

Program Notes and Translations

The *Cinq melodies populaires grecques* set is Ravel's first venture into the harmonization of folk songs. The melodies of these folk songs were gathered by Greek musicologist Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi in the island of Chios. Calvocoressi translated them into French, and Ravel harmonized the tunes, keeping their folk-like qualities intact while also capturing the colorful and exuberant scenes of Greek peasant life. Although more often performed in French, tonight we perform these songs in Greek, as in the first performance in 1906.

Program notes © Carol Kimball

I. *Rock Partridge*

Wake up, rock partridge.
Spread your wings,
Your beauty marks, both real and of art,
 have now marked my heart.
A golden ribbon I have brought
 for you to braid your hair
Oh come and be my pair
 and thus our houses, our happiness can share.

II. *Yonder, at St. Sideros's church*

Yonder at St. Sideros
 at the church, oh Virgin Mother
 at St. Kostandino's church
They gather and die
the world's, oh Virgin Mother
 the brave ones of the world.

III. *What dandy can compare with me*

Is there a dandy out there like me
 strolling through the market
 tell me, Miss Vassiliki?
With two pistols strapped around the waist
 and a double-edged sword...
Hello to you, my golden love!

IV. *Song of the lentisk gatherers*

Oh, you're an angel, my eyes
Oh, and like an angel you're dressed.
As an angel you walk this earth
Oh, how girls wither in your sight.

V. *Very merrily*

Jarumbi!
You have a beautiful leg, break 'em!
You have a beautiful leg,
break 'em glasses!
La la la... Vai vanama!*

**refers to a dance expression*

(Translations © Lydia Zervanos)

The development of the German art song (*Kunstlied*) began in the eighteenth century and culminated in the following century with the works of Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, and Hugo Wolf. Schubert's *Fischerweise* reflects the German Romanticism's interest in nature as a source of artistic inspiration. As in his *Die Forelle*, the graceful piano accompaniment in *Fischerweise* depicts both the water and the sinuous movements of fish. Although forming the fourth movement of Gustav Mahler's Second Symphony, *Urlicht* was first conceived as a song in the cycle *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The Boy's Magic Horn), a collection of German folk poems and songs published in the early 19th century. The collection of love, soldiers, wandering, and children's songs was an important source of idealized folklore in the German Romantic nationalism. In this song, a simple, solemn chorale follows the vocal line's rising three-note opening statement. As the song progresses, we get a sense of struggle, aspiration, and deep longing.

Fischerweise (Franz Schlegel)

Fisherman's Ditty

The fisherman is not plagued by cares, grief or sorrow.
In the early morning he casts off his boat with a light heart.
Round about, peace still lies over forest, meadow and stream,
with his song the fisherman bids the golden sun awake.

He sings at his work from a full, vigorous heart.
His work gives him strength, his strength exhilarates him.
Soon a bright multitude will resound in the depths,
and splash through the watery heavens.

But whoever wishes to set a net needs good, dear eyes,
must be as cheerful as the waves, and as free as the tide.
There, on the bridge, the shepherdess is fishing. Cunning wench,
leave off your tricks! You won't deceive this fish!

Urlicht (Justinus Kerner)

Primordial Light

O red rose,
Man lies in direst need,
Man lies in direst pain,
I would rather be in heaven.
I then came upon a broad path,
An angel came and sought to turn me back,
Ah no! I refused to be turned away.
I am from God and to God I will return,
Dear God will give me a light,
Will light my way to eternal blessed life. (*Translations* © Richard Stoke)

Giacomo Puccini's **La Bohème** is set in Paris around 1830 and shows the bohemian lifestyle of a poor seamstress (Mimi) and her artist friends: Rodolfo, a poet; Marcello, a painter; Schaunard, a musician; and Colline, a philosopher. On one freezing Christmas Eve, the artists keep warm by feeding their stove with pages from the poet Rodolfo's latest poem. In *La banca di Francia*, when Schaunard arrives with food, fuel, and funds he has collected from an eccentric nobleman, the group celebrates their good fortune.

La banca di Francia

The bank of France
has gone broke just for you.
Are you deaf? Blind?
(*showing a crown*)
Who is this man?
Louis Philippe is at our feet!
(*Schaunard wants to tell his adventure,
but the others won't listen to him.*)
*They set the provisions on the table
and put wood in the stove.*)
Now I'll tell you: this gold,
this silver, rather, has a noble history.
An Englishman... a gentleman...
A lord... was looking for
a musician.
And I? I flew to him!
I introduce myself.
He hires me. I ask him...
When do the lessons begin?
He replies: "Let's start... look!"
and points to a parrot on the first floor.
Then adds: "You play until that bird dies!"
And so it went:
I played for three long days!

