

Program Notes, Texts, and Translations

Nightingales have been a subject of Western art for centuries, and frequently represent love. As nocturnal birds, nightingales are symbols for nighttime, which is often associated with darkness and mysticism, and sensuality and physical intimacy. Through their beautiful songs, nightingales also represent the duality between joy and hopefulness of intimacy and the melancholy afterness of love's departure. I chose to share these four poetic representations of nightingales in Lieder because of their sad and hopeful symbolism. Each composer's setting is completely different, yet they all touch on the same themes and human experiences.

Alban Berg (1885–1935)

Die Nachtigall

from *Sieben Frühe Lieder*

Alban Berg was born in Vienna, Austria in 1885 and began studying with Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) in 1904. As a pupil of Schoenberg, Berg was one of the first composers to adopt Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique. Near the end of the 1910s Berg's writing shifted towards atonal and Expressionistic styles. He served in the Austrian army from 1915-1918 which influenced his creation of *Wozzeck*. Soon after the completion of *Wozzeck*, Berg began using more of the twelve-tone methods for which he is so well known. In the early part of his career, before he was associated with his more Modernist idioms, his musical sensibilities tended more towards Romanticism, with an emphasis on communication and expression.

Die Nachtigall, composed in 1907, is a brilliant example of Berg's early Romantic style, with poetry by Romantic poet and novelist Theodor Storm (1817-1888). A lyrical quality can also be noted in many of Storm's texts. The music and text of this piece express that a nightingale's song has awakened love in the subject of the poem, and combine to seamlessly demonstrate this lyricism.

Die Nachtigall

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

Sie war doch sonst ein wildes Blut,
Nun geht sie tief in Sinnen;
Trägt in der Hand den Sommerhut
Und duldet still der Sonne Glut
Und weiß nicht, was beginnen.

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

The nightingale

It is because the nightingale
Has sung the whole night,
Because of her sweet call
Because of its echo and re-echo
The roses have sprung up.

She was once a wild creature,
Now she wanders deep in thought;
Carries in her hand a summer hat,
And endures in silence the sun's heat,
Not knowing what to do.

It is because the nightingale
Has sung the whole night,
Because of her sweet call
Because of its echo and re-echo
The roses have sprung up

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Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
An die Nachtigall, D. 497

Franz Peter Schubert was born in Vienna, Austria in 1797 and composed during the late Classical into the early Romantic eras. Despite his short life, Schubert's musical output was vast and included around 630 Lieder, as well as symphonies, operas, masses, and a large amount of piano music. He was one of the first major composers to popularize Lied as a genre, setting texts by approximately 100 poets, of which Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was the most prominent.

The text for *An die Nachtigall*, composed in 1819, was written by another German poet, Matthias Claudius (1740-1815). Claudius is most well known for his work titled *Der Mond ist aufgegangen* ("The Moon Has Risen") and was also an editor of the journal *Der Wandsbecker Bothe*. Schubert's *An die Nachtigall* highlights a moment of intimacy.

An die Nachtigall

Er liegt und schläft an meinem Herzen,
Mein guter Schutzgeist sang ihn ein;
Und ich kann fröhlich sein und scherzen,
Kann jeder Blum und jedes Blatts mich freun.
Nachtigall, ach! Nachtigall, ach!
Sing mir den Amor nicht wach!

To the nightingale

He lies sleeping upon my heart;
my kind guardian spirit sang him to sleep;
And I can be happy and joke,
I can enjoy every flower and leaf.

Nightingale, ah, nightingale, ah!
do not awaken my love with your singing!

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Clara Schumann (1819–1896)
Die liebe saß als Nachtigall (Liebeszauber)
from *Sechs Lieder*, Op. 13

Clara Schumann, born Clara Wieck in Leipzig, Germany in 1819, is one of the most prominent musical figures of the 19th century. She was an exceptional musician from a very young age, a piano prodigy whose upbringing was similar in many ways to Mozart's. As a composer, Clara wrote almost all of her early works for personal use in performance. She composed less often after her marriage to Robert Schumann (1810-1856) in 1840 and stopped almost completely when he died in 1856. Clara continued teaching and performing throughout her life.

