

DREAMS
DESIRES
DESOLATION
English Song

TREVOR ALEXANDER & PETER CROCKFORD

Dreams, Desires, Desolation

1. Is my team ploughing? George Butterworth and A E Housman	3:47	12. Autumn (<i>first commercial recording</i>) Peter Gellhorn and Walter de la Mare	2:03
2. Come to me in my dreams Frank Bridge and Matthew Arnold	3:37	13. If there were dreams to sell (<i>Dream-Pedlary</i>) John Ireland and Thomas Beddoes	2:03
3. I hear you calling me Charles Marshall and Harold Harford	3:35	14. Silver Cecil Armstrong Gibbs and Walter de la Mare	2:52
4. Now sleeps the crimson petal Roger Quilter and Alfred, Lord Tennyson	2:10	15. The cloths of heaven (<i>World Premier/first recording</i>) Clive Pollard and W B Yeats	2:41
5. Go song of mine (<i>World Premier/first recording</i>) Clive Pollard and Guido Cavalcanti (tr. Rossetti)	3:34	16. The sky above the roof Ralph Vaughan Williams and Mabel Dearmer	2:49
6. Do not go my love Richard Hageman and Rabindranth Tagore	2:58	17. Lullaby Cyril Scott and Christina Rossetti	2:54
7. Silent Noon Ralph Vaughan Williams and D G Rossetti	4:07	18. Kashmiri Song Amy Woodforde-Finden and Laurence Hope	3:39
8. Remembrance Frederick Keel and Katharine Hinkson	2:56	19. I arise from dreams of thee Roger Quilter and Percy B Shelley	4:41
9. Dream Song Victor Hely-Hutchinson and Walter de la Mare	2:09	20. Journey's End Frank Bridge and Humbert Wolfe	3:58
10. What shall I your true love tell? Frank Bridge and Francis Thompson	4:15	Encore:	
11. Love's garden of roses Haydn Wood and Ruth Rutherford	4:04	21. How could I ever know (<i>The Secret Garden</i>) Lucy Simon and Marsha Norman	3:03
		Total Playing Time	68:03

Artists' Foreword

Dreams, Desires, Desolation was created out of our love for English Song. The album comprises a real mixture: some very familiar songs, some relatively unknown ones, and a few which were very popular in their day but have fallen out of fashion. There are also three 'first' recordings. We believe, despite the mixture of styles, each song brings something valid to our concept.

We have not tried to be clever or intellectual in our choice of songs. We also realise that many wonderful songs have been missed out, indeed, we recorded a few more songs but didn't feel there was space for them on this recording.

It is unlikely that our audience will empathise with every song we have chosen. Some will find the desolation songs too distressing, others may find some songs are just too lightweight for them. However, we hope that you can all find enough herein to share our enjoyment of these songs.

Trevor and Peter



Trevor Alexander, baritone



Peter Crockford, piano

The Music

1. Is my team ploughing?

George Sinton Kaye Butterworth (1885-1916), born in London, was a composer of great promise who died in the Somme during the First World War.

His musical talent was clear from a very early age and he began composing when young. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Oxford after which he became a student at the Royal College of Music. He was not happy at the RCM and did not continue beyond his first year.

He was a friend of the folk song collector Cecil Sharp and a great friend of Ralph Vaughan Williams, with whom he collected over four hundred and fifty folk songs in Sussex during the summer of 1907. He was an expert folk dancer (along with Cecil Sharp) and was employed for a while by the English Folk Dance and Song Society as a professional member of the Demonstration Team.

He destroyed many of his manuscripts before going to war in case he should not return and have the chance to finish and revise them himself.

Is my team ploughing? is the last song in his set: Six Songs from *A Shropshire Lad* composed in 1911.

Alfred Edward Housman (1859-1936) was a classicist scholar and poet. His attitude to study seems to have been – if it interested him: he worked very hard at it, if it did not: it was neglected. As a consequence he failed his degree exams and only achieved a 'pass' when he retook them a term later. After Oxford he worked in the Patent Office in London and pursued his studies privately. He published many scholarly articles and, gradually, began to establish a reputation which led to him being offered the professorship of Latin at University College, London and, later, at Trinity College, Cambridge.

He was thorough, exacting and admired for his own scholarship, scathing in his attacks on scholarship which he thought shoddy, could be intimidating to his students, famously 'dry' as a professor and his influence led to a style of scholarship which was without emotion. His feelings about poetry were ambivalent and he certainly treated it as less important than his scholarship, but argued in his 1933 lecture that 'poetry should appeal to the emotions rather than the intellect'. His ashes were buried in Ludlow and a cherry tree was planted there in his memory.

