERT SCHUMANN
(b. Zwickau, Germany, 1810 – d. Endenich, Bonn, Germany, 1856)

_Frauenliebe und -leben_, Op.42 (Woman’s Love & Life) (1840)
‘Seit ich ihn gesehen’ (Ever since first seeing him)
‘Er, der Herrlichste von allen’ (He, the most glorious of all)
‘Ich kann’s nicht fassen, nicht glauben’ (I can’t grasp, nor believe it)
‘Du Ring an meinem Finger’ (Thou ring on my finger)
‘Helft mir, ihr Schwestern’ (Help me, ye sisters)
‘Süßer Freund, du blickest’ (Sweet friend, thou gazest)
‘An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust’ (At my heart, at my breast)
‘Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan’ (Now thou hast given me, for the first time, pain)

ALBAN BERG
(b. Vienna, Austria, 1885 – d. Vienna, Austria, 1935)

_Sieben frühe Lieder_ (Seven Early Songs) (1905-1908)
_Nacht_ (Night)
_Schilflied_ (Song amid the reeds)
_Die Nachtigall_ (The Nightingale)
_Traumgekrönt_ (Crowned in dream)
_Im Zimmer_ (Indoors)
_Liebesode_ (Ode to Love)
_Sommertage_ (Summer days)
Interval: 20 minutes

HECTOR BERLIOZ
(b. La Côte-Saint-André, France, 1803 – d. Paris, France, 1869)

_Les nuits d’été_ (Summer Nights) Op.7 (1841)
_Villanelle_
_Le spectre de la rose_ (The Spectre of the Rose)
_Sur les lagunes_ (On the Lagoons)
_Absence_
_Au cimetière_ (At the Cemetery)
_L’île inconnue_ (The Unknown Isle)
ABOUT THE MUSIC

Delicate filaments string together these three song cycles. Of the three, two were composed at the same time, 1840-41. Two celebrate the night, both ecstatic and threatening. Two drew on words by poets known to the composers. Two were inspired by the composers’ own marriages: one a celebration, the other a doleful stocktaking. Two aren’t cycles in the conventional sense, but rather carefully-curated collections of miraculous shards.

Robert Schumann *Frauenliebe und -leben*

With a handful of notes, Robert Schumann conjures a world. Hesitant steps introduce our deferential heroine at the opening of the first song. Broad, full chords set the stage for our ‘hero’ in the second. Later there are breathless recitatives, hushed hymns and celebratory wedding bells. Heartbreaking suspensions shiver with anticipation, while a knife’s stab pushes us to the edge of our seats.

Schumann and Clara Wieck were in love. He, a troubled, debt-ridden and alcoholic composer. She, one of Europe’s most famous and influential pianists, firmly under the thumb of a controlling father. For three years Friedrich Wieck blocked their marriage with legal and emotional manipulations. After a debilitating struggle, the path to marriage was cleared in 1840 and into those heady days *Frauenliebe und -leben* was born.
True to his name, poet Adalbert von Chamisso lived a swashbuckling life. Driven from Paris during the French revolution, Chamisso traveled the world as soldier, botanist, linguist, folk-tale writer and poet. This outsider’s passionately ‘democratic, anticolonial and antiracist’ views appeal to our modern sensibilities, yet, thanks to Schumann, Chamisso is remembered for a poetic cycle with resolutely old-fashioned gender attitudes.

Women in 19th-century Germany were subordinate to the men in their lives, first their father, then their husband. Enormous gaps in age, power and education existed within married couples, and there was little hope for the situation to change. Unsurprisingly, the heroine of Frauenliebe und -leben shares this lack of autonomy. She idealises her betrothed, dreams only of her wedding ring, longs to see her husband’s face in their child, and knows no future as a widow.

Schumann was a man of his time. In 1838 he wrote to Clara that ‘young wives must be able to cook and keep house if they want satisfied
husbands. The first year of our marriage you shall forget the artist, you shall live only for yourself and your house and your husband.’ For Schumann, life and art were firmly intertwined, and he likely intended *Frauenliebe und -leben* as a musical manifestation of an ideal marriage.

Why does this cycle, so problematic in our modern times, retain its enormous popularity?

First, for its miraculous use of the female voice. Graham Johnson writes that Schumann’s music ‘lovingly nourishes [the words], fills them out, transfigures them, [providing] a flow of sound where breath unites with intelligence. He understands the visceral miracle at the heart of singing, as the voice cries out with the pain of what it is to be human.’ Second, for its heartfelt intimacy. Schumann guides performers again and again with the word ‘innig’, which translates as intimate, heartfelt, deep, fond and dear. This cycle takes place in close-up, and we often feel the composer himself leaning towards us, sharing secret thoughts, quiet ecstasy and a delicate touch.