The text of this piece, *Liebeszauber (Die Liebe saß als Nachtigall)*, composed in 1844, was written by Emanuel von Geibel (1815-1884). Geibel, the son of a pastor, became devoted to traveling and philology instead of following in his father's footsteps. This piece evokes beautiful imagery of nature and a nightingale's song of love.

Liebeszauber

Die Liebe saß als Nachtigall
Im Rosenbusch und sang;
Es flog der wunderschöne Schall
Den grünen Wald entlang.

Und wie er klang, - da stieg im Kreis
Aus tausend Kelchen Duft,
Und alle Wipfel rauschten leis,
Und leiser ging die Luft;

Die Bäche schwiegen, die noch kaum
Geplätschert von den Höhen,
Die Rehlein standen wie im Traum
Und lauschten dem Getöse.

Und hell und immer heller floß
Der Sonne Glanz herein,
Um Blumen, Wald und Schlucht ergoß
Sich goldig roter Schein.

Ich aber zog den Wald entlang
Und hörte auch den Schall.
Ach! was seit jener Stund ich sang,
War nur sein Widerhall.

Love's magic

Love, as a nightingale,
Sat perched on a rosebush and sang;
The wonderfully sweet sound flew
throughout the green forest.

And as it sounded, there arose a scent
From a thousand flowers,
And all the treetops rustled softly,
And the breeze moved softer still;

The brooks fell silent, barely
Having splashed from the heights,
The fawns stood as if in a dream
And listened to the sound.

Brighter, and ever brighter
The sun shone on the scene,
And poured its red glow
Over flowers, forest and glen.

But I made my way along the path
And also heard the sound.
Ah! all that I've sung since that hour
Was merely its echo.

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Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)
An die Nachtigall
from 4 *Lieder*, Op. 46

Johannes Brahms was born in Hamburg, Germany in 1833. At age twenty, Brahms went under the musical care of Robert and Clara Schumann, whom he met through Hungarian violinist and composer Joseph Joachim (1831-1907). Brahms's relationship with the Schumanns greatly influenced his musical output. In his late twenties, Brahms moved to Vienna where he spent much of his musical career. While musical expectations set by his predecessors, such as Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), held Brahms back from writing symphonies until midlife,

much of his early piano, vocal, and chamber works gained high praise. His compositional style, while highly expressive, was fairly rooted in Classical technique.

An die Nachtigall, composed in 1868, is a Lied set to a poem by the well-known German poet Ludwig Heinrich Christoph Hölty (1748-1776). Many of Hölty's texts have been set to music by composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Brahms, and are often focused on nature and expression. In this piece, the speaker begs a nightingale to not sing so loudly, because their song awakens the love inside them.

An die Nachtigall

Geuß nicht so laut der liebentflammten Lieder
Tonreichen Schall
Vom Blütenast des Apfelbaums hernieder,
O Nachtigall!
Du tönest mir mit deiner süßen Kehle
Die Liebe wach;
Denn schon durchbebt die Tiefen meiner
Seele
Dein schmelzend Ach.

Dann flieht der Schlaf von neuem dieses
Lager,
Ich starre dann
Mit nassem Blick und totenbleich und hager
Den Himmel an.
Fleuch, Nachtigall, in grüne Finsternisse,
Ins Haingesträuch,
Und spend im Nest der treuen Gattin Küsse;
Entfleuch, entfleuch!

To the nightingale

Do not pour so loudly the rich sounds
Of your love-inflamed songs
Down from the blooming branch of the
appletree,
O nightingale!
The tones of your sweet throat
Awaken love in me;
For your melting "Ah!" already beats through
the depths of my soul

Then sleep flees anew from this place,
And I stare
With moist gaze, haggard and deathly pale
At the heavens.

