



London Philharmonic Orchestra

STRAUSS
FIVE SONGS
LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME
SALOME (EXCERPTS)

KLAUS TENNSTEDT *conductor*
JESSYE NORMAN *soprano*
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

A BBC recording

STRAUSS FIVE SONGS

Cäcilie
Ruhe, meine Seele
Meinem Kinde
Wiegenlied
Zueignung

Richard Strauss was in love with the human voice, as any composer must be who devotes more than half his life to opera and writes as many songs as he did. He composed over 200 songs, and although a few of those belonging to his childhood have been lost, some 180 have been published. Most are for soprano voice, which Strauss especially loved, and many he composed for Pauline de Ahna, the soprano he married.

Since he was a master orchestrator, it is no surprise that one of his important contributions to the German *Lied* was the continuation of Mahler's work in devising effective orchestral accompaniments. Strauss composed his first song when he was only 13, and his final completed compositions were the *Four Last Songs* for soprano and orchestra in 1948. However, comparatively few of his songs were designed from the start for the interplay of voice and orchestra. The majority were composed with piano accompaniment, some being orchestrated by the composer later.

Cäcilie is the second in a set of four songs that Strauss composed in 1893–94 and dedicated to Pauline on their wedding day, 10 September 1894. It is a splendidly ardent song, the music's urgent passion growing in parallel with that of the poem.

Ruhe, meine Seele (Rest, my soul) is the opening song of the Opus 27 wedding day set. It may seem curiously sombre for a wedding present to one's bride, but it is a distinguished song showing how surely Strauss matched music to words when a poem that caught his eye found him in a responsive mood. 'At once', he wrote to a friend, 'the appropriate music is instinctively fitted to it'.

On 12 April 1898, the first birthday of their son Franz, Strauss dedicated to his wife the six songs of Opus 37. *Meinem Kinde* (To my Baby) had been composed a few weeks before their baby's birth, and Pauline later often sang it in public, grouping it with *Wiegenlied* and another song for a proud mother. The orchestral version of the accompaniment is scored with great delicacy for two flutes, two bassoons, harp and string quintet.

Wiegenlied, the celebrated lullaby, sets a marvellously long-drawn thread of vocal melody against a constantly undulating accompaniment. Strauss composed this song in 1899 and orchestrated it the following year.

Zueignung (Dedication) was the first Strauss song published. Composed in 1882 when he was 18 years old, it is the first of eight settings of poems from Hermann von Gilm's *Last Leaves*. Strauss intended them for a tenor voice, but when he orchestrated *Zueignung* in June 1940 he made some revisions and dedicated the new version to Viorica Ursuleac, who was then singing the title role in a Munich revival of his opera *Die ägyptische Helena*.

SUITE, LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME, OP. 60

Overture
Minuet
The Fencing Master
Entry and Dance of the Tailors
Lully's Minuet
Courante
Entry of Cléonte
Prelude to Act II
The Dinner

As a thank-offering to Max Reinhardt for his work on the first production of *Der Rosenkavalier*, Strauss and his librettist, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, decided to make a present to the great producer's Berlin drama company. Hofmannsthal would make a new German version of one of Molière's plays and Strauss would write incidental music for it. Another project the two men had in mind that year (1911) was a one-act chamber opera, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and it occurred to Hofmannsthal that the two plans could be combined by choosing Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, reducing it from five acts to two and adding the opera at the end as the entertainment arranged by M. Jourdain for his guests.

Strauss began writing music for the play in May 1911, went on to compose the opera and completed the project in July the following year. This play-plus-opera had its premiere on 25 October 1912 in Stuttgart – not Berlin, because Reinhardt’s theatre was unable to accommodate the orchestra. It was well received and other productions followed, but it became apparent that having to engage actors as well as singers was prohibitively expensive. Moreover, actors who commanded the requisite style for Molière were rare, and many operagoers were as lacking in enthusiasm for French drama as playgoers were for opera. Strauss and Hofmannsthal therefore separated the two halves of this long entertainment and provided the opera with an operatic prologue. *Ariadne auf Naxos* is nowadays nearly always performed in this second version.

The next step was to re-cast *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* in three acts with ten more pieces of incidental music, so that the play would stand alone and also fit Reinhardt’s Berlin theatre. This version of the play had its premiere on 9 April 1918 but failed to establish itself in the theatre. Fortunately, Strauss extracted a concert suite of nine movements from the incidental music, and it is almost entirely to this that we owe our knowledge of this exquisitely fashioned and charming score.