Third, for its challenge to our empathy as performers and listeners. For almost two centuries, singers have lifted our downtrodden heroine up off the page, filling her with three dimensions, imbuing her with a wide range of thoughts and attitudes. In one performance she might be proud, in another humble, sometimes ambivalent, occasionally

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**Clara Schumann (née Wieck) (1819-1896)**

Virtuoso pianist, teacher and composer, Clara Wieck was one of the most celebrated performers of the 19th century, touring extensively and premiering works by Frederic Chopin, Johannes Brahms and her husband, Robert. She championed the latest works by leading composers in her recitals. A child prodigy, her piano-teacher father Friedrich micromanaged her career. In 1830, when Clara was 11, Friedrich took on Robert Schumann as a live-in pupil (he was 20). Seven years later Schumann asked Clara to marry him, which she did despite her father’s objections and legal blockade. Clara was the principal breadwinner of the household and maintained her musical career but stopped composing. She supported Robert (financially and emotionally) and their eight children, while organising her own touring schedule and teaching.
angry, but always more complex than she may at first appear. We come together to give her renewed life and love in our very different century.

Alban Berg
_Sieben frühe Lieder_ (Seven Early Songs)

1. _Nacht_. Notes rise from the depths of twilight, pulling aside a curtain to reveal a glowing dreamland of night. This song, the longest in the collection, floats in the weightless ambiguity of the whole-tone scale, adrift.

Alban Berg lives a quiet, comfortable, studious life in Vienna. Self-taught, he shows his love for and knowledge of great music and poetry through the teenaged composition of dozens of songs. His sister, unbidden, signs him up for composition lessons with Arnold Schoenberg in 1905, a small decision that changes Berg’s life irrevocably. They are a study in contrasts: Berg is tall, aloof, reserved, cultivated; Schoenberg is short, shabby and outspoken, poor. Yet Berg falls under the spell of this strict, passionate and hypnotic presence and is transformed as an artist and a person.

4. _Traumgekronkt_. A dream-like apparition is sketched, freehand, soft pencil on textured paper. This music has no hard edges or straight lines, is always shifting, melting, in flux.
The *Sieben frühe Lieder* is Berg’s first acknowledged work. More ‘collection’ than ‘cycle’, it was compiled by Berg from 30 songs written during his studies with Schoenberg. The collection has no clear narrative voice or theme, but the dense, cerebral poems are united by a fascination with the night. Dusk fades at the opening of the first song, and thereafter the set is rich with dreams, apparitions, sex and moonlight. Dawn breaks with the final song, a hymn to an Earth drenched in light.

5. *Im Zimmer*. Home and hearth.
The simplest, shortest song of the set envelops us in the warm glow of a crackling fire, rocking us gently into a love-drunk sleep.

In 1905, Schoenberg’s music contracted, compressed. He turned away from the epic size and scope of his previous work, and began to pack entire symphonies into tiny suitcases, shrinking tunes, piling ideas, eliding sections. Berg’s *Sieben frühe Lieder* mirrors his teacher’s newly-focused concision. Apart from the four-minute-long ‘Nacht’, no song lasts for more than two minutes. The soprano is rarely silent, crushing every word to fit into tiny capsules.

7. *Sommertage*. This final song is a full-throated, full-fisted paen to the ‘wandering wonderland’ of the earth. After six ambiguous, moonlit songs, full of subtle shadows and half-light, ‘Sommertage’ surges towards the light, steadily increasing in tension until the sun blinds us with its brilliance.
The set brings two major challenges to its performers. First, the singer must surmount technical demands, soaring high and diving deep, struggling to have the words understood. Second, the performers must counter the set’s lacks of variety. The songs are slow and harmonically ambiguous, and the unending display of ecstasy and rapture can wear a listener down, providing a glorious but numbing diet of musical Sachertorte.

Hector Berlioz

*Les nuits d’été*

Hector Berlioz was no shrinking violet. The passionate Frenchman produced voluminous critical and journalistic writings, as well as a 600-page autobiography, the ‘unlikely novel of my life’. But the composer was gun-shy when discussing one work; *Les nuits d’été*, about which we know next to nothing. So why the reticence?

In 1841, as he wrote *Les nuits d’été*, Berlioz’s marriage was foundering. Almost a decade prior, he married his dream-partner and muse, English Shakespearean actress Harriet Smithson. Berlioz pined for Smithson for years before they met, immortalizing her in two opium-fueled, love-crazed symphonies (*Symphonie fantastique* and *Lélio, ou le retour à la vie*, composed 1830-1831). Once married, the two learned that fantasy and reality rarely align. A stranger in a strange land, Smithson struggled with debilitating feelings of alienation, envy of her husband’s success, sexual jealousy, and constant poor health.
In 1840, Berlioz took a mistress. It was the beginning of the end.

