

MANSION
STRATHMORE
Music in the Mansion

THE THIRTEEN

Light of a Clear Blue Morning: Quartet Edition

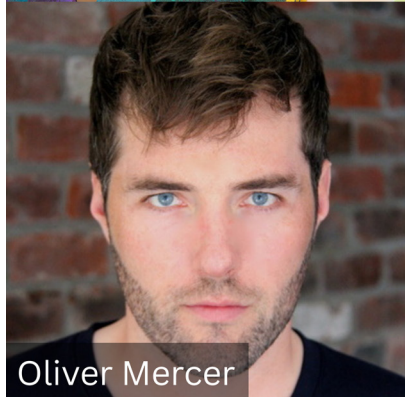
Thursday, November 20, 2025 at 7:30pm



Kristen Dubenion-Smith



Amy Broadbent



Oliver Mercer



Gilbert Spencer

We invite you to take photographs (without flash) and to use social media during the concert. We politely decline unauthorized audio or video recordings of our concerts. Please silence all cell phones.

PROGRAM

i.

Six Chansons

Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)

- i. La Biche
- ii. Un Cygne
- iii. Puisque tout passe
- iv. Printemps
- v. En Hiver
- vi. Verger

ii.

Linden Lea
Sicut Cervus
The Willow Song

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525–1594)
R.V. Williams

iii.

Ad Majorem Die Gloriam (A.M.D.G.)

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

Prayer I
Rosa Mystica
God's Grandeur
Prayer II
O Deus, ego amo te
The Soldier
Heaven-Haven

Intermission

iv.

Sure On This Shining Night
Der gang zum Liebchen, Op. 31 No. 3

Samuel Barber (1910–1981)
Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

v.

Be Like The Bird
Morgen
Light of a Clear Blue Morning

Abbie Betinis (b. 1980)
Richard Strauss (1864–1949)
Dolly Parton (b. 1946), arr. Amy Broadbent (b. 1992)

World Premiere Performance

Be Like The Bird

a round in five parts

Victor Hugo

Abbie Betinis

1

Be like the bird that, paus - ing in her

3

2

flight a - while on boughs too slight,

5

3

feels them give way be - neath her and

7

4

sings, and sings, and sings

9

5

— know - ing she hath wings.

CONDUCTOR'S NOTE

Welcome! I am so glad that you've joined us for the second concert of our 2025–26 season, *Kaleidoscope*. This season celebrates the multifaceted approach to programming that is a foundational aspect of The Thirteen's identity. In an increasingly specialized classical music world, The Thirteen defies easy classification. We are a choir and period orchestra that performs works from the Baroque at the highest levels of excellence. We are a tight-knit vocal ensemble performing some of the most virtuosic modern music written. We tackle works listed among classical radio's Top 10, works by composers who have been excluded from recognition by virtue of their skin color or gender, and new works by a dizzying array of emerging composers. We perform with as many as 50 musicians and, today, as few as four singers and a pianist. This is the kaleidoscope that inspired the name of our 2024-25 season.

Today's concert, *Light of A Clear Blue Morning*, exemplifies this kaleidoscopic approach. Not only do we perform Palestrina's beloved motet *Sicut cervus*, in celebration of the composer's 500th birthday, but we also perform well-loved works by wide-ranging composers such as Barber, Brahms, Strauss, and Vaughan Williams. We perform a newly commissioned arrangement of the Country classic, *Light of A Clear Blue Morning*, by our own Amy Broadbent; Hindemith's modern masterpiece, *Six Chansons*; and what is perhaps Benjamin Britten's most technically demanding work for vocal ensemble: his rarely performed *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*.

This concert also reflects our belief that the music we make must be in dialogue with the times in which we live and that art has the capacity to animate the conscience on issues of deep importance to the human condition. Today's concert explores the natural world as viewed through the kaleidoscope of love in all its faces: divine, filial, and romantic. And while this concert is meant to demonstrate love for the natural world and how it is reflected in music, it also evinces my concern for its fragility. It is my hope that this concert may, in turn, inspire our love of our natural world and inculcate care for it.

