

MadMen

Program Notes & Texts

Alan Dunbar, *bass-baritone*
Mark Bilyeu, *piano*

Let the dreadful engines of eternal will

Henry Purcell (1659-1695), realized by Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Thomas d'Urfey (1653 - 1723), from *The Comical History of Don Quixote*, Act IV, scene i

With original music by Henry Purcell, Thomas D'Urfey's *The Comical History of Don Quixote* premiered in London of 1694 to rave reviews. "Let the dreadful engines of eternal will" is the monologue of a character called Cardenio, a man Don Quixote and Sancho Panzo encounter in the mountains of the Sierra Morena. Just shy of 300 years after its premiere, Benjamin Britten turned to Purcell's work as one of his dozens of realizations for piano (and one of the few not explicitly written for Peter Pears, this draft bearing the inscription "for John S-Q" [Shirley-Quirk]). Britten's goal: to 'apply to these realizations something of that mixture of clarity, brilliance, tenderness and strangeness which shines out in all Purcell's music.'

Cardenio serves as the perfect theatrical vehicle for these contrasts. Seeming to have been crossed in love, he sighs for his beloved Lucinda before delivering a savage diatribe against women in general.

TEXT:

Let the dreadful engines of eternal will,
The thunder roar and crooked lightning kill,
My rage is hot as theirs, as fatal too,
And dares as horrid execution do.
Or let the frozen North its rancour show,
Within my breast far greater tempests grow;
Despair's more cold than all the winds can blow.

Can nothing, nothing warm me?
Yes, yes, Lucinda's eyes.
There Etna, there,
There, there Vesuvio lies,
To furnish Hell with flames
That mounting reach the skies.

Ye powers, I did but use her name,
And see how all the meteors flame;
Blue lightning flashes round the court of Sol,
And now the globe more fiercely burns
Than once at Phaeton's fall.

Ah, where are now those flow'ry groves
Where Zephyr's fragrant winds did play?
Where guarded by a troop of Loves,
The fair Lucinda sleeping lay:

There sung the nightingale and lark,
Around us all was sweet and gay;
We ne'er grew sad till it grew dark,
Nor nothing feared but short'ning day.

I glow, I glow but 'tis with hate
Why must I burn for this ingrate?
Cool, cool it then and rail,
Since nothing, nothing will prevail.

When a woman love pretends,
'Tis but till she gains her ends,
And for better and for worse
Is for marrow of the purse,
Where she jilts you o'er and o'er,
Proves a slattern or a whore,
This hour will tease and vex,
And will cuckold ye the next,
They were all contrived in spite,
To torment us, not delight;
But to scold and scratch and bite,
And not one of them proves right,
But all, all are witches by this light.
And so I fairly bid 'em, and the world, Good
Night.

Heard in a Violent Ward

David Evan Thomas (b. 1958) | John Clare (1793 - 1864)

A peasant poet, the son of a Northamptonshire farm laborer, John Clare achieved a certain fame through the publication in 1820 of *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery*, and *The Village Minstrel*, which appeared the following year. Bloom and Trilling call him “a genuine visionary of nature,” acknowledging the poet’s narrow range, but pronouncing the work “intense and pure.” “That sweet man, John Clare” as Roethke called him, entered the Northampton General Lunatic Asylum in 1841, the victim of acute bipolar disorder. He lived there, and was treated well and allowed to continue writing, until his death.

Selected from various sources, this cycle includes observations on Byron’s funeral train, Clare’s best-known poem, “I am,” and his last, poignant letter. (www.davidevanthomas.com)

I. In a Madhouse

Dear Sir,

I am in a Madhouse and quite forget your Name or who you are You must excuse me for I have nothing to communicate or tell of and why I am shut up I don’t know I have nothing to say so I conclude (Letter to James Hipkins, 1860)

Yours respectfully,

JOHN CLARE

II. There is a charm in Solitude

There is a charm in Solitude that cheers
A feeling that the world knows nothing of
A green delight the wounded mind endears
After the hustling world is broken off
Whose whole delight was crime at good to scoff
Green solitude his prison pleasure yields
The bitch fox heeds him not—birds seem to laugh
He lives the Crusoe of his lonely fields
Which dark green oaks his noontide leisure shields (before 1856)

III. Byron’s Funeral

My eye was arrested by stragglers of common people. . . . The train of a funeral suddenly appeared on which a young girl that stood beside me gave a deep sigh and uttered “Poor Lord Byron.” I looked up in the young girl’s face; it was dark and beautiful, and I could almost feel in love with her for the sigh she had uttered. . . . She had counted the carriages in her mind as they passed and she told me there were 63 or 4 in all. . . . I saw his remains born away on its last journey to that place where fame never comes; though it lives like a shadow and lingers like a sunbeam on his grave it cannot enter. (1825)

IV. Enquiry

You told me to enquire about my old companions of my single days—

How is Thomas Porter—in my single days we loved books and flowers together. And how is Tom Clare—we used to sit in the fields and sing capital songs—“She is the darling of my life, and she lives in the alley...”—capital songs over a bottle of beer!