Is my team ploughing? is No.27 in Housman's 1896 collection *A Shropshire Lad*, which was written in the shadow of the Second Boer War. The poem is a narrative between a young man and his friend. The young man has died and is asking his friend if all is well at home. Butterworth's setting is the epitome of simplicity - a series of ethereal, descending chords accompanying the ghost's questions followed by simple bombastic chords representing the friend who assures the ghost that all is well and that it is time for him to rest. An almost self-effacing setting which does not stand in the way of a poem which should make us all tremble.

2. Come to me in my dreams

Frank Bridge (1879-1941) came from a large family in Brighton. His father was a violin teacher and variety theatre conductor who was insistent that Bridge practise the violin regularly for long hours. When Bridge became proficient enough, he played in his father's bands, also conducting in his absence, and arranging some of the music.

He studied at the Royal College of Music between 1899 and 1903, studying composition with Charles Villiers Stanford - an exacting teacher who could not abide modernism. It has been suggested that he consequently stifled Bridge's creativity which only began to find free rein in the 1920s. On leaving the RCM it was necessary for Bridge to earn a living which he did by playing and conducting. Many of his compositions from these years would have been for parlour use and a way to earn money; they had to be commercial and appeal to the general public. However, his works also suggest that he was developing away from 'the parlour' and finding his own voice.

In the decade or so before WWI, Bridge seems to have been interested in more modernist tendencies and his works display significant changes in his use of harmony - harmony developed from whole tone and octatonic scales and non-functional harmony to create colour. After the War he wanted to try writing larger and more complex pieces and accepting the patronage of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge gave him the freedom to focus full-time on composition.

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) was the son of Thomas Arnold, the famous Headmaster of Rugby School. When Matthew decided that he wanted to get married, he realized that he would be unable to support a family on his income as a Private Secretary. He therefore applied for and, in 1851, gained the position of Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools. He described this work as 'drudgery' but acknowledged that regular work also had its benefits. With the railway network having grown rapidly during the Victorian years, he spent much of his time in trains, in railway waiting rooms and in small hotels, travelling more widely than any man of letters had ever been able to, to schools all over central England.

He wrote poetry, prose and criticism and said of himself: 'It might be fairly urged that I have less poetical sentiment than Tennyson and less intellectual vigour and abundance than Browning; yet because I have perhaps more of a fusion of the two than either of them... I am likely enough to have my turn as they have had theirs.'

Come to me in my dreams was written in 1850 and is the first of several poems by Arnold which Bridge set to music. Bridge's setting is from 1906 - soon after he left the RCM. One can already see the elements of Bridge pushing at the harmonic boundaries although, in effect, this is a full-blown 'romantic' setting.

3. I hear you calling me

Charles Marshall (1857-1927) was a songwriter whose output was not huge - numbering only some fifteen songs. However, this includes one of the most successful songs of its day: *I Hear You Calling me* - its popularity mainly due to the recordings of John McCormack.

Marshall visited McCormack one day to play him his setting of Harford's verses, and the story goes that McCormack began to sing along with Marshall, becoming more and more enthusiastic about the song. He suggested that they should visit Arthur Boosey who, McCormack thought, would be sure to publish it. McCormack went on to record it no fewer than six times and it became a best-seller. The song became so closely identified with him that his wife, Lily, adopted it as the title of her biography of him.

Harold Harford was the pseudonym under which journalist Harold Lake wrote. Lake attended the choir school of Westminster Abbey and was a great friend of fellow pupil Larry Dearth (the well-known Ballad Singer). Dearth had urged Lake to write lyrics but it was only some years later, that *I hear you calling me* was written.

Lake said the words just came to him and took only twenty minutes to write. He explained that behind its composition was a story of youthful romance: 'a sixteen-year-old boy met a fifteen-year-old girl and there followed three years of complete devotion. The girl then caught galloping consumption and, a fortnight later, died, leaving a nineteen-year-old lad standing by her grave one wet November day'.