Fly, nightingale, to the green darkness,
To the busy grove,
And there in the nest kiss your faithful mate;
Fly away, fly away!

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)
Exsultate, jubilate, K. 165

Born in Salzburg, Austria in 1756, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to this day is recognized as one of the greatest composers in the history of Western music. He was an extraordinary musical

prodigy who grew into the most versatile composer of his era. His works culminated the Classical style and helped usher in the Romantic era.

Exsultate, jubilate, composed in 1773 during the third of Mozart's three concert tours to Italy, is a three-movement sacred motet with a recitative between the first and second movements. It can be performed with orchestra or piano and, though it was originally written for Italian castrato Venanzio Rauzzini (1746-1810), it is most often sung by sopranos. The author of the text is unknown but it embodies a joyousness that Mozart brilliantly set to music. Overall, the motet conveys a sense of gratitude and the idea of light at the end of a period of hardship. I believe every person can deeply relate to these universal themes, which is why I chose this piece.

Exsultate, jubilate

Exsultate, jubilate,
o vos animae beatae,
Dulcia cantica canendo,
cantui vestro respondendo,
psallant aethera cum me.

Fulget amica dies

Fulget amica dies,
jam fugere et nubila et procellae;
exortus est justis inexpectata quies.

Undique obscura regnabat nox;
surgite tandem laeti,
qui timuistis adhuc,
et jucundi aurorae fortunatae
frondes dextera plena et lilia date.

Tu virginum corona

Tu, virginum corona,
tu nobis pacem dona.
Tu consolare affectus,
unde suspirat cor.

Alleluia

Alleluja.

Exult, rejoice

Exult, rejoice,
Oh you blessed souls,
In the singing of sweet songs.
Responding to your singing
the heavens resound with me.

A friendly day shines forth

A friendly day shines forth,
Both clouds and storms have now fled;
For the righteous there has arisen an
unexpected calm.
Dark night has reigned everywhere;
arise happy at last
you, who have feared until now,
and, delighted with this blessed dawn
Give fronds and lilies with a full right hand.

You, queen of all virgins

You, queen of all virgins,
grant us peace.
Console the afflictions
From which our hearts sigh.

Alleluia

Alleluia.

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Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)
Sole a amore (Mattinata)
Morire?

Giacomo Puccini, one of the most beloved composers of Italian opera, was born in Lucca, Italy in 1858. He is famous for his verismo operas: *La bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900), *Madama Butterfly* (1904), *Turandot* (1924), and others which remain staples of operatic stages worldwide. Because of this popularity we continue to ponder the potent topics explored in Puccini's operas, such as dramatic purpose and greater social issues. In addition to his operas, Puccini's art songs have much to offer both musically and textually.

Sole e amore and *Morire?* each capture a unique element of Puccini's composition abilities and showcase two unique perspectives in their texts and settings. I chose these pieces to highlight the joy and variety of color offered in Puccini art songs.

Sole e amore was composed in 1888, with a text by an anonymous poet. The piece has a musical lightness and buoyancy that leads smoothly into the most dramatic words of the poem, "pensa a chi t'ama," "think of the one who loves you!"

Morire? was composed in 1917, with poetry by Italian librettist, playwright, and music critic Giuseppe Adami (1878-1946). Puccini set several of Adami's texts to music. *Morire?* offers a more legato setting to match the beautiful poem, in which the speaker ponders the meaning of life.

Sole e amore (Mattinata)

Il sole allegramente
Batte ai tuoi vetri.
Amor pian batte al tuo cuore,
E l'uno e l'altro chiama.
Il sole dice: O dormente,
Mostrati che sei bella.
Dice l'amor: Sorella,
Col tuo primo pensier pensa a chi t'ama!
Al Paganini, G. Puccini

Sun and Love

The sun joyfully
Beats at your window.
Love softly beats at your heart,
And both call to you.
The sun says: "Oh sleeping woman,
Show yourself, for you are beautiful."
Love says: "Sister,
With your first thought, think of the one who
loves you!"
To Paganini, from G. Puccini

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Morire?