How is old Otter the Fiddler and old John Nottingham and his wife Sally Frisby. Henry Snow and his wife and Robin Oliver and Jonathan Burbidge and his wife and daughter and Mary Buzley and old Mr. Buzley if alive for many are dead and some forgotten and Richard Royce and his wife and daughter? And Nottingham, old John Nottingham?

There is also Will Bloodworth and Tom and Sam Ward and John Fell and his wife and John King and Miss Large. And John Nottingham.

Mr. and Miss Bellars on the hill and John and Mrs. Bullimore the Village Schoolmistress and how is Charles Welsh and Robin Oliver. And John Nottingham. And remember me kindly to all I have forgotten. (Letter to Charles Clare, 1849)

(please wait to turn page until the song has ended)

V. Nobody will own me

Nobody will own me or have me at any price, and what have I done? . . . When people call me God's bastard . . . pay me by shutting me up from Gods people out of the way of common sense and then take my head off because they can't find me. It out-herods Herod.

Dearest Mary, are you faithful?* How I should like to walk with you in the snow where I helped to shake your carpets and take the opportunity we neglected then to kiss on the green grass and love you even better than before. (Letter to Mary Collingwood, 1850)

*Clare is confusing Mary Collingwood with his wife, who was also named Mary.

VI. I Am

I am—yet what I am, none cares or knows;
My friends forsake me like a memory lost:—
I am the self-consumer of my woes;—
They rise and vanish in oblivion's host,
Like shadows in love's frenzied stifled throes:—
And yet I am, and live—like vapours tossed
Into the nothingness of scorn and noise,—
Into the living sea of waking dreams,
Where there is neither sense of life or joys,
But the vast shipwreck of my life's esteems;
Even the dearest, that I love the best
Are strange—nay, rather stranger than the rest.
I long for scenes, where man hath never trod
A place where woman never smiled or wept
There to abide with my Creator, God;
And sleep as I in childhood, sweetly slept,
Untroubling, and untroubled where I lie,
The grass below—above the vaulted sky. (1840s)

VII. Conclusion

Dear Sir,

I... quite forget your Name or who you are... You must excuse me I have nothing to communicate and why I am shut up... I have nothing... I conclude, John Clare.

Don Quichotte à Dulcinée

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) | Paul Morand (1888 - 1976)

In 1932, film director G.W. Pabst commissioned five composers (Maurice Ravel, Manuel de Falla, Darius Milhaud, Marcel Delannoy and Jacques Ibert) to write four songs and incidental music for a cinema version of Don Quichotte starring the legendary bass Fyodor Chaliapin. Ravel's rapidly declining health – he suffered from Pick's disease - slowed down his writing process, and in was beaten out by Ibert before he could complete the commission. Written originally for piano and voice, the premiere of the songs were given in the orchestrated version in in December of 1934. These three songs stand as the last score composed by Ravel.

Chanson romanesque

Si vous me disiez que la terre
A tant tourner vous offensa,
Je lui dépêcherais Pança:
Vous la verriez fixe et se taire.

Si vous me disiez que l'ennui
Vous vient du ciel trop fleuri d'astres,
Déchirant les divins cadastres,
Je faucherais d'un coup la nuit.

Si vous me disiez que l'espace
Ainsi vidé vous plaît point,
Chevalier dieu, la lance au poing,
J'étoilerais le vent qui passe.

Mais si vous me disiez que mon sang
Est plus à moi qu'à vous, ma Dame,
Je blémirais dessous le blâme
Et je mourrais, vous bénissant.

O Dulcinée.

Chanson épique

Bon Saint Michel qui me donnez loisir
De voir ma Dame et de l'entendre,
Bon Saint Michel qui me daignez choisir
Pour lui complaire et la défendre,

Bon Saint Michel veuillez descendre
Avec Saint Georges sur l'autel
De la Madone au bleu mantel.

