

## Program Notes and Text/Translations

Roger Quilter (1877–1953) was born into a wealthy family in Sussex England and then went abroad to study music with Ivann Knorr in Frankfurt at the Hoch Conservatory where he studied the piano, and composition. Quilter's songs became extremely popular in England during the early part of the twentieth century, and his impact on English art songs and choral work are widely performed. "**O Mistress Mine**," which uses lyrics that are from William Shakespeare's (1564–1616) comic play *Twelfth Night*, depicts a man who is telling his love to search no further, because they have already found love. The piece uses a light and expressive piano part that often aligns with the poetry itself, adding meaning to the vocal line. "**Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal**," was first composed in 1897, as one of Quilter's first songs. This song uses lyrics from a long narrative poem by Alfred Tennyson (1850–1892) called *The Princess*. The legato piano part combines well with the imagery depicted in the poetry, creating feelings of love and beauty. "**The Jolly Miller**" is a part of Quilter's collection *Seven Elizabethan Lyrics*, Op. 12 where he took poetry from the fifteen hundreds and set them to music. This piece uses a light and joyful accompaniment to depict the joys of the Jolly Miller, who sings about the happiness he feels from his life as a Miller.

John Ireland (1879–1962) is regarded as a well-known English composer during the 20th century. Ireland's sensitive and insecure nature troubled him throughout his life, but he found that it had a beautiful place in music, as it gave his music a longing and unique sound. Ireland's "**Memory**," which was originally a poem by William Blake (1757–1827), conveys themes of longing for a youthful past, and outlines how those joyful moments live on in our memories.

Robert Schumann (1810–1856) was one of the great German Romantic composers. Schumann was a law student in his young adult years, but pursued his passion for music, inspired by Schubert. Schumann's ability to connect emotion and depth into the form of his music made Schumann one of the most influential composers of the romantic era. In the year of his marriage to Clara Schumann (1840), Schumann composed more than a half of his songs, including *Liederkries* and *Myrthen* and dedicated them to Clara as a wedding gift. "**Mondnacht**" (Moonlight) is the fifth song of Schumann's *Liederkreis* and is considered amongst Schumann's most famous compositions. The poetry for this piece comes from the poet Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857), whose incredible imagery works perfectly alongside Schumann's piano accompaniment. The poetry is crucial to this piece, as the imagery of the poem works its way into the larger story of *Liederkreis*. The gentle and soft piano accompaniment represents the text, which displays themes of nature and its unity with the human spirit. Schumann's collection *Myrthen* uses metaphor to compare a loving relationship to a beautiful and delicate flower. Friedrich Rückert's (1788–1866) poetry is crucial in this collection, with his poem "**Widmung**" (Dedication). The lyrics of this piece depict the emotional connection and intimacy which lovers can find from the gift of marriage. "**Du bist wie eine Blume**," (You Are like a Flower) is the 24<sup>th</sup> piece of the same collection and uses metaphor to compare a loving relationship to a beautiful and delicate flower. The slower tempo of the piece also demonstrates a feeling of longing and sadness. Heinrich Heine's (1797–1856) poetry is crucial in this piece, as the imagery allows Schuman to mimic elements of the poetry into the music itself.

### **Mondnacht**

Es war, als hätt' der Himmel,  
Die Erde still geküßt,  
Daß sie im Blütenschimmer  
Von ihm nun träumen müßt'.

Die Luft ging durch die Felder,  
Die Ähren wogten sacht,  
Es rauschten leis die Wälder,  
So sternklar war die Nacht.

Und meine Seele spannte  
Weit ihre Flügel aus,  
Flog durch die stillen Lande,  
Als flöge sie nach Haus.

### **Widmung**

Du meine Seele, du mein Herz,  
Du meine Wonn', o du mein Schmerz,  
Du meine Welt, in der ich lebe,  
Mein Himmel du, darein ich schwebe,  
O du mein Grab, in das hinab  
Ich ewig meinen Kummer gab!  
Du bist die Ruh, du bist der Frieden,  
Du bist vom Himmel mir beschieden.  
Dass du mich liebst, macht mich mir wert,  
Dein Blick hat mich vor mir verklärt,  
Du hebst mich liebend über mich,  
Mein guter Geist, mein bess'res Ich!

### **Du bist wie eine Blume,**

So hold und schön und rein;  
Ich schau' dich an, und Wehmut  
Schleicht mir ins Herz hinein.  
Mir ist, als ob ich die Hände  
Aufs Haupt dir legen sollt',  
Betend, dass Gott dich erhalte  
So rein und schön und hold.

### **Moonlight**

It was as though Heaven  
Had softly kissed the Earth,  
So that she in a gleam of blossom  
Had only to dream of him.

The breeze passed through the fields,  
The corn swayed gently to and fro,  
The forests murmured softly,  
The night was so clear with stars.

And my soul spread  
Her wings out wide,  
Flew across the silent land,  
As though flying home.