Unsurprisingly, *Les nuits d’été* is preoccupied with loneliness and alienation, but is also haunted by the spectre of death. Composer and poet were both terrified by their own mortality, obsessions that leached into their artistic works. Between 1835 and 1840, Berlioz wrote a *Requiem*, a *Romeo and Juliet* symphony, and the ‘Funeral and Triumphant’ symphony, while the poems of *Les nuits d’été* were drawn from the collection *La Comédie de la Mort* (‘The comedy of death’) whose author, Théophile Gautier, had a morbid fascination with France’s then-proliferating cemeteries.

Berlioz’s title, ‘Summer nights’ is a little odd. ‘Villanelle’ occurs during spring, and most of the songs take place during the day. The title’s oblique reference to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* may hint at a hidden meaning, a forlorn hat-tip to his generation’s most famous Shakespearean actress, Harriet Smithson.

Berlioz wrote *Les nuits d’été* after a long string of gargantuan works. Perhaps the composer wanted to prove he could still work on a smaller scale. Or perhaps the ease of arranging song performances made the form lucrative in straightened times. Regardless, song writing was a core activity for Berlioz, who in his teen years learned his craft through the composition of dozens of simple romances. By reviving this beloved form of
his childhood, was *Les nuits d'été* a way for Berlioz to recall a happier, simpler time?

**Les nuits d'été: Many voices**

*Les nuits d’été* is more ‘collection’ than ‘cycle’, one with no central through-line or unifying theme. In Berlioz’s later orchestration, each song is dedicated to a different singer (these voice-types are included in parentheses below), a confirmation that *Les nuits d’été* gathers together many characters, many moods, many voices. A challenge for performers is to embody each song’s unique ‘voice’ while charting a steady course through the whole work.

1. **Villanelle** (tenor). A bright voice for a song of young love. The simplicity and innocence of this first song misleads us, lulls us, making the darker turn to come more wrenching. The ‘villanelle’ is a poetic form with origins as a ‘country song’.

2. **Le spectre de la rose** (mezzo-soprano). The hazy-voiced rose is our seductress here. An operatic scene leads us on a journey through a perfumed dream-sequence, one that appears to a barely-concealed sexual encounter, as the lovers ‘pluck’ the flower and put the rose to death.

3. **Sur les lagunes** (baritone). A boatman laments in husky, dark-hued tones above a sea-borne funeral march. Punctuated by three sobbing cries of pain (‘Ah!’), this song, surprisingly, is the only song of *Les nuits d’été* in a minor key.
4. **Absence** (soprano). A soprano’s voice gleams with clarion-like brilliance in the opening cry, a mournful call to an absent lover. But the tone of ‘Absence’ is not one of desperation, rather of muted acceptance.

5. **Au cimetière** (tenor). The chaste hymn of a pious woman, beside her lover’s grave, gives way to an operatic scene of trembling terror as our heroine faces a ghostly presence.

6. **L’île inconnue** (soprano). A bright voice for another song of young love. Our hero tempts a young maid with dreams of adventures far and wide, but this song has a sting in its tail. Lasting love is a fiction, he says, perhaps hoping this lures the young maid into something of the one-night variety.

Berlioz, whose curdling marital fantasy likely inspired *Les nuits d’été*, might have intended this throwaway line to hit home with unexpected force.

© Tim Munro 2016

Tim Munro is a Brisbane-born, Grammy-winning flautist based in Chicago.
'If you’re choosing an Angel, you can’t improve on the lightness and charm of the soprano Camilla Tilling.'
Since her acclaimed 1999 debut as Corinna (Il viaggio a Reims) at New York City Opera, Swedish soprano Camilla Tilling has not looked back as her mix of beautiful voice, musicality and winning stage personality launched her onto the stages of the world’s most prominent opera houses, concert halls and to regular collaborations with the greatest orchestras and conductors.