Designated a *Comédie-ballet*, Molière’s play was first staged in 1670 with music by Lully, so Strauss turned to Lully for his inspiration and directly borrowed from that composer for some of his numbers. The instrumental colours and harmonic modulations, of course, are wholly Straussian, though the chamber orchestra of three dozen is in marked contrast to the massive forces he had previously employed in his tone poems.

Molière’s comedy is a satirical study of the nouveau riche would-be gentleman, M. Jourdain, who is anxious to learn the social graces and fills his household with prospective instructors. The overture opens with an *Allegro* for piano and strings depicting the bustle in his establishment. M. Jourdain self-importantly stumps in (woodwind and brass), after which the activity subsides and the Overture ends with an anticipation of the arietta with which the play begins, the singing melody being given here to a solo oboe.

From the Minuet it is clear that Jourdain is not much of a dancer. The elegant dancing master (flute solo) tries to demonstrate the steps; repeated stresses on weak beats show that the pupil gets the rhythm wrong. Next is a lesson from the fencing master, who flexes his muscles impressively (trombone and trumpet solos) and shows his pupil the prescribed movements. The piano makes

a virtuosic contribution to this brilliant sketch. Equally virtuosic is the violin solo in the next movement, which opens with the entry of the tailors to a gavotte. The violin accompanies the principal tailor, who dances attendance upon his customer (Jourdain’s heavy theme from the overture) to the sound of a polonaise; Vienna tailors in Strauss’s time were traditionally Polish!

The following three movements come from the additional music for the 1918 version of the play. First comes what Strauss described as ‘the charming, famous minuet by Lully’, though he attunes the piece stylistically to the other movements. The canonic Courante comes from a ball scene. ‘Entry of Cléonte’ is based on a sarabande by Lully. Cléonte, a young man rejected by Jourdain as too low-class a suitor for his daughter, returns in the play’s final scene disguised as the Grand Turk, supposedly come to ennoble Jourdain. He enters to a slow measure for muted strings. After a livelier second section the reprise of the first is enriched by scoring for wind, strings and percussion with a descant on the trumpet.

We return to original Strauss in the Prelude to Act II, subtitled ‘Intermezzo’. This exquisite *Andante* is associated with Dorante and Dorimène, the couple who plot Jourdain’s downfall.

The brilliant finale is the dinner scene. As each course is served, Strauss offers an appropriate quotation. Rhine salmon (the river motif from Wagner’s *Ring*) is followed by leg of mutton (references to the sheep in *Don Quixote*), during which course there is an amorous interlude (cello solo) between Jourdain and Dorimène. A dish of thrushes and larks (bird calls from *Der Rosenkavalier*) is served next, and a snatch of Verdi’s *La donna è mobile* on first oboe suggests Dorimène is not to be trusted. Finally comes the omelette surprise, out of which springs the smallest kitchen boy, who brings the dinner and this suite to an end with a lively dance.

DANCE OF THE SEVEN VEILS AND CLOSING SCENE FROM SALOME

Dance of the Seven Veils

Ah! Du wolltest mich nicht deinen Mund küssen lassen

Nun wohl! Ich lebe noch

Ah! Ich habe deinen Mund geküsst, Jochanaan

Early in 1902 the Viennese poet Anton Lindtner suggested to Strauss that Oscar Wilde's 1891 French play on the Biblical subject of Salome would make a good one-act opera. Strauss agreed that Lindtner should start work on a libretto, but the 'cleverly versified opening scenes' that the poet sent did not inspire him to compose. Then Strauss looked again at the play – not Wilde's original text but the German translation by Hedwig Lachmann – and realized how apt was its very first line: 'Wie schoen ist die Prinzessin Salome heute Nacht' (How beautiful the Princess Salome is tonight). Setting that to music straight away stirred him into action on the rest, and he produced his own effective libretto by shortening and simplifying the Lachmann text. He composed the music between August 1903 and September 1904, and completed the full score the following June.

The opera received its first performance on 9 December 1905 in Dresden. It was a huge success with the public and, despite censorship problems in some places, was given in 50 other theatres in the next two years. In London the Lord

Chamberlain banned the opera in 1907 and only allowed its performance in 1911 on condition that the severed head of John the Baptist was not seen.