*(Translation from www.IPAsource.com)*

### **Dedication**

You my soul, you my heart,  
You my rapture, O you my pain,  
You my world in which I live,  
My heaven you, to which I aspire,  
O you my grave, into which  
My grief forever I've consigned!  
You are repose, you are peace,  
You are bestowed on me from heaven.  
Your love for me gives me my worth,  
Your eyes transfigure me in mine,  
You raise me lovingly above myself,  
My guardian angel, my better self!

*(Translation from www.oxfordsong.com)*

### **You are like a flower,**

So sweet and fair and pure;  
I look at you, and sadness  
Steals into my heart.  
I feel as if I should lay  
My hands upon your head,  
Praying that God preserve you  
So pure and fair and sweet.

*(Translation from www.oxfordsong.com)*

Reynaldo Hahn (1874–1947) was a French composer born in Venezuela and was known for writing beautiful French art songs (*mélodies*). Hahn's gift for composing *mélodies* made his compositions some of the most famous French pieces during the late romantic era. Hahn was also a gifted singer, conductor, and wrote operas, ballets, orchestral works, and served as director of the Paris Opéra during the 1940s. His song "À Chloris", which takes poetry by Théophile de Viau (1590–1626), is known as Hahn's most famous piece, and uses a beautiful combination of a

baroque piano style and romantic poetry, creating a deeply intimate and emotional piece about a lover named Chloris.

### À Chloris

S'il est vrai, Chloris, que tu m'aimes,  
Mais j'entends, que tu m'aimes bien,  
Je ne crois point que les rois mêmes  
Aient un bonheur pareil au mien.  
Que la mort serait importune  
De venir changer ma fortune  
A la félicité des cieux!  
Tout ce qu'on dit de l'ambrosie  
Ne touche point ma fantaisie  
Au prix des grâces de tes yeux.

### To Chloris

If it be true, Chloris, that you love me,  
(And I'm told you love me dearly),  
I do not believe that even kings  
Can match the happiness I know.  
Even death would be powerless  
To alter my fortune  
With the promise of heavenly bliss!  
All that they say of ambrosia  
Does not stir my imagination  
Like the favour of your eyes!

(Translation from [www.oxfordsong.com](http://www.oxfordsong.com))

Claude Debussy (1862–1918) was regarded as one of the great composers during the Impressionist era. Known for his complex and experimental harmonies, Debussy's music influenced generations of composers after his time. Some of his greatest works include *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (1894), *Clair de lune* (from *Suite Bergamasque*, 1905), and *La mer* (1905). “**Les cloches**” (The Bells) is the second song from Debussy's song cycle *Deux Romances*, which was composed in 1891, and with lyrics from Paul Borget (1852–1935). Borget's poetry uses a wide variety of metaphors, which allows the reader to develop their own interpretations of the meaning of the text. This piece features a beautiful piano accompaniment that resembles a bell-like sound mentioned in the poetry, depicting time itself, and the emotions we experience as we notice the passing of time.

### Les cloches

Les feuilles s'ouvraient sur le bord des branches,  
Déliatement.  
Les cloches tintaient, légères et franches,  
Dans le ciel clément.  
Rythmique et fervent comme une antienne,  
Ce lointain appel  
Me remémorait la blancheur chrétienne  
Des fleurs de l'autel.  
Ces cloches parlaient d'heureuses années,  
Et, dans le grand bois,  
Semblaient reverdir les feuilles fanées  
Des jours d'autrefois.

### The Bells

The leaves opened upon the edge of the branches,  
Delicately.  
The bells rang, light and free,  
In the clear sky.  
Rhythmically and fervently, like an antiphon,  
This distant call  
Reminded me of the Christian whiteness  
Of altar flowers.  
These bells told of happy years,  
And, in the great forest,  
Seemed to revive the withered leaves  
Of days gone by.

(Translation from [www.oxfordsong.com](http://www.oxfordsong.com))

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) was known as one of the most talented French composers during his time. He was a pianist, organist, teacher, and composer, being taught by people such as Clément Loret and Louis Niedermeyer. Fauré's style, which included rich harmonies and accompanied by fluid melodies, made his music unique and inventive during his time as a composer. Fauré also took the use of rhythm in his music to another level, using subtle

syncopation in his music. “**Lydia**,” composed in 1871, and written by Charles Marie Rene Leconte de Lisle (1818–1894) in 1852, is a love song which depicts a man who is so consumed by his love, that he feels it is the only thing that it is worth living for.

### **Lydia**

Lydia sur tes roses joues,  
Et sur ton col frais et si blanc,  
Roule étincelant  
L'or fluide que tu dénoues.  
Le jour qui luit est le meilleur:  
Oublions l'éternelle tombe.  
Laisse tes baisers de colombe  
Chanter sur ta lèvre en fleur.  
Un lys caché répand sans cesse  
Une odeur divine en ton sein:  
Les délices, comme un essaim,  
Sortent de toi, jeune Déesse!  
Je t'aime et meurs, ô mes amours!  
Mon âme en baisers m'est ravie.  
O Lydia, rends-moi la vie,  
Que je puisse mourir toujours!