4. Now sleeps the crimson petal

Roger Cuthbert Quilter (1877-1953) was born in Sussex and educated at Eton. He was a fellow student of Percy Grainger, Cyril Scott and Henry Balfour Gardiner at Dr Hoch's Konservatorium in Frankfurt; they were known as the Frankfurt Group. He studied there under Iwan Knorr for nearly five years and, despite his German training, most people consider his music to be the quintessence of 'englishness'. His reputation rests largely on his songs and light music for orchestra. He wrote over one hundred songs for voice and piano many of which are still popular and performed today. His favoured poets were Shakespeare, Herrick, and Shelley. He also wrote and published a collection of sixteen traditional and folk songs from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and France called *The Arnold Book of Old Songs*. This was dedicated to his nephew Arnold Guy Vivian who died during the Second World War. Quilter felt the loss of his nephew keenly and that, along with the general pressures of life, led to him suffering mental illness. He died at home in St John's Wood shortly after his seventy-fifth birthday.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) born in Lincolnshire, stated in his early years that 'poetry was to be his career, however bleak the prospect of his ever earning a living'; ironically though, poetry made him a rich man.

His early home life was beset by tragedy, illness and misfortune; this colours much of his poetry in recurring negative themes. When he became a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, life opened up for him and he was at the centre of a group of young men interested in poetry and conversation. Sadly, his time at Cambridge was cut short when his father died and his grandfather refused to pay any further fees.

Despite the rapid changes that were happening everywhere around him during his maturing years, his sympathies lay with an idealised, unaltered ('english') rural idyll; his talent was being able to express this with lyricism. He published his first solo collection of poems when he was twenty-one and another two years later, unfortunately these were not well received. He continued to write through the next decade (and through difficult personal times) but didn't publish again until he was thirty-one. On this occasion his work was well received and propelled

him to the forefront of his generation of poets. In 1845 he was granted a government pension of £200 per annum, this released him from financial worries, but the habit of a lifetime persisted and he always pleaded poverty.

A number of phrases in Tennyson's work have become common place in the English language, for example: 'tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all' and, 'Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers'. His work was a great influence on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

Now sleeps the crimson petal is from Tennyson's long narrative poem *The Princess* published at Christmas 1847. It is one of Quilter's early songs, but contains elements of his later, more mature style. He used only the first and last quatrains of Tennyson's poem. It is, at the same time, fully romantic, very evocative and delicate in its sensuality.

5. *Go song of mine* (World Premier/First Recording)

Clive Pollard (b.1959) was born in Nottingham. He studied piano and piano accompaniment at the Royal College of Music and then won a scholarship to study piano at the Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest. A further scholarship took him to Salzburg to study Lieder accompaniment at the Hochschule Mozarteum. He played regularly for BBC Radio 4 Singing Together (for schools) before working as a répétiteur for Icelandic Opera (Reykjavik) and the Royal Ballet (London). As a composer, he has written songs, choral, instrumental and orchestral music. He says that he wonders why he started to write music at such an early age because, by his own admission, he comes from a 'not very musical background'. He never received instruction in composition and, in his own words, he just 'does what comes to him'. As both composer and accompanist he loves the interplay between words and music, and says: 'My vocal writing is always melodic, and the piano accompaniments are always intended to form an integral part of the whole picture..... My top priority has always been to touch the heart of the listener and the performer.'

Guido Cavalcanti (c.1250-1300) was an Italian poet and philosopher. He was politically active on the side of the White Guelph and was a personal friend of Dante. His politics led to him being exiled to Sarzana in 1300. He didn't stay there long before deciding to return home to Florence, dying of a fever on the way in August that year. Cavalcanti became a strong influence on some of the writers associated with the development of modernist poetry in English. This influence can be traced back to the appearance, in 1861, of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's work: *The Early Italian Poets*, which features translations of works by both Cavalcanti and Dante. Ezra Pound also produced translations under the title *The Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti*. There are some who say that this canzone is incorrectly attributed to Cavalcanti but we have chosen to agree with Rossetti. It is the final part of a longer poem: *A Dispute with Death*. This setting by Clive Pollard is to Rossetti's translation.

Having received the beautiful setting of *The cloths of heaven* from Clive, we decided that it would be marvellous if he could write a setting of *Go song of mine* specially for this recording. This canzone has been a favourite of Peter's for many years. Clive didn't know the poem but found that it 'spoke' to him immediately and he quickly fell in love with it. He says that the inspiration to write came a little hesitantly at first, but that once he found his starting point, it came to him fairly quickly. (See also note No.15)

6. Do not go my love

Richard Hageman (1881-1966) was a Dutch-born conductor, pianist, composer and Hollywood film actor who became an American citizen in 1925. He was a child prodigy and by the age of six was appearing at the piano in public regularly. In 1906 he went on tour to the USA as an accompanist; he stayed and, in 1908, joined the staff at the Metropolitan Opera as a conductor and pianist. He stayed with the Met for fourteen years. He was also staff pianist for Paramount Film Studios for over twenty years, guest director for the Chicago, Philadelphia and Los Angeles Symphony Orchestras and, between 1938 and 1943, conducted the Hollywood Bowl Summer Concerts. He wrote some twenty film scores and shared an Academy Award for his score to John Ford's 1939 western *Stagecoach*. He wrote some orchestral and chamber music and an opera, but he is chiefly remembered for some of his early songs of which *Do not go my love*, published in 1917, was the first.