When Strauss told his first Salome, Marie Wittich, that he envisaged a 16-year-old princess with the voice of Isolde, she reasonably replied: 'One just does not write a thing like that, Herr Strauss: either one or the other.' Furthermore, being as she said 'a decent woman', she was extremely reluctant to go along with the producer's ideas for the opera. Her qualms were eventually subdued, and in the 110 years since that first production many celebrated sopranos have subdued any doubts they may have had about playing this challenging role.

Strauss's score, which William Mann has described as 'one of the most masterly and original composed in this century', employs a very large orchestra, not only to conjure up the nightmarish atmosphere of Herod's decadent court as depicted by Wilde but to present engrossing psychological studies through a quasi-symphonic interplay of many motives. Great power is available at need, but much of the score has a chamber-musical delicacy. Strauss was not entirely joking when he made it one of his golden rules for a young conductor to conduct *Salome* 'as if it were Mendelssohn fairy music'.

The action takes place on a moonlit terrace at Herod's palace in Tiberias, Galilee, in AD 30. Herod, Tetrarch of Judea, has married his late brother's widow, the courtesan Herodias, and in an old cistern beneath the terrace he has imprisoned John the Baptist (called Jochanaan here) for denouncing the immorality of the marriage.

Princess Salome, the innocent but spoilt 16-year-old daughter of Herodias by her previous marriage, is sick of the oppressive household. Made uncomfortable by her stepfather staring at her with 'mole eyes', she also detests the disputatious Jews, silent Egyptians and brutal Romans in the palace. Jochanaan's other-worldly fanaticism intrigues her, and when she has him brought from the cistern her latent sexual desires are aroused. She feels a literally maddening urge to kiss his mouth, but he will not even look at her and curses her as the daughter of an incestuous mother.

When Herod begs her to dance for him, Salome seizes her opportunity. Securing first his solemn oath to reward her with whatever she desires, she performs the erotic Dance of the Seven Veils. The music for this is a weaving together of themes associated with Salome and her thoughts of Jochanaan. Midway through the dance comes a seductive C sharp minor waltz melody in fairly slow tempo, and this

leads to the urgent principal theme of Salome's passion. The plain innocent C major of her first meeting with Jochanaan has been perverted into the extreme sharpness of C sharp major. After a moment's fatigue Salome finds new energy, whirls rapidly across the terrace, hovers briefly by the cistern (the eerie woodwind motif of her fixation), then flings herself at Herod's feet.

For reward Salome demands Jochanaan's head on a silver dish. Herod is aghast, fearing to murder a holy man yet obliged to honour his oath. Jochanaan is beheaded and the closing scene begins as the executioner's huge arm emerges from the cistern bearing the severed head on a silver shield.

Salome is by now obviously unhinged, and Strauss meant what follows to fill us with compassion for a chaste virgin defeated 'by the miracle of a great world'. The various themes connected with her and the prophet are drawn together as the climax approaches. In delirious ecstasy Salome seizes and addresses the head. Now she can do as she will, she says, she may throw it to the dogs if she wishes. When she had looked at him, she had heard strange music. If only he had looked at her, he would have loved her. 'The mystery of love is greater than the mystery of death'.

The horrified Herod and grimly satisfied Herodias have been watching from the palace steps, and he now commands his slaves to extinguish the torches. Salome, crouching in the dark, kisses Jochanaan's mouth. Is the bitterness, she wonders, the taste of blood or of love? The music is shivering with multiple trills, and the principal love theme is heard for the last time as Salome exults in the fulfilment of her longing. The moon emerges from behind a cloud and Herod is sickened by what he sees. He orders his soldiers to kill the girl, and they run to crush her beneath their shields.

Programme notes © Eric Mason

Cäcilie, Op. 20, No. 2

Wenn du es wüsstest
was träumen heisst
von brennenden Küssen,
Von Wandern und Ruhen
mit der Geliebten,
Aug' in Auge,
und kosend und plaudernd,
wenn du es wüsstest
du neigtest dein Herz.

Wenn du es wüsstest
was bängen heisst
in einsamen Nächten,
umschauert vom Sturm,
da niemand tröstet
milden Mundes
die kampfmuede Seele,
wenn du es wüsstest,
du kämest zu mir.

Wenn du es wüsstest
was leben heisst,
unhaucht von der Gottheit
Weltschaffendem Atem,
zu schweben empor,
Lichtgetragen
zu seligen Höh'n,
wenn du es wüsstest
du lebtest mit mir.