Then I used my charm,
my handsome figure...
I won the serving-girl over!
We poisoned a little parsley...
Lorito spread his wings,
Lorito opened his beak,
took a peck of parsley,
and died like Socrates!
(*the others continue to pay no attention to him*)
Go to the devil, all of you!
Now what are you doing?
No! These delicacies are the provender
for the dark and gloomy days in the future.
Dine at home on Christmas Eve
when the Latin Quarter
has decked its streets with eatables?
When the perfume of fritters
is wafted through the ancient streets?
There the girls sing happily
and each has a student echoing her!
Have some religion, gentlemen:
we drink at home, but we dine out!

(Translations William Fense Weaver © Capitol Records)

Come Home is a song set to a text by Clara Park. The words evoke the struggle between technology and the natural world. I used an active and energetic minimalist texture in the piano to evoke the technological atmosphere with the vocal part providing the humanistic element. The work gradually gets far less busy as the natural world takes over in the end.

The *Four Poems by Fredegond Shove*, published and first performed in 1925, mark a considerable development in the Vaughan Williams' technique and maturity. The songs, though published together, do not form a song cycle or possess any kind of connection between them. The full triads that provide a pattern of accompaniment for *Four Nights*, with its passing of the seasons, contrast with the cold desolation of the first song. In *The Water Mill*, the accompaniment depicts the turn of the millwheel and other homely details of the poem.

(Program notes © Keith Anderson)

José Siqueira was an important Brazilian composer who was strongly influenced by the Modernist movement idea of a uniquely Brazilian cultural identity. *Foi numa noite calma* reflects the Brazilian *modinha* and *seresta* through extensive use of musical elements that characterize that musical genre and tradition, such as descending melodic motion, use of minor keys, and short melodic fragments separated by rests. The other three Brazilian art songs in this program express aspects of the African legacy in Brazilian culture. Marlos Nobre's *Estrela do mar* evokes the myth of Iemanjá (in the *Candomblé* religion, the goddess that reigns over the ocean and rivers) through the use of elements such as the sand, the fish, the boat, the net, the mermaid. In *Cantilena no. 3*,

the outline of a Cm7 chord in both the vocal line and piano accompaniment and the left hand of the accompaniment played “as a gong” help to express the meditative and simple needs of the persona of the poem. Waldemar Henrique’s *Abaluaiê* is a pray to the Deity of Diseases and Healing in the Yoruba religion, also the son of Iemanjá. The text of this song is in Portuguese, Yoruba, Fon, and Quimbundo - the latter three being African languages.

Foi numa noite calmosa

It was on a calm night

It was on a calm night that I saw you,
Beautiful woman, and I loved you and I became drunk
By the perfumed smile that I received.

Staggering for a moment
I took slow steps towards you, that’s when I heard
That no one loves without suffering, and I suffered.

But when back to reality
What torture I suffered, what longing I felt, for the woman who loved me
Never again thought of me, and I cried.

Estrela do mar (Marlos Nobre)

Star of the Sea

Oh, Iemanjá is coming to kiss me, Abaluaiê is coming to take me
I will fish with a net and bring lots of fish from the green ocean roads.

I want to be happy! I want to drown!
On the ocean waves I will see the Star of the Sea
And on the ocean floor forget what I can’t have.

Oh, Iá Otô, come hear my lamenting
Oh, Bajarê makes me dream
Mermaid, leave the ocean and come live on the beach
Play on the sand I want to lose myself!
Come, oh, Iemanjá!
The night when she does not come ss full of sadness
So I go somewhere else, I’ll leave this so terrible sea.

Cantilena no. 3

Ditty no. 3

The King summoned me to marry his daughter
The dowry would be Europe, France, and Bahia
I thought about my little ranch
My farm, my beans
The King summoned me
Oh, Mr. King, I don’t want that, no.

Abaluaiê

Forgive me, Abaluaiê, forgive me!
Forgive me, Orixalá, forgive me!
Forgive me, oh my God in Heaven, forgive me!
Abaluaiê, forgive me!

Oh, King of the World, forgive me, Abaluaiê!
He came from the ocean - Abaluaiê!
He is strong, he came - Abaluaiê - to save us.

Silence, so we can summon Abaluaiê!
May the drum player summon him with his
hands
We ask for its healing powers
We ask for blessings, my father!