Lastly, I'm delighted to be performing this concert with four of our most beloved singers. I have worked with Amy Broadbent for eleven years: longer than any other of our other artists. Gilbert Spencer is an exceptional baritone in addition to being a core part of our staff at

The Thirteen. Oliver Mercer is a featured soloist on many all our concerts, and Kristen Dubenion-Smith is a spectacular mezzo with a deep range of expression. It is a delight to share the stage with these spectacular artists.

—Matthew Robertson

ABOUT THE THIRTEEN

Amy Broadbent, *soprano*
Kristen Dubenion-Smith, *mezzo-soprano*
Oliver Mercer, *tenor*
Gilbert Spencer, *baritone*
Matthew Robertson, *piano*

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The Thirteen Thanks Our Generous Sponsors

This program is made possible by generous gifts from Cheryl Naulty & Walter Hill, and Stephen & Maygene Daniels.

The Thirteen thanks our **Season Sponsors, J. Penny Clark, Charles Cerf & Cindy Dunbar, and Walter Hill & Cheryl Naulty.**

This program is supported in part by the **D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, the Maryland State Arts Council, The Capitol Hill Community Foundation, and the City of Alexandria, VA through the Annual Arts Program.**

PROGRAM NOTE

One-to-a-part ensemble singing has blossomed in the past 50 years or so, and for a number of reasons. Perhaps the biggest spur has been the refinement of our view of historical performance practice norms, a view that now for vast swaths of early repertoires—madrigals, chansons, the liturgical music of J. S. Bach, to name but a few—affirms the historicity of ensembles of solo singers. And the modern-day appetite for “period performance” has made the sound familiar and popular. In later music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the one-to-a-part configuration claims an easy kinship with instrumental chamber music norms, like the string quartet, but also seems natural in the blurring of boundaries between solo song and solo song with vocal accompaniment. Within this framework it is important to note the musical distinctions that arise, as well: distinctions, such as a more colorful ensemble sound for the individuality of the voices, a flexibility in rendition, and in some cases, an enviable match for the intimacy of sound and the intimacy of venue.

In this concert, “Light of a Clear Blue Morning,” The Thirteen become “The Four” or, with piano, “The Five,” exploring the sound of a solo ensemble in a program whose variety seems will in tune with the season theme, “Kaleidoscope.” The two larger works on the program—Benjamin Britten’s *AMDG* and Paul Hindemith’s *Six Chansons* both originate in 1939 and both come from composers who at the time had left home due to the rising threat of German fascism and Nazism; Britten, along with his partner, the tenor Peter Pears, traveled to North America, while Hindemith located for a short time in Valais, Switzerland, prior to taking up a faculty post at Yale University in the next year.

AMDG—*Ad majorem Dei gloriam* (to the greater glory of God)—is the motto of the Roman Catholic Society of Jesus, “the Jesuits,” and Britten’s title acknowledges that the poet of the songs, Gerard Manley Hopkins, was a Jesuit priest. A convert to Rome from the Church of England, Hopkins’s conversion shows the influence of the Tractarian Movement and its leading voices, like John Henry Newman and Edward Pusey. It is easy to imagine, as well, that his early admiration of the mediaevalism of the architect and critic, Augustus Pugin, may also have played a part.

When Britten composed *AMDG*, he was 25 years old, young in his career and young in age. He wrote the work for a London vocal quartet in which Peter Pears sang—The Round Table Singers—but his North American travel precluded a performance, and Britten seems to have disowned the work. It had no complete performance nor publication during his lifetime. A self-critical gesture from a young composer? An acknowledgement of the work’s difficulty? His motivation is not clear, but *AMDG*’s first performance in 1984 and subsequent publication in 1989 seem so late for a work so rich.

The texts are religious—even “The Soldier” (timely comment in 1939) adopts Christ imagery, and Britten shows quite a range in his musical responses. For example in “Prayer I,” the texture is simple, the harmonies fluid, even sometimes lush, and the vocal range demanding. “Rosa Mystica,” on the other hand, features a monotonic, driving pattern in the lower voices, while the treble dances above. “God’s Grandeur” is exuberant with fanfare-like gestures, and in “Deus ego,” Britten gives the song an animated rhythmic lilt with metrical re-groupings. Meanwhile, “The Soldier” offers a spirited, vocal evocation of a military band.