Rabindranth Tagore (1861-1941). The youngest of thirteen surviving children, Tagore was born in Calcutta.

The Tagore family was at the forefront of the Bengal renaissance and they regularly hosted literary, theatrical and musical (both Bengali and European) events. Among Tagore's siblings were a philosopher and poet, a musician, composer and playwright, and a novelist.

Tagore loathed formal education - he lasted only one day at the local college. Years later he said that proper teaching does not explain things; proper teaching stokes curiosity. His brother, Hemendranath, tutored him, not only academically but also physically, having him swim the Ganges, trek through the hills and engage in gymnastics, judo and wrestling.

After his coming-of-age rite, aged eleven, Tagore and his father toured India for several months. He read biographies and studied history, astronomy, modern science, Sanskrit, classical poetry and English (not his favourite topic).

Known mostly for his poetry, Tagore also wrote novels, essays, short stories, travelogues, dramas, non-fiction and thousands of songs. Of his prose, his short stories are perhaps most highly regarded. As a humanist, universalist and internationalist he advocated independence for India. Internationally, his best known work is the collection of poetry entitled *Gitanjali* for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. Tagore was the first non-European to receive this recognition.

7. Silent Noon

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) was born at Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, but grew up in Surrey. On his mother's side, he was related to both Josiah Wedgwood and Charles Darwin. He and his siblings were raised to have liberal social and philosophical opinions consistent with the ethos of both families. When the young Vaughan Williams asked his mother about Darwin's controversial book: *On the Origin of Species*, she answered, 'The Bible says that God made the world in six days. Great Uncle Charles thinks it took longer: but we need not worry about it, for it is equally wonderful either way.'

He studied at the Royal College of Music and Cambridge University between 1890 and 1895; studying composition under Hubert Parry (whom he idolised) and Charles Villiers Stanford (a stormy but affectionate relationship). After college, he supplemented a modest private income by writing articles for musical journals, editing for the Purcell Society, and co-editing *The English Hymnal*. He collected folk songs with George Butterworth, and these greatly influenced his own compositions, as did his love for and knowledge of Tudor and Stuart music. Wishing to improve his composing technique, and after being turned down by Edward Elgar, he was accepted by Maurice Ravel and went to study with him in Paris. Vaughan Williams said that Ravel had helped him escape from 'the heavy contrapuntal Teutonic manner'.

Vaughan Williams volunteered for military service in the First World War; he lost many comrades and friends (including Butterworth), and it scarred him both emotionally and physically; the noise of the guns damaged his hearing and led to deafness in his later years.

In 1919 he accepted an invitation to teach composition at the RCM - a post he held for the next twenty years.

During the Second World War he was active in civilian war work including chairing the Home Office Committee for the Release of Interned Alien Musicians. In 1954 he set up and endowed the RVW Trust to support young composers and promote new or neglected music. He died suddenly on 26 August 1958 aged eighty-five.

Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti (1828-1882) born in London to Italian parents, was a poet, illustrator, painter, translator and one of the co-founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Before attending King's College School, Rossetti was educated at home by his parents. He enjoyed reading the Bible, Shakespeare, Dickens, Scott and Byron and his early poetry was influenced by Keats and Blake. As he matured, his poetry was characterised by the interlinking of thought with feeling (as in his sonnet sequence *The House of Life*). When his wife, Elizabeth (Siddell) died, such was his grief that he buried the bulk of his unpublished poems with her, and it wasn't for some years that he was able to retrieve them from her grave, later publishing them. He frequently wrote sonnets to accompany his pictures, and also created art to illustrate poems, such as those by his sister, Christina.

Silent Noon is No.19 of *The House of Life*, written between 1847 and 1881. Part 1 - *Youth and Change* - is mostly concerned with love. Part 2 - *Changing Fate* - focuses on despair, sorrow and remorse; an ever-shifting sequence of poems depicting the challenges in a life lived between two great passions: his wife and his mistress. Vaughan Williams published *The House of Life: Six Sonnets* by Rossetti in 1904.

8. Remembrance

James Frederick Keel (1871-1954) was a successful recitalist and, later on, a professor of singing at the Royal Academy of Music.

He enrolled as a student at the RAM in 1895, studying singing and composition. He furthered his singing studies in Milan and Munich and made his debut at the Queen's Hall, London in 1898.