Heinrich Hart

Cäcilie

If you only knew
what it means to dream
of burning kisses,
of roaming and resting
with your beloved,
eye to eye,
and caressing and chatting,
if you only knew,
you would incline your heart.

If you only knew
what it means to be afraid
on lonely nights,
in the midst of a storm,
nobody there to comfort
with gentle words
the strife-weary soul,
if you only knew,
you would come to me.

If you only knew
what it means to live,
inspired by the Deity's
world-creating breath,
to soar aloft,
borne on the light
to blessed heights
if you only knew,
you would live with me.

Ruhe, meine Seele, Op. 20, No. 1

Nicht ein Lüftchen regt sich leise,
sanft entschlummert ruht der Hain;
durch der Blätter dunkle Hülle
stiehlt sich lichter Sonnenschein.
Ruhe, ruhe, meine Seele,
deine Stuerme gingen wild,
hast getobt und hast gezittert,
wie die Brandung, wenn es schwillt!
Diese Zeiten sind gewaltig,
bringen Herz und Hirn in Not.
Ruhe, ruhe, meine Seele,
und vergiss was dich bedroht!

Kari Henckell

Meinem Kinde , Op. 37, No. 3

Du schläfst und sachte neig' ich mich
über dein Bettchen und segne dich.
Jeder behutsame Atemzug
ist ein schweifender Himmelsflug,
ist ein Suchen weit umher
ob nicht doch ein Stemlein wär,
wo aus eitel Glanz und Licht
Liebe sich ein Glückskraut bricht,
das sie geflügelt hemeider trägt
und dir aufs weisse Deckchen legt.
Du schläfst und sachte neig' ich mich
über dein Bettchen und segne dich.

Gustav Falke

Rest, my soul

Not a breeze is softly stirring,
in gentle slumber rests the grove;
through the dark cover of leaves
light sunshine steals.
Rest, rest, my soul,
your storms were wild,
you raged and you shook
like the surf when it swells!
Those times are tremendous,
distressing to heart and mind.
Rest, rest, my soul,
and forget what threatens you!

To my baby

You sleep and gently I lean
over your cradle and bless you.
Each cautious breath
is a ranging heavenward flight,
is a seeking far afield
to find out whether a star there be,
from whose vain lustre and light
love might pluck a lucky charm
to bear on wings below
and lay on your white coverlet.
You sleep and gently I lean
over your cradle and bless you.

Wiegenlied, Op. 41, No. 1

Träume, träume du mein süßes Leben,
von dem Himmel, der die Blumen bringt.
Blüten schimmern da, die beben
von dem Lied das deiner Mutter singt.
Träume, träume, Knospe meiner Sorgen,
von dem Tage da die Blume spross;
von dem hellen Blütenmorgen
da dein Seelchen sich der Welt erschloss.
Träume, träume, Blüte meiner Liebe,
von der stillen, von der heil'gen Nacht
da die Blume seiner Liebe
diese Welt zum Himmel mir gemacht.

Richard Dehmel

Lullaby

Dream, dream, my sweet life,
of heaven, which brings the flowers.
There blossoms gleam that vibrate
with the song your mother sings.
Dream, dream, bud of my cares,
of the day the flower burst forth;
of the bright blossoming morning
when your little soul opened to the world.
Dream, dream, blossom of my love,
of the still holy night
when the flower of his love
made this world heaven to me.

Zueignung, Op. 10, No. 2

Ja, du weisst es, teure Seele,
dass ich fern von dir mich quale,
Liebe macht die Herzen krank,
habe Dank!

Einst hielt ich, der Freiheit Zecher,
hoch den Amethysten Becher
und du segnetest den Trank,
habe Dank!

Und beschworst darin die Bösen,
bis ich, was ich nie gewesen,
heilig, heilig an's Herz dir sank,
habe Dank!

Hermann von Gilm

Dedication

Yes, you know, dear soul,
that far from you I pine,
love that makes hearts sick,
be thanked!

Once, of freedom drinking, I raised
high the amethyst cup,
and you blessed the drink,
be thanked!

And exorcised the evil spirits,
till, as I had never been, was
holy, holy fell upon your breast,
be thanked!

English translations © Eric Mason

KLAUS TENNSTEDT *conductor*

Born in East Germany, Klaus Tennstedt studied at the Leipzig Conservatory and conducted throughout his native land but it was not until he moved to the West in 1971 that he started to achieve world recognition. He made his American debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1974 and his debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1977.