Musicologist Lucy Walker insightfully notes that *AMDG* has a “slightly beyond the grave aspect” in that its music largely surfaces posthumously, and Hopkins’s poetry also was largely published posthumously by his friend, the poet Robert Bridges. It is not difficult then to find an added poignance in modern performances of these songs.

Hindemith’s *Six Chansons* are settings of poems by the Austrian poet, Rainer Maria Rilke, from a collection entitled *Vergers* (Orchards), and the genesis of both text and music is rooted in the Swiss canton of Valais, a canton scenically offering both the beauty of the Alps and the Rhône Valley. Rilke located there following the upheaval of World War I, and would write *Vergers* a few years later in the mid-1920s. Hindemith came to Valais in 1938, and subsequently became friends with the choral director of the ensemble, *La Chanson Valaisanne*, George Haenni. Haenni gave the composer a copy of Rilke’s *Vergers*, and in just a few days, Hindemith presented the *Six Chansons* to him, with a dedication that reads, “To my good friend G. Haenni and his Chanson Valaisanne, from the newer resident of Valais to the older with best wishes.”

Hindemith’s noted involvement with early music—he directed the Collegium Musicum at Yale, for instance, and also edited and later performed Monteverdi’s *Orfeo*—may have been influential on the way he set Rilke’s albeit Romantic poetry. The chansons are all short, not only in their individual durations, but also in the typical terseness of phrases, they favor homophonic textures, and in some instances like “Puisque tout passe,” have a light dance rhythm and syllabic patter, all of which suggest the model of the Parisian chanson of the sixteenth century. However, if the evocation of an earlier age is present, nevertheless the harmonic language is decidedly modern, and in a way that is engagingly colorful rather than challenging.

Several of the shorter works on the program are ensemble arrangements of solo songs, and in this they seem especially well suited to quartet performance. Ralph Vaughan Williams’s “Linden Lea,” his first published work, renders the natural beauty of Dorset and an affection for home in a folk song style that was much a part of the composer’s musical world. Samuel Barber’s setting of James Agee’s popular “Sure on this shining

night” (a text now especially familiar in a more recent choral setting by the Los Angeles composer, Morten Lauridsen), ushers in a reflective quietude and a graceful sense of awe; the composer’s long-appreciated melodic gift gives this setting particularly expressive contours. Richard Strauss’s “Morgen” comes from a collection of four songs that he composed as a wedding present for his wife in 1894, and his late Romantic vocabulary is well-suited to the text’s “speechless silence of bliss.”

The outlier from the early music repertory in the eclectic mix is Palestrina’s motet, “Sicut cervus.” An almost textbook example of finely controlled contrapuntal imitation and balance, the motet’s psalm text, “Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks,” itself makes an interesting counterpoint with the beauty of nature so thematic in other works on the program. Finely wrought counterpoint surfaces elsewhere on the program, as well, as Abbie Betinis’s haunting “Be like the bird” employs canon extensively.

Our relationship with nature is so often an intimate one, nurtured and experienced in personal encounter and individual reflection. Thus, it seems particularly compelling to savor these musical settings that engage the beauty of nature with the intimate configuration of but four singers, but this is intimacy, not minimalism, and the worlds the singers bring into sound are endlessly rich.

—*Program note by Steven Plank, the Andrew B. Meldrum Professor of Musicology at Oberlin College & Conservatory.*

The Thirteen

“Exquisite in every way” (*Gramophone*), The Thirteen is a professional choir and orchestra celebrated for reimagining the potential of vocal music. In our fourteen years of performing works ranging from early chant to world premieres and the centuries in between, we have gained a reputation not only for our “tight and attractive vocal blend and excellent choral discipline” (*American Record Guide*), but also as clarion voices for our time, “offer[ing] a vivid portrait of a nation still finding its voice” (*The Washington Post*). By our mission to inspire the soul to sing, move the heart to empathy, and build community through groundbreaking musical performance, we seek to humanize the stories we tell. As the chief music critic of *The Washington Post* wrote of our *New American Songbook* program in May 2025, “I wasn’t expecting to have my heart broken.”