D'un rayon du ciel bénissez ma lame
Et son égale en pureté
Et son égale en piété
Comme en pudeur et chasté: Ma Dame.

O grands Saint Georges et Saint Michel
L'ange qui veille sur ma veille,
Ma douce Dame si pareille
A vous, Madone au bleu mantel!

Amen

Romanesque song

Were you to tell me that the earth,
turning so much, offended you,
I would hurry Panza to her:
you would see her motionless and fall silent.

Were you to tell me that boredom
comes to you from heaven, adorned with too many stars,
tearing apart the divine decrees,
with one blow I would fell the night.

Were you to tell me that space
thus emptied pleases you not
knight of God, lance in hand,
I would scatter stars in the passing wind.

But were you to tell me that my blood
is more mine than yours, my Lady,
I would grow pale under the reproach
And I would die, still blessing you.

O Dulcinea

Epic song

Good Saint Michael who give me liberty
to see my Lady and to hear her,
good Saint Michael who deign to choose me
to please and defend her,

good Saint Michael I beg you to come down
with Saint George to the altar
of the Madonna with the blue mantle.

With a ray from heaven bless my blade
and its equal in purity
and its equal in piety
as in modesty and chastity: my Lady.

O great Saint George and Saint Michael
the angel who watches over my vigil,
my sweet Lady so like
you, Madonna with the blue mantle!

Amen

Chanson à boire

Foin du bâtard, illustre Dame,
Qui pour me perdre à vos doux yeux,
Dit que l'amour et le vin vieux
Mettent en deuil mon cœur, mon âme!

Je bois à la joie!
La joie est le seul but
Où je vais droit
Lorsque j'ai bu!

Foin du jaloux, brune maîtresse,
Qui geind, qui pleure et fait serment
D'être toujours ce pâle amant
Qui met de l'eau dans son ivresse!

Je bois à la joie!
La joie est le seul but
Où je vais droit
Lorsque j'ai bu!

Drinking song

Away with the bastard, illustrious Lady,
who, to disfavour me in your sweet eyes,
says that love and old wine
place my heart, my soul in mourning!

I drink to happiness!
Happiness is the only goal
to which I go straight
once I have drunk!

Away, dark-haired mistress, with the jealous man
who moans, who weeps and preaches
to be forever that pale lover
who waters down his intoxication!

I drink to happiness!
Happiness is the only goal
to which I go straight
once I have drunk!

© translated by Christopher Goldsack

from the *Poetisches Tagebuch* of Ernst Schulze

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) | Ernst Konrad Friedrich Schulze (1789-1817)

Ernst Schulze was a charming, educated womanizer who was quoted as saying "I could have twelve mistresses without loving any less than the others." As was often the case in the late 18th century, a hard childhood caused by the early death of his mother at the age of two and the loveless house after the remarriage of his father was to blame. His sister's death in 1811 seems to have been a tipping point, inciting a need within the young man to establish a relationship with someone who resembled his sister. Enter: the Tychsens sisters: Adelheid and Cäcilie. Describing the latter as "rather like a bagpipe that does not sound equally pleasant to all listeners" and having "a monkey's face," he turned his attentions to Cäcilie. His advances unreturned, she died in 1812, inciting his epic poem *Cäcilie, Ein romantisches Gedicht*. The Tychsens family tolerated this memorial devotion, but become concerned when he turned his attention back to Adelheid. In reading Schulze's letter to a friend which says "we love each other – she had told me so herself and treats me as her fiancé as does the entire city," we see his reality altering. Schulze began a poetic diary - *Poetisches Tagebuch* – in which he uses the smallest bit of reality to lead the reader into a world where his ongoing relationship with both sisters exists. Its publication was the tipping point for the Tychsens, who then banned him from their home – a 19th Century restraining order. Two years later, Schulze died of tuberculosis, the disease which killed his mother, sister and his beloved Cäcilie Tychsens.

Schubert's nine settings of Schulze poems are all taken from his *Poetisches Tagebuch*, and were written within the span of one year (March 1825 – March 1826). Pianist Graham Johnson has offered an ordering of these nine, along with the title *Auf den wilden Wegen* (On the Wild Paths) to suggest a cycle of sorts. While this grouping of the four presented in this program mirror Johnson's first and last, they were selected to offer not only the genius of Schubert's writing, but also showcase the contrast between Schulze's consistent tone and structure in juxtaposition with his overall unbalanced state of mind.