He had an instant rapport with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, which resulted in return invitations and his appointment as the Orchestra's Principal Conductor and Music Director in 1983. This developed into a unique and remarkable relationship until illness brought it to a premature end some ten years later.

Tennstedt was renowned for his performances of the German repertoire, particularly Mahler and Bruckner whose symphonies he conducted regularly with the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall and on disc to huge public acclaim. His energy, musicianship and emotional involvement combined with a rare humility endeared him to audiences and musicians alike.

Klaus Tennstedt died in 1998.



JESSYE NORMAN *soprano*



Born in Georgia in 1945, legendary American soprano Jessye Norman studied voice at Howard University in Washington DC, and later at the Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan, the Peabody Institute in Maryland, and the University of Michigan. She was born into a musical family, her mother played piano and her father sang in the church choir, and by the age of four Jessye herself was already singing gospel songs in the church choir.

Norman made her professional operatic debut at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, and over the following decades cultivated a spectacular career filled with unique and unprecedented achievements. She won great acclaim for

her performances in a wide range of leading roles with the world's leading opera companies; in solo recitals and in concerts of her cherished classical repertoire with preeminent orchestras across the globe; and in artistic excursions into jazz and American musical theatre.

Norman was renowned not only for her vocal virtuosity and versatility, but also for her strong work ethic, thorough preparation, and deep understanding of language, texts and context.

Norman was the recipient of many awards and accolades, including 40 honorary doctorate degrees, five Grammy awards including the Lifetime Achievement Award, the National Medal of the Arts from President Obama, and the Kennedy Center Honors. In France, an orchid was named for her by the National Museum of Natural History, she was a Commandeur de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, and she was an Officier of the Legion Francaise. She was a passionate advocate for arts education and was devoted to the Jessye Norman School for the Arts in Augusta, Georgia.

Jessye Norman died in 2019.

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra is one of the world's finest orchestras, balancing a long and distinguished history with its present-day position as one of the most dynamic and forward-looking ensembles in the UK. This reputation has been secured by the Orchestra's performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, trail-blazing international tours and wide-ranging educational work.

Founded by Sir Thomas Beecham in 1932, the Orchestra has since been headed by many of the world's greatest conductors, including Sir Adrian Boult, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Kurt Masur. In September 2021 Edward Gardner became the Orchestra's Principal Conductor, succeeding Vladimir Jurowski, who became Conductor Emeritus in recognition of his transformative impact on the Orchestra as Principal Conductor from 2007–21.

The Orchestra is based at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in London, where it has been Resident Orchestra since 1992. Each summer it takes up its annual residency at Glyndebourne Festival Opera where it has been Resident Symphony Orchestra for over 50 years. The Orchestra performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous international tours, performing to sell-out audiences in America, Europe, Asia and Australasia.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra made its first recordings on 10 October 1932, just three days after its first public performance. It has recorded and broadcast regularly ever since, and in 2005 established its own record label. These recordings are taken mainly from live concerts given by conductors including LPO Principal Conductors from Beecham and Boult, through Haitink, Solti and Tennstedt, to Masur and Jurowski. lpo.org.uk



RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)

Five Songs

- 01 02:10 Cäcilie, Op. 20 No. 2
- 02 04:16 Ruhe, meine Seele, Op. 20 No. 1
- 03 02:40 Meinem Kinde, Op. 37 No. 3
- 04 05:30 Wiegenlied, Op. 41 No. 1
- 05 01:39 Zueignung, Op. 10 No. 2

Suite, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Op. 60

- 06 03:59 Overture
- 07 01:30 Minuet
- 08 01:39 The Fencing Master
- 09 05:16 Entry and Dance of the Tailors
- 10 02:04 Lully's Minuet
- 11 02:47 Courante
- 12 04:06 Entry of Cléonte
- 13 02:55 Prelude to Act II
- 14 10:07 The Dinner

Dance of the Seven Veils and Closing Scene from *Salome*

- 15 09:17 Dance of the Seven Veils
- 16 05:04 Ah! Du wolltest mich nicht deinen Mund küssen lassen
- 17 06:28 Nun wohl! Ich lebe noch
- 18 04:48 Ah! Ich habe deinen Mund geküsst, Jochanaan

KLAUS TENNSTEDT *conductor*

JESSYE NORMAN *soprano*

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

David Nolan *leader*

Recorded live at the Southbank Centre's **ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**, London

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