He was an active member of the English Folk Song movement and, although he never personally collected very many, he was Honorary Secretary of the Folk Song Society from 1911 to 1919. He also helped revive an interest

in Elizabethan and Jacobean music with his 'free settings' for the piano of the lute songs of Dowland, Campion, Morley and others.

In 1914 he and his family were on holiday in Bavaria when the War broke out. He was held in a civilian internment camp where he gave recitals and played an active role in the music making of the camp in order to keep up morale.

Although not known as prolific composer, these days his reputation relies almost solely on his setting of Masfield's Salt Water Ballad: *Trade Winds*.

Katharine Tynan Hinkson (1859-1931) was born in County Dublin and is known mainly for her novels and poetry. She became a major part of the literary society in Dublin and was a correspondent of, and friendly with, Gerard Manley Hopkins, W B Yeats and, later, Francis Ledwidge. She is reputed to have written over one hundred novels and five autobiographical volumes. Her *Collected Poems* was published in 1930.

The poem *Farewell* is No.141 in this collection, and it is this poem which Keel sets as his song *Remembrance*.

9. Dream Song

Christian Victor Noel Hope Hely-Hutchinson (1901-1947) was born in Cape Town and educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford. He was a musical prodigy and, aged five, could play piano reductions of orchestral pieces and transpose at sight into any key.

Hely-Hutchinson was sent to study counterpoint with Sir Donald Tovey and developed his compositional skills by setting advertising copy to music. At thirteen he had written a symphony and a mass (in memory of his father), and had played as soloist in a Mozart piano concerto with the London Symphony Orchestra. By his mid-teens, Hely-Hutchinson was a renowned keyboard virtuoso with a talent for improvisation.

He joined the BBC in 1926 as conductor, pianist and arranger and was promoted in 1933 becoming Midland Regional Director of Music. The following year he succeeded Granville Bantock as Professor of Music at Birmingham University, and in 1944 became Director of Music at the BBC succeeding Arthur Bliss.

These days he is remembered mostly for his Carol Symphony and a couple songs, but his output includes many other songs, chamber, orchestral and incidental music and arrangements. He died of pneumonia in March 1947 - the result of his choosing to save resources and not heat his office during rationing.

Walter John de la Mare (1873-1956) was born in Kent and educated at St Paul's Cathedral Choir School. He left school at the age of sixteen and, from 1890 to 1908, he worked in the accounting department of the Anglo-American Oil Company in London. His career as a writer started in 1895 with his first published story: *Kismet*. In 1908 he was awarded a government pension of £100 per annum which enabled him to concentrate on his writing. He is best known for his poetry, supernatural fiction and children's literature. His ashes were interred in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral where he had been a choirboy.

Dream Song is from: *Peacock Pie* – a book of rhymes published in 1913.

10. What shall I your true love tell?

Of his over fifty songs with piano, *What shall I your true love tell?* was amongst the last few that Bridge wrote and is dated 31st May 1919. Many of his songs are beautifully 'romantic' or 'light' in style, but not so this piece; it is, emotionally, a hard hitting song without resolution. Thompson's verses depict a maiden on her deathbed being questioned by.... we don't know who. Bridge sets the questioner in, more or less, recitative style, which allows the singer to let the words rule the music. These sections contrast with the maiden's outburst replies, which have much less liberty of rhythm and seem to be torn from her amidst shifting harmonies and chromaticism. Each verse gets a little more desperate until the final outburst - the final answer of which she is capable, and then...emptiness.

Francis Thompson (1859-1907) was an English poet and Catholic mystic. He was born in Lancashire and was expected to follow in his father's footsteps and become a doctor. He studied medicine in Manchester for eight years but finally fled to London to pursue his dream of becoming a writer. He lived on the streets of Charing Cross for three years doing menial jobs and, at this time, took opium medicinally; unfortunately, he became addicted to it. At the height of his despair he was befriended, and taken in by a local prostitute whose identity he never revealed apart from to call her 'his saviour' in some of his poetry. He finally managed to send some poetry to *Merrie England* magazine, and the editors, Wilfred and Alice Meynell, liked his work and recognized his potential. They sought him out, took him to their home and arranged for him to go to Storrington Priory for rehabilitation and recuperation. He wrote most of his poetry between 1888 and 1897 after which he wrote mostly prose. He had a good relationship with his benefactors who were the inspiration for some of his work. They arranged publication of his first volume, *Poems*, in 1893. He died of tuberculosis at the age of forty-seven.