We are committed to educating and supporting the next generation of musicians through our Vocal Fellows Program for early career singers who have experienced obstacles in the pursuit of their craft and through robust education programs for students at the high school and collegiate levels in masterclasses, workshops, and collaborative performance sessions.

We have been in residence at Yale University, University of Maryland College Park, Bowling Green State University, Eastern Illinois University, the University

of Central Oklahoma, York College, and nearly 15 more colleges, as well as performing on concert series throughout the United States. In 2018 we were awarded the Greater Washington Area Choral Excellence award for Most Creative Programming.

Our commercial recordings include “Monteverdi: The Lost Vespers of 1650,” Monteverdi’s “Vespers of 1610,” the World Premiere recording of Scott Ordway’s opera, “The Outer Edge of Youth,” “Truth and Fable,” the critically acclaimed Christmas album “Snow on Snow,” “Voice Eternal,” and “Radiant Dark,” which reached No. 28 on the iTunes Classical Charts.

What’s in a name?

When Matthew Robertson founded The Thirteen in 2012, he initially imagined a collaborative ensemble that performed and toured with twelve singers and one conductor, making music that was best suited for that configuration. Since then, The Thirteen’s artistic ambitions have outstripped our name, and we now perform with varying numbers of musicians as required by the music we program, from five to 50. This led us in 2022 to add “Choir & Orchestra” to our name. Still, while our numbers may expand or contract according to the music we perform, our commitment to reaching each member of our audience remains unchanged. So too does our commitment to the collaborative music-making environment that was the initial inspiration for our name, The Thirteen.

Matthew Robertson

American conductor Matthew Robertson (b. 1986) is the founder and driving voice of the professional choir and orchestra The Thirteen, which he has led in more than two hundred concerts, two dozen concert tours, nine commercial recordings, and numerous world premieres. Noted for boundary-defying performances that “transfigure the listener” (*The Washington Post*), for his “incisive tempos and dramatic pacing” (*Washington Classical Review*) and “flowing lines and dramatic climaxes” (*Fanfare Magazine*, UK), Robertson’s vision has led to acclaimed performances of a diverse repertoire, often featuring use of staging and multimedia, and to The Thirteen’s winning the Most Creative Programming Award from the Greater Washington Area Choral Music Awards.

Robertson advances the frontier of vocal music performance, reimagining music from the entirety of the classical music canon. Equally at home in well-loved classics and contemporary works, Robertson tackles music by Renaissance and Baroque masters and contemporary composers with equal skill. For example, Robertson’s “highly convincing” (*Organists’ Review*) curation of Monteverdi’s end-of-life magnum opuses resulted in concerts in The Lost Vespers series and the commercial recording *Monteverdi: The ‘Lost’ Vespers of 1650*, while a recent performance of contemporary compositions was

hailed as “Sensational stuff” by Michael Andor Brodeur, chief music critic of *The Washington Post*. Robertson’s passion for reinterpreting masterpieces has led to staged performances of J.S. Bach’s *St. John Passion* and Johannes Brahms’ *Requiem*, and the use of projected images in Kile Smith’s *The Consolation of Apollo*, the World Premiere of Scott Ordway’s *The Outer Edge of Youth*, and the Washington, D.C. premiere of Joby Talbot’s *Path of Miracles*.

Robertson’s programming frequently addresses the issues of our time. His concerts *Sing Willow* (2020), *From Tree to Shining Tree* (2019), Ordway’s *The Outer Edge of Youth* (2022), and *Light of a Clear Blue Morning* (2025) grapple with climate change. His staged 2021 performance of J.S. Bach’s *St. John Passion* tackled systemic racism and was called “an indictment of injustice” (The Washington Post). *The New American Songbook* (2025) explored immigration and belonging. He frequently commissions underrepresented voices, including composers Juhi Bansal, Melissa Dunphy, Lori Laitman, Hilary Purrington, Diedre Robinson, Trevor Weston, and Jonathan Woody.