### **Lydia**

Lydia, over your rosy cheeks,  
and over your neck, so fresh and white,  
sparkling, rolls the fluid gold that you untie.  
The day which is gleaming is the best:  
let us forget the eternal tomb.  
Let your dove's kisses sing on your blossoming  
lips.  
A hidden lily ceaselessly diffuses a divine scent in  
your breast:  
like a swarm, delights escape from you, young  
Goddess!  
I love you and am dying, o my loves!  
My soul is ravished by kisses.  
O Lydia, give me back my life, that I might die  
eternally.

*(Translation from www.oxfordsong.com)*

George Frederic Handel (1685–1759) was one of the most famous, and influential composers of the late baroque era. Handel was an extremely diverse composer, composing pieces from nearly every popular music genre at the time. Handel's most famous composition is the oratorio *Messiah*, which was written in 1741, and includes a libretto from Charles Jennens (1700–1773). Handel is well-known for his baroque operas such as *Giulio Cesare*, and *Rinaldo*, as well as his orchestral works. Sung by a baritone soloist from his oratorio *Messiah*, “**Why do the Nations So Furiously Rage Together?**” uses a quick orchestral accompaniment alongside a wide variety of key changes to illustrate the might and power of God.

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643) is credited as one of the composers who bridged the gap between the Renaissance and the Baroque periods and is widely known for his influence on the popularity of opera. “**Tu se' morta**” comes from his most famous opera *L'Orfeo*, during Act II, and immediately follows the death of Orpheus's wife Euridice. Because of this, Orpheus must travel to the underworld to bargain with Pluto for her life. The libretto of this opera was done by Alessandro Striggio (1573–1630), who worked with Monteverdi to blend the music to the text. Speech-like rhythms and tense vocal harmonies in this aria convey the fear and sorrow felt by Orpheus after losing Euridice.

Tu se' morta, mia vita, ed io respiro?  
Tu se' da me partita  
Per mai più non tornare, ed io rimango?  
No, che se i versi alcuna cosa ponno,  
N'andrò sicuro a' più profondi abissi;  
E intenerito il cor del Re dell'ombre,  
Meco trarrotti a riveder  
le stelle,  
Oh, se ciò negherammi empio destino,  
Rimarrò teco in compagnia di morte.  
Addio terra, addio cielo e sole, addio.

Have you perished, my life, yet I still breathe?  
Have you departed from me,  
Never to return again, and I remain?  
No, for if my verses have any meaning  
I must go, with certainty, to the deepest abyss;  
And having softened the King of Shadows' heart,  
I shall pull you up with me to see the stars once  
more,  
Oh, if fate, in its capricious cruelty, were to see  
me fail, I shall remain by your side in death.  
Farewell earth, farewell sky and sun, farewell.  
(Translation from [www.oxfordsong.com](http://www.oxfordsong.com))

Alan Menken (b. 1949) is an American composer best known for his works on the Walt Disney musicals, including *The Little Mermaid*, *Aladdin*, *Hercules*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Born to a Jewish family, Menken developed a love for the arts at an early age, as his father was a pianist, and his mother was a playwright and actress. Menken learned piano and violin in his childhood and began to compose at age 9. “**Me,**” from *Beauty and the Beast*, comes early in the show, and is sung by the show’s main antagonist Gaston. In this song, Gaston tells Belle how great they would be as a couple, showing his confidence, and self-absorbed arrogance in a very comedic piece.

The French composer Claude-Michel Schönberg (b. 1944) used his natural piano-playing ability to support himself and became part of the group known as *Les Vénètes* while at the Sup de Com in Nantes, France. After his time there, he began composing with lyricist Alain Boublil (b. 1941), creating musicals such as *La Révolution Française* and *Les Misérables*. “**Stars,**” from *Les Misérables*, sung by the antagonist Javert, is about Javert's self-imposed duty to catch and arrest the story’s protagonist, Jean Valjean. This song’s powerful lyrics create a memorable and epic moment in the story of *Les Misérables* as Javert commits suicide by jumping off a bridge immediately following this song.

“**A Gift for You,**” is a composition that was written by Joey Johnson for his senior recital. This song conveys the idea that we need not fear making mistakes, as they are an essential part of what makes life beautiful. The composer felt that this song built around this idea would be a meaningful choice for performance during his last semester at GCSU.

Paul Anka (b. 1941) is a Canadian American singer-songwriter who is credited for writing countless American pop hits during the 1950’s and 60’s. Anka is one of the most influential figures in American pop music, writing hits such as “Put Your Head On My Shoulder”, and creating the iconic theme for Johnny Carson's “The Tonight Show”. “**My Way**”, was written for jazz vocal legend Frank Sinatra. Anka took the melody from a French piece called “Comme d'habitude”, and wrote the lyrics himself. The meaning behind the tune depicts a man who reflects on the mistakes he has made throughout his life but finds fulfillment through having lived his life to the fullest.