Morire?... E chi lo sa qual è la vita!
Questa che s'apre luminosa e schietta
ai fascini, agli amori, alle speranze,
o quella che in rinuncie s'è assopita?

È la semplicità timida e queta
che si tramanda come ammonimento
come un segreto di virtù segreta
perché ognuno raggiunga la sua mèta,

O non piuttosto il vivo balenare
di sogni nuovi sovra sogni stanchi,
e la pace travolta e l'inesausta
fede d'avere per desiderare?

Ecco... io non lo so, ma voi che siete
all'altra sponda sulla riva immensa
ove fiorisce il fiore della vita
son certo lo saprete.

To die?

To die? And who knows what life is?
Is it something that opens itself up, shining
and pure, to charm, to love, to hope,
or something that in renunciations slumbers?

Is it the shy and quiet simplicity
that is handed down like a warning,
like a secret of hidden virtue,
so that everyone may reach his goal,

or rather, a bright flash
of new dreams over tired dreams,
and the overwhelming peace and the
inexhaustible
faith one needs to desire?

Therefore, I do not know, but you who are
On the other shore, on the vast shore
where the flower of life blooms,
I am certain you will know it.

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Eric Satie (1866–1925)
Trois Mélodies de 1916
La diva de l'empire
Je te veux

Eric Satie, born in Honfleur, France in 1866, had a unique influence on 20th-century music, especially in France. He dropped out of the Paris Conservatory at the age of twenty one after having been nicknamed by his piano teacher “the laziest student in the Conservatoire.” He supported himself playing piano at a local nightclub in Montmartre called Le Chat Noir (The Black Cat), and it was during this time that he became friends with Claude Debussy (1862-1918). Despite Debussy being four years older and a strong musical influence, Satie’s music remained distinctly his own. His wit and motivation to “strip pretentiousness and sentimentality from music and thereby reveal an austere essence,” as stated in website Britannica, inspired him to compose pieces like *Trois Gnossiennes* (1890), *Trois Sarabandes* (1887) and *Trois Gymnopédies* (1888) for piano.

Trois Mélodies de 1916, composed in 1916 (as the title suggests), is a three-song cycle with texts that have absolutely no correlation with one another except for their strangeness. I chose these pieces because the texts and their musical settings are charming and puzzling, and I wanted to add a bit of humor to my program.

The first song *La statue de bronze*, with text by French poet and essayist Léon-Paul Fargue (1876-1947), depicts a French frog barrel game. The game board has a frog and a hole with a spinner in front of it in the center of the top board. There are holes on either side of the frog covered with an arch-band to make it more challenging to score. The objective of the game is to score points by throwing discs into the holes and frog's mouth. This song is from the perspective of the frog.

The second song *Daphénéo*, with text by Polish pianist Mimi Godebska (1872-1950), or Misia Sert, depicts a confused young girl, Chrysaline, asking her caretaker, Daphénéo, which type of tree bears weeping birds as fruit.

The third and final song in the set *Le chapelier*, with text by French poet and music critic René Chalupe (1885-1957), depicts a hatmaker whose wristwatch is running three days behind, and although he had greased it with butter and dipped it in his tea, he cannot seem to make it run any faster!

La statue de bronze

La grenouille du jeu de tonneau
S'ennuie, le soir, sous la tonnelle...
Elle en a assez!
D'être la statue
Qui va prononcer un grand mot: Le Mot!

Elle aimerait mieux être avec les autres
Qui font des bulles de musique
Avec le savon de la lune
Au bord du lavoir mordoré
Qu'on voit, là-bas, luire entre les branches...