11. Love's garden of roses

Haydn Wood (1882-1959) was born in Yorkshire and grew up on the Isle of Man. He came from a musical family and, aged fifteen, went to study at the Royal College of Music. He studied violin and piano (excelling at both) and composition with Charles Villiers Stanford. As a star violin student, he was sent to Brussels to further his studies after which he toured the world extensively with Emma Albani and her 'Concert Party'.

In 1909 Wood married Savoyard soprano Dorothy Court and, over the next decade and more, they toured the British music halls. He wrote many of his popular ballads (including *Roses of Picardy*) for her. This one song is reported to have sold so many thousands of copies of sheet music that it earned Wood a six figure sum in royalties. *Love's garden of roses* (written in 1915) didn't become popular until it was recorded by John McCormack; it then became one of the biggest hits of 1918.

Wood is best known for his one hundred and eighty published ballad style songs, but he also published over eighty orchestral pieces, most of which are in the 'British Light Music' style and still have influence on today's light music.

12. Autumn (first commercial recording)

Peter Gellhorn (1912-2004) was a German conductor, composer, pianist and teacher who settled in London and had a career which lasted until very shortly before his death. Born in Breslau to a musical family, he described his early life as being 'difficult'. He studied in Berlin under (amongst others) Franz Schreker and, by 1934 (when he completed his studies), he was already gaining a reputation as conductor, pianist and composer. Of Jewish descent, it became necessary for him to leave Germany when his name was published in *Das musikalische Juden-ABC* - friends in Europe aided his escape. In London he found work at Toynbee Hall: teaching, composing and conducting. In 1940 he was arrested as an enemy alien and interned on the Isle of Man. He was released in 1941 with the help of Ralph Vaughan Williams and, in 1947, became a naturalised citizen (changing his name from Hans Fritz to Peter). He is mostly known for his work with Sadler's Wells, Carl Rosa, the Royal Opera, Glyndebourne and the BBC, but he also taught extensively, both privately and at institutions including the National Opera Studio, Dartington, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the Royal College of Music.

Autumn comes from de la Mare's *Poems*, first published in 1906. It is a bleak poem of loss. A desolate landscape is conjured up within the first few words; a desolation which begins in nature but very quickly reveals itself as in the mind of the narrator. Gellhorn's setting conjures up the same desolation almost as immediately as does the poem. It is an unsettled accompaniment: very sparing in its use of notes, insistent and unrelenting in its rhythm, switching between twos and threes without letting us become accustomed to either and finishing on a deserted lone note – the deafening silence after the storm has vented its rage on a desolate heath.

13. If there were dreams to sell (Dream-Pedlary)

John Nicholson Ireland (1879-1962) was born in Cheshire. He was described as 'a self-critical, introspective man, haunted by memories of a sad childhood' (his mother died when he was fourteen and his father a year later).

He went to the Royal College of Music in 1893 to study piano and organ. Later, he studied composition with Charles Villiers Stanford receiving a thorough grounding in the German Classics and Romantics. Ireland also had a strong interest in the music of Debussy, Ravel and the earlier works of Bartók and Stravinsky; their influence is evident in his music and is at odds with the 'folk song style' so prevalent at that time in Britain. He subsequently became a teacher at the RCM and his pupils included Benjamin Britten (who found Ireland's teaching uninspiring) and Ernest John Moeran.

He married in 1926 but was divorced within nine months and never married again. However, in 1947, Mrs Norah Kirkby became his personal assistant and companion; she stayed with him for the rest of his life. Upon his death she destroyed a portion of his papers and correspondence before donating the remainder to the British Library.

Ireland wrote orchestral, chamber and church music, music for the organ and for films, but he is probably best known for his songs and his compositions for piano.

He set only the first two stanzas of Beddoes' five stanza poem.

Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803-1849) was an English poet, dramatist and physician who was preoccupied with the notion of death. Hoping to discover physical evidence of a spirit which survives the death of the body, Beddoes went to Germany to study medicine in 1824.

After qualifying, he wandered about Europe practising medicine, writing poetry and expounding democratic theories; the latter got him deported from Bavaria in 1833 and Zurich in 1840. After leaving Switzerland he continued with his itinerant life-style, only returning to England in 1846, before going back to Germany. At this stage his mental health was in decline; he became increasingly disturbed and committed suicide in Basel in 1849 at the age of forty-five.

Death's Jest Book, which he had been working on for some years, was finally published posthumously in 1850 and his *Collected Poems* was published in 1851.

Whilst he was criticized for his dramatic writing, his shorter pieces (including: *Dream-Pedlary*) were praised as 'masterpieces of intense feeling exquisitely expressed'.