A graduate of both the University of Gothenburg and London’s Royal College of Music, Camilla made an early debut at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden as Sophie (Der Rosenkavalier), a role she went on to sing at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre, La Monnaie and the Munich Opera Festival. An on-going relationship with the Royal Opera House has seen her return as Pamina (Die Zauberflöte), Dorinda (Orlando), Oscar (Un ballo in maschera), Arminda (La finta giardiniera), Gretel (Hansel und Gretel) and most recently as Susanna (Le nozze di Figaro). At the Metropolitan Opera she has appeared as both Zerlina (Don Giovanni) and Nannetta (Falstaff). As Susanna, she has performed at the San Francisco Opera, Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Bayerische...
Staatsoper and Opéra national de Paris. With the vocal flexibility to embrace a diverse repertoire, Camilla has enjoyed success as the Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*) at The Glyndebourne Festival, as l’Ange (*Saint François d’Assise*) at De Nederlandse Opera, as Mélisande (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) at Teatro Real Madrid and last season in her house debut at Sächsische Staatsoper Dresden, as Euridice (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) at Salzburg Mozartwoche, and as Donna Clara (*Der Zwerg*) at Bayerische Staatsoper. Last season Camilla returned to Opéra National de Paris as Pamina and sang her first Contessa (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at Drottningholms Slottsteater.

A highly regarded concert performer, Camilla is a regular guest of the Berliner Philharmoniker, Orchestre de Paris, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, NDR Sinfonieorchester and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Recent highlights include Berg’s *Sieben frühe Lieder* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Lionel Bringuier and Strauss’ *Vier letzte Lieder* at the Salzburg Festival with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Christoph von Dohnányi. Last season she performed Mahler’s Symphony No.4 with the Orchestre National de France under Robin Ticciati and with the Vienna Symphony under Philippe Jordan while recent performances with the Berliner Philharmoniker include Beethoven’s Symphony No.9 at Berlin’s Waldbühne under Sir Simon Rattle, *La resurrezione* under Emmanuelle Haïm, and Peter Sellars’ highly-acclaimed production of St. Matthew Passion in Lucerne, London and New York.

Current season highlights include *Sieben frühe Lieder* with London Symphony Orchestra under Francois-Xavier Roth and Schumann’s *Faustszenen*.
with NDR Sinfonieorchester under Thomas Hengelbrock. She performs Brahms’s *Ein deutsches Requiem* with Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich and with the orchestra of Teatro alla Scala, both under Bernard Haitink, and also with the New York Philharmonic under Christoph von Dohnányi. And she returns to the Los Angeles Philharmonic for Dutilleux’s *Correspondances* and concert performances as Mélisande (Pelléas et Mélisande) under Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Among Camilla’s many recordings are three recital discs with Paul Rivinius on the BIS label: the most recent, *I Skogen* released in the summer of 2015, being dedicated to songs from Nordic composers. She appears on *Die Schöpfung* with Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks under Bernard Haitink, Mozart’s Mass in C Minor with Paul McCreesh, and she performs the role of Ilia (*Idomeneo*) on DVD from Teatro alla Scala conducted by Daniel Harding.

**Leigh Harrold** enjoys a reputation as a ‘musician of rare talent and intelligence’, and is one of Australia’s busiest and most sought-after pianists since being named The Advertiser ‘2008 Musician of the Year’.

Born in Whyalla, South Australia, Leigh completed undergraduate and post-graduate studies at The University of Adelaide with concert pianist Gil Sullivan. During this time he had many successes, including being a National Finalist in the Young Performer Awards and a recipient of the prestigious Beta Sigma Phi Classical Music Award – the conservatorium’s highest honour. He moved to Melbourne in 2003 to take up a full scholarship at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) under the mentorship of Geoffrey Tozer and in 2004 was
made the Academy Fellow – the first person in the institution’s history to be chosen as such after just one year of study.

Leigh has performed extensively throughout Europe, North America, Africa and Australia as both soloist and chamber musician, including concerts at Australia House in London, the Royal Academy of Music, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, the Harare International Festival of Arts, and concerto engagements with many Australian orchestras.

His international reputation as an associate artist has led to collaborations with such luminaries as Thomas Reibl, lecturer in viola at the Salzburg Mozarteum; Michael Cox, principal flautist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra; Daniel Gaede, ex-concert master of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra; London flautist Wissam Boustany; New York violinist Charles Castleman; Swedish cellist Mats Lidstrom; and British pianist Mark Gasser, to name just a few. Other significant international collaborations have included performance and studies with Andrew Ball at the London Royal College of Music; Sophie Cherrier at the Paris Conservatoire; New York-based pianist Lisa Moore and English composer Peter Maxwell Davies.

Leigh is a founding member of the Kegelstatt Ensemble and the Helpmann Award nominated Syzygy Ensemble – both winners of major national prizes - and has an internationally acclaimed piano duo with London-based pianist Coady Green with whom he regularly tours through Europe, Australia and Africa. He is a recording artist for ABC Classics and in 2010 released his debut recording for Sony with soprano Greta Bradman. Most recently, he won first prize in the 2014 Mietta Song Competition for most outstanding pianist.
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