Auf der Bruck

Den 25sten Julius 1814

Frisch trabe sonder Ruh' und Rast,
Mein gutes Roß, durch Nacht und Regen!
Was scheust du dich vor Busch und Ast
Und strauchelst auf den wilden Wegen?
Dehnt auch der Wald sich tief und dicht,
Doch muß er endlich sich erschließen,
Und freundlich wird ein fernes Licht
Uns aus dem dunkeln Thale grüßen.

Wohl könnt' ich über Berg und Feld
Auf deinem schlanken Rücken fliegen
Und mich am bunten Spiel der Welt,
An holden Bildern mich vergnügen;
Manch Auge lacht mir traulich zu
Und beut mit Frieden, Lieb' und Freude,
Und dennoch eil' ich ohne Ruh,
Zurück, zurück zu meinem Leide.

Denn schon drey Tage war ich fern
Von ihr, die ewig mich gebunden;
Drey Tage waren Sonn' und Stern
Und Erd' und Himmel mir verschwunden.
Von Lust und Leiden, die mein Herz
Bey ihr bald heilten, bald zerrissen,
Fühlt' ich drey Tage nur den Schmerz,
Und ach, die Freude mußst' ich missen!

Drum trabe muthig durch die Nacht!
Und schwinden auch die dunkeln Bahnen,
Der Sehnsucht helles Auge wacht,
Und sicher führt mich süßes Ahnen.
Weit sehn wir über Land und See
Zur wärmern Flur den Vogel fliegen;
Wie sollte denn die Liebe je
In ihrem Pfade sich betrügen?

At the Bruck

July 25th, 1814

Trot briskly without rest,
my good horse, through night and through rain!
Why do you shy at bush and branch
and stumble on the wild paths?
Though the forest stretches deep and dense,
it must finally open up;
and a distant light will greet us kindly
out of the dark valley.

I can fly over mountain and field
on your slender back
and enjoy the world's
colourful vistas.
Many an eye laughs intimately at me,
with peace, love and joy;
and yet I hurry without rest,
back to my grief.

For three days now I have been far away
from her to whom I am eternally bound;
For three days sun and star
and earth and heavens were missing for me.
Of the delight and grief,
that when I was with her, now healed, now tore
my heart,
for three days I have only felt the pain,
and oh!, the joy I had to miss!

We see the bird fly far over land and sea
to warm pastures;
How then should love ever
deceive itself in its path?
So trot bravely through the night!
Although the dark tracks may fade,
the bright eye of yearning still watches,
and sweet foreboding guides me safely.

Um Mitternacht

Am 5ten März 1815, Nachts um 12 Uhr

Keine Stimme hör' ich schallen,
Keinen Schritt auf dunkler Bahn;
Selbst der Himmel hat die schönen
Hellen Aeuglein zugethan.

Ich nur wache, süßes Leben,
Schaue sehnd in die Nacht,
Bis dein Stern in öder Ferne
Lieblich leuchtend mir erwacht.

Ach nur einmal, nur verstohlen
Dein geliebtes Bild zu sehn,
Wollt' ich gern im Sturm und Wetter
Bis zum späten Morgen stehn.

Seh' ich's nicht schon ferne leuchten?
Naht es nicht schon nach und nach?
Ach, und freundlich hör' ich's flüstern:
Sieh, der Freund ist auch noch wach.

Süßes Wort, geliebte Stimme,
Der mein Herz entgegenschlägt!
Tausend sel'ge Liebesbilder
Hat dein Hauch mir aufgeregt.

Alle Sterne seh' ich glänzen
Auf der dunkelblauen Bahn,
Und im Herzen hat und droben
Sich der Himmel aufgethan.

Holder Nachhall, wiege freundlich
Jetzt mein Haupt in milde Ruh,
Und noch oft, ihr Träume, lispelt
Ihr geliebtes Wort mir zu.

At Midnight

March 5th, 1815 at midnight

I hear no voice sounding,
No footstep upon the dark path,
Even Heaven itself has closed
Its beautiful, bright eyes.

Only I am still watchful, sweet life,
I gaze yearningly into the night,
Until, in the desolate distance, your star,
Beautifully shining, wakens for me.

Ah, only once, only surreptitiously
To see your beloved image,
I would gladly stand in storms and squalls
Until late morning!

Do I not already see it shining in the distance?
Is it not already approaching little by little?
Ah, and I hear it whisper graciously:
Lo, my beloved is also still awake.

Sweet word, beloved voice,
Which my pulsing heart greets!
Your breath has excited me with
A thousand blissful images of love.