On lui lance à coeur de journée
Une pâture de pistoles
Qui la traversent sans lui profiter

Et s'en vont sonner
Dans les cabinets

The bronze statue

The frog of the barrel game
Grows weary in the evening, beneath the
arbor...
She has had enough!
Of being the statue
Who is about to pronounce a great word: The
Word!

She would love to be with the others
Who make music bubbles
With the soap of the moon
Beside the lustrous bronze tub
That one sees there, shining between the
branches...

At midday one hurls at her
A feast of discs
That pass through without benefit to her

And will resound
In the chambers

De son piédestal numéroté!

Et le soir, les insectes couchent
Dans sa bouche...

Of her numbered pedestal!

And at night, the insects go to sleep
In her mouth...

Translation from French (Français) to English
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Daphénéo

Dis-moi, Daphénéo, quel est donc cet arbre
Dont les fruits sont des oiseaux qui pleurent?

Cet arbre, Chrysaline, est un oisetier.

Ah! Je croyais que les noisetiers
Donnaient des noisettes, Daphénéo.

Oui, Chrysaline, les noisetiers donnent des
noisettes,
Mais les oisetiers donnent des oiseaux qui
pleurent.

Ah!...

Dapheneo

Tell me, Dapheneo, what is that tree
Which has for fruit birds that weep?

That tree, Chrysaline, is a bird-tree.

Ah! I thought that the hazel trees
bore hazelnuts, Dapheneo.

Yes, Chrysaline, the hazel trees bear
hazelnuts,
But the bird-trees bear birds that weep.

Ah!...

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Le chapelier

Le chapelier s'étonne de constater
Que sa montre retarde de trois jours,
Bien qu'il ait eu soin de la graisser
Toujours avec du beurre de première qualité.
Mais il a laissé tomber des miettes
De pain dans les rouages,
Et il a beau plonger sa montre dans le thé,
Ça ne le fera pas avancer davantage.

The hatmaker

The hatmaker is surprised to note
That his watch is three days slow,
Though he has taken care to grease it,
Always with first-quality butter.
But he allowed crumbs of bread
To fall into its gears,
And though he plunged his watch in tea,
This will not advance it any further.

The final two pieces in my Satie set are pieces written in a cabaret style. I chose them because they are very contrasting in expression and message.

La diva de l'empire, composed in 1904 with poetry by Dominique Bonnaud and Numa Blès, tells the story of a young actress, and of all the men in the town who are obsessed with her. She is a tease and a flirt, but none of it is sincere.

By contrast, *Je te veux*, composed in 1897 with poetry by Henry Pacory, is an incredibly earnest song where the speaker is confessing how deep their love and lust is for their partner.

La diva de l'empire

Sous le grand chapeau Greenaway,
Mettant l'éclat d'un sourire,
D'un rire charmant et frais
De baby étonné qui soupire,
Little girl aux yeux veloutés,
C'est la Diva de l'Empire.
C'est la rein' dont s'éprennent
Les gentlemen
Et tous les dandys
De Piccadilly.

Dans un seul "yes" elle mettant de douceur
Que tous les snobs en gilet à cœur,
L'accueillant des hourras frénétiques,
Sur la scène lançant des gerbes de fleurs,
Sans remarquer le rire narquois
De son joli minois.

Elle danse presque automatiquement
Et soulève, oh très pudiquement,
Ses jolis dessous de fanfreluches,
De ses jambes montrant le frétillement.
C'est à la fois très très innocent
Et très très excitant.

The starlet of the Empire

Beneath her large Greenaway hat,
Putting on her dazzling smile,
The fresh and charming laugh
Of a wide-eyed sighing babe,
A little girl with velvet eyes,
She's the Diva of the Empire,
She's the queen they're smitten with,
The gentlemen
And all the dandies
Of Piccadilly.