14. Silver

Cecil Armstrong Gibbs (1889-1960) disliked the name Cecil preferring to be called Armstrong. He was raised by five maiden aunts and so obvious were his musical talents that they begged his father to allow him to receive specialist education abroad. His father, however, preferred that he should receive the 'benefits' of an English public school education! After university he became a teacher for a short while but, having met Adrian Boult, he was persuaded to attend the Royal College of Music as a mature student. He studied conducting with Boult and composition with Vaughan Williams and, later, taught at the college himself. He was very active in amateur and local music making, eventually becoming Vice-President of the National Federation of Music Festivals. He had a very busy life touring the country adjudicating festivals, conducting and composing. Known principally for his solo songs, he also wrote music for the stage, sacred pieces, three symphonies and a large amount of chamber music.

Walter de la Mare and Armstrong Gibbs

Gibbs became a school teacher after leaving university on the basis that he would have free time to do some composing. Although this was a misjudgment, he did manage to write some songs to poems by Walter de la Mare. On being asked to write something for the retirement of his school's headmaster, Gibbs approached de la Mare to write a text for the piece, and was delighted with the play *Crossings*, which de la Mare wrote for him. Thus began a lifelong friendship and association between the two. Gibbs set poems by over fifty different poets however; thirty-eight of his one hundred and fifty or so songs are to poems by de la Mare. *Silver* is from *Peacock Pie* – a book of children's rhymes published in 1913. The poem has been set twenty-three times by various composers; the setting by Gibbs is considered by some to be the definitive version. It is undoubtedly extremely atmospheric, reflecting the mood of the poem perfectly.

15. The cloths of heaven (World Premier/First Recording)

We asked Clive Pollard to set this poem for a recital based on comparative settings of texts we were giving. Clive and Trevor have worked together for many years at the City Literary Institute. Clive therefore knows Trevor's voice very well and he designed this setting with Trevor's voice in mind. Although Clive knew the poem, he had not thought of setting it. Once he agreed to try to write something for us, it came to him very quickly and the result is a beautiful, sympathetic and passionate setting.

Clive Pollard says about *The cloths of heaven* and *Go song of mine*: 'I was very pleased to write these songs for Peter and Trevor. Having worked with them for many years, and admiring their work, I knew that anything I wrote would be in safe hands. I consulted with them throughout the recording process and what they have achieved, virtually perfectly represents what I had in mind for these songs.'

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was an Irish poet, dramatist, writer, and politician. Family circumstances dictated that they live in both Dublin and London and Yeats was educated in both cities. When in Dublin, he met many of the city's artists and writers at his father's art studio.

He studied poetry from an early age and the first volume of his own verses was published in 1889.

He had a lifelong interest in mysticism, spiritualism, occultism and astrology, and he read extensively on these subjects. In 1892 he wrote: 'If I had not made magic my constant study, I could not have written a single word of my Blake book. The mystical life is the centre of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write.'

After 1900 his writings became more realistic, politicised and identifiably Irish. He was involved with the younger generation of Irish writers and was jointly responsible for the establishment of the 'Irish Literary Revival' movement.

He married Georgie Hyde-Lees in 1917 and, despite a difference of twenty-seven years in their ages, the marriage was a success.

Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923 'for his always inspired poetry, which in a highly artistic form gives expression to the spirit of a whole nation.'

The cloths of heaven or, to give it its full title: *Aedh wishes for the cloths of heaven* was published in 1899 in Yeats' third volume of poetry: *The Wind Among the Reeds*.

16. The sky above the roof

Vaughan Williams said of the voice that it 'can be made the medium of the best and deepest human emotion'. Vaughan Williams set more than eighty poems for voice and piano, describing his early songs as 'more or less simple and popular in character'. *The sky above the roof* is from 1908 - the same year as his *First String Quartet* - and the fruits of his study with Ravel are distinctly audible in both pieces. The words are a translation by Mabel Dearmer of Verlaine's poem: *Le ciel est par-dessus le toit*. She had asked RVW to do a setting of the poem for one of her plays. Although reluctant, he agreed, and we have this rather haunting, melancholic vision of what might be

considered to be time wasted or lost.

Jessie Mabel Pritchard Dearmer (1872-1915) was an English novelist, dramatist, and children's book author/illustrator. She studied with William Gorman Wills and Hubert von Herkomer.