I see all the stars glittering
Upon the dark, blue firmament,
And in my heart and on high
The heavens have opened.

Lovely echo, kindly lull
My head to gentle rest,
And often still, ye dreams, whisper
Her beloved words to me!

Im Fruhling

Am 31sten März 1815

Still sitz' ich an des Hügels Hang,
Der Himmel ist so klar,
Das Lüftchen spielt im grünen Thal,
Wo ich beym ersten Frühlingsstrahl
Einst, ach, so glücklich war;

Wo ich an ihrer Seite ging
So traulich und so nah,
Und tief im dunkeln Felsenquell
Den schönen Himmel blau und hell,
Und sie im Himmel sah.

Sieh, wie der bunte Frühling schon
Aus Knosp' und Blüthe blickt!
Nicht alle Blüthen sind mir gleich,
Am liebsten pflückt' ich von dem Zweig,
Von welchem sie gepflückt.

Denn Alles ist wie damals noch,
Die Blumen, das Gefild;
Die Sonne scheint nicht minder hell,
Nicht minder freundlich schwimmt im Quell
Das blaue Himmelsbild.

Es wandeln nur sich Will' und Wahn,
Es wechseln Lust und Streit;
Vorüber flieht der Liebe Glück,
Und nur die Liebe bleibt zurück,
Die Lieb' und ach, das Leid!

O wär' ich doch das Vöglein nur
Dort an dem Wiesenhang,
Dann blieb' ich auf den Zweigen hier
Und säng' ein süßes Lied von ihr
Den ganzen Sommer lang.

In Spring

March 31st, 1815

Quietly I sit on the hill's slope.
The sky is so clear;
a breeze plays in the green valley
where I was at Spring's first sunbeam
once - ah, I was so happy;

Where I walked at her side,
So intimate and so close,
and deep in the dark rocky spring
was the beautiful sky, blue and bright;
and I saw her in the sky.

Look how colorful Spring already
looks out from bud and blossom!
Not every blossom is the same for me:
I like best to pick from the branch
from which she picked hers.

For all is as it was back then:
the flowers, the field;
the sun does not shine less brightly,
nor does the stream reflect any less charmingly
the blue image of the sky.

The only things that change are will and illusion:
Joys and quarrels alternate,
the happiness of love flies past
and only the love remains -
The love and, ah, the sorrow.

Oh, if only I were a little bird,
there on the meadow's slope --
then I would remain here on these branches
and sing a sweet song about her
the whole summer long.

Über Wildemann

*Ueber Wildemann,
einem Bergstädtchen am Harz.
Den 28sten April 1816*

Die Winde sausen
Am Tannenhang,
Die Quellen brausen
Das Thal entlang;
Ich wandr' in Eile
Durch Wald und Schnee,
Wohl manche Meile
Von Höh zu Höh.

Und will das Leben
Im freien Thal
Sich auch schon heben
Zum Sonnenstrahl;
Ich muß vorüber
Mit wildem Sinn
Und blicke lieber
Zum Winter hin.

Auf grünen Haiden,
Auf bunten Au'n,
Müßt' ich mein Leiden
Nur immer schau'n,
Daß selbst am Steine
Das Leben sprießt,
Und ach! nur Eine
Ihr Herz verschließt.

O Liebe, Liebe,
O Mayenhauch!
Du drängst die Triebe
Aus Baum und Strauch;
Die Vögel singen
Auf grünen Höhn;
Die Quellen springen
Bei deinem Wehn!

Mich läßt du schweifen
Im dunklen Wahn
Durch Windespfeifen
Auf rauher Bahn.
O Frühlingssschimmer,
O Blüthenschein,
Soll ich denn nimmer
Mich dein erfreun?

Above Wildemann

*Above Wildemann,
a mountaintown on the Harz
28th April, 1816*

The winds roar
Along the fir-clad slopes,
The water-springs
Race through the valley;
I wander in haste
Through forest and snow,
Many a mile
From peak to peak.

And when in
The open valley
Life already rises
Toward the sunbeams,
I must pass by
With a frenzied spirit
And I gaze instead
To where it is still winter.

Upon green moors,
Upon colourful meadows,
I would only be
Constantly confronted with my pain,
That life puts forth shoots
Even upon the rocks,
And, alas, only one
Has locked her heart.

Oh love, love,
Oh breath of May,
You urge the shoots forth
From tree and bush,
The birds sing
[Upon the green heights,]1
The water-springs bubble up
When you waft by.