She invests a single 'Yes' with such
sweetness,
That all the fancy-waistcoated snobs
Welcoming her with frenzied cheers,
Hurl bouquets on the stage,
Without observing the wily smile
On her pretty face.

She dances almost mechanically
And lifts - Oh! so modestly -
Her pretty petticoat edged with flounces,
To reveal her wriggling legs.
It is very, very innocent
And very, very exciting too.

Je te veux

J'ai compris ta détresse,
Cher amoureux,
Et je cède à tes vœux:
Fais de moi ta maîtresse.
Loin de nous la sagesse,
Plus de tristesse,
J'aspire à l'instant précieux
Où nous serons heureux:
Je te veux.

Je n'ai pas de regrets,
Et je n'ai qu'une envie:
Près de toi, là, tout près,
Vivre toute ma vie.
Que mon cœur soit le tien
Et ta lèvre la mienne,
Que ton corps soit le mien,
Et que toute ma chair soit tienne.

Oui, je vois dans tes yeux
La divine promesse
Que ton cœur amoureux
Vient chercher ma caresse.
Enlacés pour toujours,
Brûlés des mêmes flammes,
Dans des rêves d'amours,
Nous échangerons nos deux âmes.

I want you

I've understood your distress,
Dear lover,
And yield to your desires:
Make me your mistress.
Let's throw discretion
And sadness to the winds.
I long for the precious moment
When we shall be happy:
I want you.

I've no regrets
And only one desire:
Close, very close by you
To live my whole life long.
Let my heart be yours
And your lips mine,
Let your body be mine
And all my flesh yours.

Yes, I see in your eyes
The exquisite promise
That your loving heart
Is seeking my caress.
Entwined forever,
Consumed by the same desire,
In dreams of love
We'll exchange our souls.

Translation © Richard Stokes, author of *A French Song Companion* (Oxford, 2000).

Lori Laitman (b. 1955)
4 Dickinson Songs

Lori Laitman, born in Long Beach, New York in 1955, grew up in a musical family. She has composed several operas including *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Three Feathers*, and *Uncovered*, choral pieces, and hundreds of songs. In particular, her settings of texts by classical and contemporary poets are highly acclaimed for their "sensitivity and grace," according to *The Journal of Singing*.

Laitman's settings of these 4 *Dickinson Songs* (1996) are breathtaking and some of my favorite pieces to sing. The range of expression and human experience within the texts of these poems and their musical settings are inspiring and rewarding. The following quote from the *Poetry Foundation* highlights Emily Dickinson's (1830-1886) ingenuity and brilliance:

"The speakers in Dickinson's poetry ... are sharp-sighted observers who see the inescapable limitations of their societies as well as their imagined and imaginable escapes. To make the abstract tangible, to define meaning without confining it, to inhabit a house that never became a prison, Dickinson created in her writing a distinctively elliptical language for expressing what was possible but not yet realized. Like the Concord Transcendentalists whose works she knew well, she saw poetry as a double-edged sword. While it liberated the individual, it as readily left him ungrounded."

I chose these pieces because I connect deeply with their texts. The humor and seriousness of these settings brings me great purpose in my art, and makes me immensely grateful for this art form and the works I am able to experience and share with my audience.

Will there really be a morning?

Will there really be a morning?
Is there such a thing as day?
Could I see it from the mountains
If I were as tall as they?

Has it feet like water-lilies?
Has it feathers like a bird?
Is it brought from famous countries
Of which I have never heard?

Oh, some scholar! Oh, some sailor!
Oh, some wise man from the skies!
Please to tell a little pilgrim
Where the place called morning lies!

I'm nobody

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us - don't tell!
They'd advertise, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell one's name the livelong June

To an admiring bog!

She died

She died, this was the way she died;
And when her breath was done,
Took up her simple wardrobe
And started for the sun.

Her little figure at the gate
The angels must have spied,
Since I could never find her
Upon the mortal side.

If I...

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.