Committed to fostering the next generation of musicians and music lovers, Robertson has led educational residencies at more than twenty colleges and universities, including Yale University and The University of Maryland – College Park, where he led a staged performance of Johannes Brahms’ *Requiem*. He has also directed educational outreach for young people throughout the Washington, D.C. region, including with the Children’s Chorus of Washington, D.C. Youth Orchestra, and the LGBTQ+ teen choir, GenOUT. In 2019 he created The Thirteen’s Vocal Fellows Program, an initiative for early career singers who have experienced obstacles in the pursuit of their craft which launched in 2021.

Robertson’s growing discography with The Thirteen features nine commercially released albums, including the recently released *Monteverdi: The ‘Lost’ Vespers of 1650* and *The Outer Edge of Youth*, of which *Gramophone* wrote, “Robertson’s pacing is faultless, and he shows how silences and breaths are as important in this music as the notes themselves.” The recording *Truth & Fable* received four stars from *Choir & Organ* and *Fanfare* when it was released in September 2019.

Robertson served as Director of Music at Bradley Hills Church in Bethesda, MD from 2013–2025. In this capacity he conducted much of J.S. Bach’s oeuvre, the requiems of Brahms, Duruflé, Fauré, and Mozart, Arvo Pärt’s *Passio*, Buxtehude’s *Jesu membra nostri*, Carissimi’s *Jephte*, and many other masterworks. Robertson is a Trustee of the Denyce Graves Foundation and has also served on the Board of the DC area chapter of the American Choral Director’s Association and on the faculty of Oberlin’s Baroque Performance Institute. Robertson holds a M.M. in conducting from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ, where he studied with Andrew

Megill and Joe Miller, and was the Robert P. Fountain scholar at Oberlin Conservatory where he studied with Bridget Reischl, Robert Spano, and Hugh Floyd. A native Washingtonian, Robertson’s early musical formation included studies with Norman Scribner, J. Reilly Lewis, and Stan Engebretson.

Support The Thirteen

The Thirteen is committed to a diverse and multi-generational audience. Yet this does not always translate to financial security. The Thirteen depends on your donations for its existence. Only 20% of our operating budget comes from ticket sales.

Please consider making a commitment to The Thirteen and give as you are able. It means a great deal to us to expand our musical family. Join us in making music.

What are some suggested giving levels? The Thirteen appreciates a donation of any size, but we list some milestones below. All contributors of \$50 or more will be listed in our programs.

To donate, please visit TheThirteenChoir.org and click on “Donate,” or send your check payable to The Thirteen to:

The Thirteen | P.O. Box 32065 | Washington, DC 20007

The Thirteen gratefully accepts tax-deductible donations of appreciated securities, transferred from your brokerage account directly to ours. The gifts are not only tax-deductible, but since they are transferred directly, you do not need to sell them and may not pay any capital gains tax on sales. Please contact info@thethirteenchoir.org for more information.

Next from The Thirteen

Handel’s *Messiah*

December 20 – 21 in DC, and Bethesda
www.TheThirteenChoir.org

Due to its ubiquity, Handel’s *Messiah* is a piece that we all think we know. And yet, at each return, the work still surprises us through the overwhelming power and beauty of its music and the Christmas story. The Thirteen returns to Handel’s masterpiece this year as we establish a new holiday tradition for the region.

The Thirteen performs all three parts of *Messiah*—including the iconic “Hallelujah Chorus”—telling the greatest story ever told in song. Featuring the region’s only all-professional *Messiah*, our orchestra of the nation’s finest period instrumentalists, and our “dazzling” choir, whose members—center-stage soloists all—will sing *Messiah*’s iconic solos and duets in a kaleidoscope “of distinctive approaches to these famous arias” (*Washington Classical Review*).

This program is made possible by a generous gift from Clint & Missy Kelly. The musicians of our orchestra are supported, in part, by a gift to The Thirteen’s Building for Tomorrow fund by Sue Berryman.

TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

Six Chansons

P. Hindemith

1. La Biche

*O la biche: quel bel intérieur
d'anciennes forêts
dans tes yeux abonde;
combien de confiance ronde
mêlée à combien de peur.*

*Tout cela, porté
par la vive
gracilité de tes bonds.
Mais jamais rien n'arrive
à cette impassive
ignorance de ton front.*

2. Un Cygne

*Un cygne avance sur l'eau
tout entouré de lui-même,
comme un glissant tableau;
ainsi à certains instants
un être que l'on aime
est tout un espace mouvant.*

*Il se rapproche, doublé,
comme ce cygne qui nage,
sur notre âme troublée ...
qui à cet être ajoute
la tremblante image
de bonheur et de doute.*

3. Puisque tout passe

*Puisque tout passe,
faisons la mélodie passagère;
celle qui nous désaltère,
aura de nous raison.*

*Chantons ce qui nous quitte
avec amour et art;
soyons plus vite
que le rapide départ.*

1. The Doe

O thou doe, what vistas
of secular forests appear
in thine eyes reflected!
What confidence serene
affected by transient shades of fear.

And it all is borne
on thy bounding course,
for so gracile art thou!
Nor comes aught to astound
the impassive profound
unawareness of thy brow.

2. A Swan

A swan is breasting the flow
all in himself enfolded
like a slow-moving tableau;
And so, at some time or place,
a loved one will be moulded
to seem like a migrating space;

Will near us, floating redoubled
as a swan on the river
upon our soul so troubled,
which swells it by addition
of a wraith a-quiver
with delight and suspicion.

3. Since all is Passing

Since all is passing, retain
the melodies that wander by us.
That which assuages when nigh
Us shall alone remain.

Let us sing what will leave us
with our love and art;
ere it can grieve us, can grieve us,
let us the sooner depart.

4. Printemps

*O mélodie de la sève
Qui dans les instruments de
tous ces arbres s'élève, –
accompagne le chant
de notre voix trop brève.
C'est pendant quelques mesures
seulement que nous suivons
les multiples figures
de ton long abandon,
ô abondante nature.
Quand il faudra nous taire,
d'autres continueront ...
Mais à présent comment faire
pour te rendre mon
grand cœur complémentaire?*

5. En Hiver

*En hiver, la mort meurtrière
entre dans les maisons;
elle cherche la sœur, le père
et leur joue du violon.*

*Mais quand la terre remue
sous la bêche du printemps,
la mort court dans les rues
et salue les passants.*

6. Verger

*Jamais la terre n'est plus réelle
que dans tes branches, ô verger blond,
ni plus flottante que dans
la dentelle
que font tes ombres sur le gazon.*

*Là se rencontre ce qui nous reste,
ce qui pèse et ce qui nourrit,
avec le passage manifeste
de la tendresse infinie.*

*Mais à ton centre, la calme fontaine,
presque dormant en son ancien rond,
de ce contraste
parle à peine,
tant en elle il se confond.*

4. Spring

O song that from the sap
art pouring
and through the sounding board
of all this greenwood art soaring,
amplify our brief tone,
the dying strain restoring.
'Tis but few measures duration that we share the
fantasy,
the endless variation
of thy long ecstasy,
O nature, fount of creation,
After our song is ended,
others will assume the part,
but meanwhile how can I tender
all my heart in full surrender?

5. In Winter

With the winter, Death, grisly guest
through the doorway steals in
both the young and the old to quest,
and he/plays them his violin.

But when the Spring's spades are beating
frozen earth beneath blue sky,
then Death his way goes fleeting,
lightly greeting passers-by.

6. Orchard

The earth is nowhere so real a presence
as mid thy branches, O orchard blond,
and nowhere so airy as here in the pleasure
of lacy shadows on grassy pond.

There we encounter that which we quested,
that which sustains and nourishes life,
and with it the passage manifested
of sweetest tenderness undying.

But at thy centre the spring's limpid waters,
almost asleep in the fountain's heart,
of this strange contrast scarce
have taught us
since of them it is so truly a part.