But you leave me
To roam in darksome delusions
Through the whistling wind
Upon a rough pathway.
Oh shimmer of Spring,
Oh radiance of blossoms,
Am I never
To rejoice in you?

Kung Eriks visor (King Eric's Songs)

Anders Johan Ture Rangström (1884-1947)

Gustaf Fröding (1860 - 1911)

A trained singer as well as prolific composer and conductor, Ture Rangström began writing his over 300 songs as a teen. His teacher at that time encouraged him to use more creative harmonic language – which he did – earning him the nickname "Sturm-und-Drangström" from his peers. His *Kung Eriks visor* give voice to Sweden's King Eric XIV (1533-1577), via poems of Swedish poet Gustaf Fröding (Fröding himself suffered from mental illness from a early age, living his life in and out of institutions).

Crowned King of Sweden at the age of thirty, after marriage attempts pursuing Queen Elizabeth I of England and Mary, Queen of Scots, he ultimately married Karin Månsdotter, a non-noble woman who was first his royal mistress before becoming Queen of Sweden. A power-hungry leader with expansionist dreams, his rule was marked by unrest within his domestic kingdom. By 1563, his mental instability became more prominent. Suspecting high treason, he ordered the killing of already jailed members of the diplomatic Struve family, murdering Nils Struve himself. In 1568, the Swedish nobles rebelled and Eric was dethroned and held prisoner throughout Sweden and Finland until his death in 1577. Legend stated that Eric's guards, on direction from his brother John III, poisoned him with pea soup. This legend was confirmed in 1958 when his body was exhumed and found to have traces of arsenic.

I. En visa om när jag var lustig med Welam Welamsson på Upsala hus och ärkebiskop Lars och doktor Bengt voro utanför och väntade

I. A song about when I was merry with Welam Welamsson at Uppsala Castle and Archbishop Lars and Doctor Bengt were outside waiting

Klunkom, Welam Welamsson,
klunkom, Welam Welamsson,
si ormen är tagen
och glädjen är stor,
i länkar är han slagen
och ventar domedagen
i burn, där han bor,
klunkom, Welam Welamsson,
gudlof vi hafve Sturen
instoppad i buren!
Klunkom, Welam Welamsson,
klunkom, Welam Welamsson,
herr Larses postillor
vi vele gifva Hin,
och så herr Bengtses brillor,

låt kalla våra frillor
från staden hitin,
klunkom, Welam Welamsson,
låt fylla mer i stopen
att läska frillohopen!
Klunkom, Welam Welamsson,
klunkom, Welam Welamsson,
vår tid vi vele öda
med dryckjom och svir,
så drickom oss röda,

Let's drink, Welam Welamsson,
let's drink, Welam Welamsson,
for the serpent is captured
and the joy is great,
in chains he is bound
and awaiting judgement day
in the cage, where he lives,
let's drink, Welam Welamsson,
thank God we have Sturen
imprisoned in the cage!
Let's drink, Welam Welamsson,
let's drink, Welam Welamsson,
my lord Lars's devotional books
we will give to the Devil,
and also Dr Bengt's glasses,

let us summon our whores
up here from the town,
let's drink, Welam Welamsson,
let the pint pots be refilled
to slake the whores' thirst!
Let's drink, Welam Welamsson,
let's drink, Welam Welamsson,
we will fritter our time away
in drinking and carousing,
drink ourselves red in the face,

(please wait to turn page until the song has ended)

så drickom oss döda
i godt Malvasir,
klunkom, Welam Welamsson,
och blomstrom och blommom
åt Hecklom vi kommom.

drink ourselves to death
in good Malvasier,
let's drink, Welam Welamsson,
and blossom and flower
we will go to the devil.

II. En visa om mig och narren Herkules

II. A song about me and the fool Hercules

Knäpp gitarren,
strängen slå,
hvem är narren,
hvem är narren
af oss två?

Strum the guitar,
strike the string,
which is the fool,
which is the fool
of us two?

Storm kring branten,
tallen brast,
hör diskanten,
hör diskanten
hviner hvasst.

Strum the guitar,
in a wild ring
the pine needles whirl,
the pine needles whirl
around.

Jag är narren,
du är kung,
knäpp gitarren,
knäpp gitarren,
sjung!

I am the fool,
you are the king,
strum the guitar,
strum the guitar,
sing!

Knäpp gitarren,
vildt i ring
hvirfla barren,
hvirfla barren
kring.