Linden Lea

R. Vaughan Williams

Within the woodlands, flow'ry gladed,
By the oak trees' mossy moot,
The shining grass blades, timber shaded,
Now do quiver underfoot;
And birds do whistle overhead,
And water's bubbling in its bed;
And there for me, the apple tree
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

When leaves, that lately were a-springing,
Now do fade within the copse,
And painted birds do hush their singing,
Up upon the timber tops;
And brown leaved fruit's a-turning red,
In cloudless sunshine overhead,
With fruit for me, the apple tree
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

Sicut Cervus

G. P. da Palestrina

*Sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum,
ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus.*

Let other folk make money faster
In the air of dark-room'd towns;
I don't dread a peevish master,
Though no man may heed my frowns.
I be free to go abroad,
Or take again my homeward road
To where, for me, the apple tree
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks,:
so longeth my soul after thee, O God.

The Willow Song

R. Vaughan Williams

The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow:
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow:
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans;
Sing willow, willow, willow;
Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones;
Sing willow, willow, willow;
Sing all a green willow must be my garland.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

B. Britten

I. Prayer I

Jesu that dost in Mary dwell
Be in thy servants' hearts as well,
In the spirit of thy holiness,
In the fullness of thy force and stress,
In the very ways that thy life goes
And virtues that thy pattern shows,
In sharing of thy mysteries;
And every power in us that is
Against that power put under feet
In the Holy Ghost the Paraclete
To the glory of the Father. Amen.

II. Rosa Mystica

In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
Find me a place by thee, mother of mine.
The rose in a mystery, where is it found?
Is it anything true? Does it grow upon ground? —
It was made of earth's mould but it went from men's eyes
And its place is a secret and shut in the skies.
In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
I shall look on thy loveliness, mother of mine.
But where was it formerly? which is the spot
That was blest in it once, though now it is not? —
It is Galilee's growth: it grew at God's will
And broke into bloom upon Nazareth hill.
I shall keep time with thee, mother of mine.

Tell me the name now, tell me its name.
The heart guesses easily: is it the same? —
Mary the Virgin, well the heart knows,
She is the mystery, she is that rose.
I shall come home to thee, Mother of mine.

Is Mary the rose then? Mary the tree?
But the blossom, the blossom there, who can it be? —
Who can her rose be? It could be but one:
Christ Jesus our Lord, her God and her son.
In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
Shew me thy son, mother, mother of mine.

Does it smell sweet too in that holy place? —
Sweet unto God, and the sweetness is grace:
The breath of it bathes great heaven above
In grace that is charity, grace that is love.
To thy breast, to thy rest, to thy glory divine
Draw me by charity, mother of mine.

III. God's Grandeur

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

IV. Prayer II

Thee, God, I come from, to Thee I go
THEE, God, I come from, to thee go,
All day long I like fountain flow
From thy hand out, swayed about
Mote-like in thy mighty glow.

What I know of thee I bless,
As acknowledging thy stress
On my being and as seeing
Something of thy holiness.

Once I turned from thee and hid,
Bound on what thou hadst forbid;
Sow the wind I would; I sinned:
I repent of what I did.
Bad I am, but yet thy child.

Father, be thou reconciled.
Spare thou me, since I see
With thy might that thou art mild.

I have life before me still
And thy purpose to fulfil;
Yea a debt to pay thee yet:
Help me, sir, and so I will.

But thou bidst, and just thou art,
Me shew mercy from my heart
Towards my brother, every other
Man my mate and counterpart.

V. O Deus, ego amo te

O God, I love thee, I love thee —
Not out of hope of heaven for me
Nor fearing not to love and be
In the everlasting burning.
Thou, thou, my Jesus, after me
Didst reach thine arms out dying,
For my sake sufferedst nails and lance,
Mocked and marred countenance,
Sorrows passing number,
Sweat and care and cumber,
Yea and death, and this for me,
And thou couldst see me sinning:
Then I, why should not I love thee,
Jesu so much in love with me?
Not for heaven's sake; not to be
Out of hell by loving thee;
Not for any gains I see;
But just the way that thou didst me
I do love and I will love thee:
What must I love thee, Lord, for then? —
For being my king and God. Amen.