Strum the guitar
in a wild ring
the pine needles whirl
the pineneedles whirl
around.

Rör på strängen,
det är vår,
glad på ängen,
glad på ängen
blomman står.

Move the string,
it is spring,
happy in the meadow,
happy in the meadow
the flower stands.

Trött och sprungen
är gitarren,
nu är kungen,
nu är kungen
narrn.

Tired and split
is the guitar,
now the king,
now the king
is the fool.

Öfver ljungen
står en tall
högst i dungen,
högst i dungen
all.

Above the heather
stands a pine tree,
the tallest in the grove,
the tallest in the grove
of all.

Hör gitarrens
brustna röst,
det är narrens,
det är narrens
tröst.

Hear the guitar's
broken voice,
that is the fool's,
that is the fool's
consolation.

Hög på hästen
red en kung,
upp till festen,
sprang af hästen
ung,

High on his horse
a king rode
up to the feast,
sprang from his horse,
young,

tog, du dansens
giga hör,
kyss af landsens,
kyss af landsens
mör.

stole, listen to the fiddle
of the dance,
kisses from the country,
kisses from the country
maidens.

Hör du strängens
hårda skorr,
[nu är ängens,]
nu är ängens
blomma torr.

Hear the string's
harsh tones,
[now the meadow's,]
now the meadow's
flower is dry.

(please wait to turn page until the song has ended)

III. En visa till Karin när hon hade dansat

Av ädla blomster vill jag linda
en slinga kring min käras hår,
av kära minnen vill jag binda
en krans åt dig för ålderns år.
Med mina händer vill jag vira
den kringom den jag haver kär,
ditt gråa hår skall kransen sira
ännu, när jag ej mera är.
Si däjelig och ung i dansen
min kära är, men icke glad
så är en tagg i denna kransen
och gift i dessa blommors blad.
Jag ser en droppe blod, som stänker
av kransen kring min käras hår,
så är ett kval i allt jag skänker,
min skänk gör ont, min krans ger sår.

IV. En visa till Karin ur fängelset

Mät mig ej med mått, men vät mig med tårar,
en dåre är jag vorden, en dåre ibland dårar.

Skön var min krona och härligt var mitt rike,
jag hafver varit konung och kejsarens like.
I spillror är mitt rike, i stycken är min krona,
i fängelsets mörker mitt brott vill jag sona.
Jag tjänades troget af vänner och fränder,

se frändernas blod förmörkar mina händer.
Troget gick i striden mitt folk för min ära,
i nöd fick det trohetens skördar uppskåra.
Döttrar af mitt folk gingo fagra på torgen,
jag förde dem upp till att skändas i borgen.

Sist grep jag efter dig för att finna sista trösten,
våren skulle sköflas att skänka lif åt hösten.
Tidt öfver mig har du bittra tårar gjutit,
mät mig ej med mått, förlåt hvad jag brutit.

V. Kung Eriks sista visa

Hvad båtar oss gråt, hvad hjälper oss rop,
kung Johan och Gud, de hålla ihop,
kung Johan gaf mig blacken
och Gud sin nåd med detta hopp:
ditt fånghus är din egen kropp,
och villst du ur ditt fånghus opp,
så kanst du bräcka nacken.

III. A song to Karin when she had danced

Of noble blossoms I will bind
a band round my dear one's hair,
of dear memories I will bind
a garland for you when you are old.
With my hands I will twist
it round the one I hold dear,
your grey hair the garland will adorn
still, when I am no more.
How lovely and young in the dance
my dear one is, but not happy,
then there must be a thorn in this garland
and poison in the petals of these flowers.
I see a drop of blood spilling
from the garland round my dear one's hair,
then there must be an agony in everything I give,
my gift hurts, my garland wounds.

IV. A song to Karin from prison

Do not judge me, but moisten me with tears,
I have become a fool, a fool among fools.

Beautiful was my crown & splendid was my realm,
I have been a king and the emperor's equal.
Shattered is my kingdom, in pieces is my crown,
in the darkness of prison I will atone for my misdeeds.
I was served faithfully by friends and kinsmen,

see, the blood of my kinsmen darkens my hands.
Faithfully my people fought for my honour,
the reward for their loyalty was poverty.
The daughters of my people walked fair in the squares,
I led them up to the castle to a life of infamy.

Finally I clutched at you to find a last consolation,
spring was to be captured to give life to autumn.
You have often wept bitter tears over me,
do not judge me, forgive me for what I have destroyed.

V. King Erik's last song

What use to us is crying, what help to us are shouts,
King Johan and God, the two stick together,
King Johan put obstacles in my way
and God gave me his grace with this hope:
your prison is your own body,
and if you want to escape from your prison,
then you can break your neck.

(please wait to turn page until the song has ended)

Pharaoh Songs

Libby Larsen (b. 1950)

translated from the Ancient Egyptian by John L. Foster

from LOVE SONGS OF THE NEW KINGDOM,

“In 2003, browsing the shelves of poetry at one of my favorite book stores, I came across a volume of ancient Egyptian love poems, translated into English by John L. Foster. I took the book off the shelf and opened it. As it happens, though not nearly as often as I wish it would, the poems literally sang off the page. Some were sensual, some were quite funny, all of them were as relevant to today as they were to 1300 BC when they were created. I knew that I wanted to work with these poems as much and as often as I could. An opportunity presented itself in a commission from Lotte Lehmann Foundation, for which I set *I love you through the daytimes*. Ever since then I’ve been hungry to make a grouping of them. *Pharaoh Songs*, for bass/baritone and piano, sets five more of the poems. I created a loose, fantasized narrative which exists solely in the mind of the lover. Desire, fantasy, tension, frustration, reunion and fulfillment are projected on the object of the lover’s desire.

My thanks to Mark Bilyeu and Clara Osowski for giving me the opportunity to create *Pharaoh Songs*, and to Alan Dunbar for his willingness to travel back in time (*way back*) to inhabit the poems and become love-lorn in ancient Egypt” (www.libbylarsen.com).

Pharaoh Songs was premiered by Alan Dunbar and Mark Bilyeu in August of 2017 at the Source Song Festival.

I. My love is one and only, without peer

(*Papyrus Chester Beatty I: Recto*)

My love is one and only, without peer
Papyrus Chester Beatty I: Verso
My love is one and only, without peer,
lovely above all Egypt’s lovely girls.
On the horizon of my seeing,
see her, rising,
Glistening goddess of the sunrise star
bright in the forehead of a lucky year.
So there she stands, epitome
of shining, shedding light,
(He who could hold that body tight
would know at last
perfection of delight—)

II. If I could just be the washerman

(*Cairo Ostrakon 25218*,

Augmented by Ostrakon Deir el Medineh 1266)

If I could just be the washerman
doing her laundry for one month only,
I would be faithful to pick up the bundles,
sturdy to beat clean the heavy linens,
But gentle to touch those finespun things
lying closest the body I love.
I would rinse with pure water the perfumes
that linger still in her tunics
And I’d dry my own flesh with the towels
she yesterday held to her face.
The touch of her clothes, their textures,
her softness in them...
Thank god for the body
its youthful vigor!

III. Ho, what she's done to me—that girl

(Papyrus Chester Beatty I: Recto)

Ho, what she's done to me—that girl!!
And I'm to grin and just bear it?
Letting me stand there huge in her door
while she goes catfoot inside.
Not even a word: "Have a quiet walk home!"
(dear god give me relief)
Stopping her ears the whole damned night
and me only whispering, "Share!"

IV. I love you through the daytimes

*(Cairo Ostrakon 25218,
Augmented by Ostrakon Deir el Medineh 1266)*

I love you through the daytimes,
in the dark,
Through all the long divisions of the night,
those hours
spendthrift, I waste away alone,
and lie, and turn, awake till dawn.

And with the shape of you I people night,
thoughts of hot desire grow live within me.
What magic was in your voice
to bring such singing to my flesh,
To limbs that now lie listless on my bed without
you?

Thus I beseech the darkness:
Where gone, O love?
Why gone from me whose love
can pace you, step by step, to your desire?

No loving voice replies.
And I perceive
how much I am alone.

V. My love is back, let me shout out the news

*(Cairo Ostrakon 25218, Augmented by Ostrakon
Deir el Medineh 1266)*

My love is back, let me shout out the news!
My arms swing wide to embrace her,
And hear pirouettes in its dark chamber
glad as a fish when night shades the pool.
You are mine, my mistress, mine to eternity,
mine from the day you first whispered my name!

VI. When I hold my love close

*(Cairo Ostrakon 25218,
Augmented by Ostrakon Deir el Medineh 1266)*

When I hold my love close
(and her arms steal around me),
I'm like a man translated to Punt
or like someone out in the reedflats
When the whole world suddenly bursts into flower
In this dreamland of South Sea fragrances,
My love, you are essence of roses.