VI. The Soldier

Yes. Why do we all, seeing of a soldier, bless him? bless
Our redcoats, our tars? Both these being, the greater
part,
But frail clay, nay but foul clay. Here it is: the heart,^o
Since, proud, it calls the calling manly, gives a guess
That, hopes that, makes believe, the men must be no less;
It fancies, feigns, deems, dears the artist after his art;^o
And fain will find as sterling all as all is smart
And scarlet wear the spirit of war there express.
Mark Christ our King. He knows war, served this
soldiering through;^o
He of all can reave a rope best. There he bides in bliss
Now, and seeing somewhere some man do all that man
can do,
For love he leans forth, needs his neck must fall on, kiss,
And cry 'O Christ-done deed! So God-made-flesh does too:^o
Were I come o'er again' cries Christ 'it should be this.'

VII. Heaven-Haven

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea.

Sure On This Shining Night

S. Barber

Sure on this shining night
Of starmade shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.

The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder
Wandering far alone
Of shadows on the stars.

Der gang zum Liebchen

J. Brahms

*Es glänzt der Mond nieder,
Ich sollte doch wieder
Zu meinem Liebchen,
Wie mag es ihr gehn?*

*Ach weh, sie verzaget
Und klaget, und klaget,
Daß sie mich nimmer
Im Leben wird sehn!*

*Es ging der Mond unter,
Ich eilte doch munter,
Und eilte daß keiner
Mein Liebchen entführt.*

*Ihr Täubchen, o girret,
Ihr Lüftchen, o schwirret,
Daß keiner mein Liebchen,
Mein Liebchen entführt!*

The moon shines down,
So I should set out
Again to my love,
How is she, I wonder?

Alas, she's despairing
And lamenting, lamenting
She'll never see
Me again in her life!

The moon went down,
But I hurried off happily,
Hurried so that no one
Should steal my love.

Keep cooing, you doves,
Keep whispering, you breezes,
So that no one
Should steal my love!

Be Like The Bird

A. Betinis

Be like the bird, who
Halting in his flight
On limb too slight
Feels it give way beneath him,
Yet sings
Knowing he hath wings.

Morgen

R. Strauss

*Und morgen wird die Sonne
wieder scheinen
Und auf dem Wege, den ich gehen werde,
Wird uns, die Glücklichen, sie wieder einen
Inmitten dieser sonnenatmenden Erde ...*

*Und zu dem Strand,
dem weiten, wogenblauen,
Werden wir still und langsam niedersteigen,
Stumm werden wir uns
in die Augen schauen,
Und auf uns sinkt des Glückes
stummes Schweigen...*

Light of a Clear Blue Morning

arr. A. Broadbent

It's been a long dark night and I've been a waitin' for the morning
It's been a long hard fight but I see a brand new day a dawning
I've been looking for the sunshine you know I ain't seen it in so long
But everything's gonna work out just fine
Everything's gonna be all right that's been all wrong.

Well, I can see the light of a clear blue morning
I can see the light of a brand new day
I can see the light of a clear blue morning
And everything's gonna be all right, it's gonna be okay.

It's been a long, long time since I've known the taste of freedom
Those clinging vines had me bound, well, I don't need 'em

And tomorrow the sun
will shine again
And on the path that I shall take,
It will unite us, happy ones, again,
Amid this same sun-breathing earth ...

And to the shore,
broad, blue-waved,
We shall quietly and slowly descend,
Speechless we shall gaze
into each other's eyes,
And the speechless silence of bliss
shall fall on us...

Oh, I've been like a captured eagle you know an eagle's born to fly
Now that I have won my freedom like an eagle I am eager for the sky.

'Cause I can see the light of a clear blue morning
I can see the light of a brand new day
I can see the light of a clear blue morning
And everything's gonna be all right, it's gonna be okay.

I can see the light of a clear blue morning
I can see the light of a brand new day
I can see the light of a clear blue morning
And everything's gonna be all right, it's gonna be okay.

Cause I can see the light of a clear blue morning
I can see the light of a brand new day
I can see the light of a clear blue morning
And everything's gonna be all right, it's gonna be okay...

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