She began contributing illustrations to publications in 1896, graduating to children's books, and illustrating her own titles in 1898 and, in 1902, she began writing for adults. She met Vaughan Williams when her husband co-edited *The English Hymnal* with him. In 1911 she founded the Morality Play Society which gave performances of some of her work. She was a committed pacifist but joined her husband in Serbia when he volunteered as chaplain to the British Red Cross. She was unfortunate enough to contract typhoid in June 1915 and she died of pneumonia a month later. Three months after her death, her younger son Christopher died at Gallipoli. His older brother, Geoffrey (the poet) survived to the age of one hundred and three.

17. Lullaby

Cyril Meir Scott (1879-1970) was born in Cheshire and displayed musical talent at an early age. Aged twelve he was sent to Dr Hoch's Konservatorium in Frankfurt to study piano with Iwan Knorr and he became a member of the Frankfurt Group – the circle of English speaking composers who studied there in the late 1890s (Balfour Gardiner, Percy Grainger, Norman O'Neill and Roger Quilter).

He was a prolific composer producing over four hundred works from symphonies and operas to chamber music and songs with piano. Considered a pioneer of British piano music, he wrote more piano music in the first fifteen years of 20th century than any other composer apart from Scriabin. He has been described as 'the father of modern British music and it is said that when Bernard Shaw tackled Elgar about the 'daring' harmonies used in his Second Symphony, Elgar replied: 'You mustn't forget, it was Cyril Scott started all that.' His work was admired by Debussy, R Strauss, Stravinsky and (his own great friend) Percy Grainger.

As with some of his colleagues, his popularity declined with the passing years and, despite the fact that he kept writing up until the last month of his life, little of his output is performed regularly today.

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894) was the youngest of four talented and artistic children born in London to Italian political exiles. She wrote romantic, devotional and children's poems, one of her most famous being the verses for the well-known carol *In the Bleak Midwinter*.

She was educated at home by her mother and father in a household that frequently had visiting Italian scholars, artists and revolutionaries.

Family life was difficult and at fourteen years old she had a nervous breakdown and suffered recurrent bouts of depression throughout her life. She and her mother became involved in the Anglo-Catholic movement and religion became a major factor in her life, even causing her to decline three marriage proposals.

Her brother Dante Gabriel used her as the model for several of his paintings.

She began writing down and dating her poems when she was about twelve years old, her first commercially

printed collection appeared when she was thirty-one. It was widely praised by critics who placed her as the foremost female poet of the day.

Lullaby, published in 1893, comes from Rossetti's *Sing-Song: Nursery Rhyme Book*. Scott's setting does not illustrate him as being the 'father of modern British music'; it is a fairly simple setting of a beautiful poem, relying on a simple rocking motion in the accompaniment. The harmony, though not experimental is very colourful with one or two beautiful twists. It is an enchanting song to which any baby could fall asleep.

18. Kashmiri Song

Amy Woodforde-Finden (1860-1919) born Amelia Rowe Ward to consular parents in Chile. On her father's death, she was brought by her mother, with her siblings, to live in London. She began writing music at an early age, showed talent, and was sent to study composition with Adolph Schloesser and Amy Horrocks. Her early works, though promising, were not received with much enthusiasm. In 1894 she married Brigade-Surgeon Woodforde-Finden who was serving in the Indian Army. They lived in India for several years and it was here that she wrote and published her most famous pieces – *The Lover in Damascus* and *Kashmiri Song*. Their success and popularity led to her gaining Boosey & Co as her publisher.

After the death of her husband in 1916, she moved back to London but only survived him by three years. She died at the piano in 1919 whilst composing.

Her songs, at best, are full of sentiment (as in the case of *Kashmiri Song*), or are noted for their sentimentality; either way, they possess a romantic fluidity and, however formulaic one might find them, the 'sounds of the east' which she creates, transport the audience to a world of the exotic. Her music was used in several films including Mary Pickford's 1916 film *Less than the dust*.

Laurence Hope was the writing pseudonym of Adela Florence Nicholson (1865-1904) who, in the early 1900s became known as Violet Nicholson. Born Adela Cory in Gloucestershire, she was raised by relatives (her father being employed in the British Army in Lahore). In 1881, she left to join him in India (he was editor of a Gazette in Lahore and probably gave Rudyard Kipling his first employment as a journalist).

In India, Adela married Colonel Malcolm Hassels Nicholson. He was somewhat older than her and was an unconventional colonial; he was a talented linguist and introduced Adela to his love of India, her native customs and food. On an expedition to the Zhob Valley in 1890, Adela followed her husband through the passes of the Afghan border disguised as a Pathan boy - little wonder that the couple gained a reputation for being eccentric. They lived in Mhow from 1895 until 1900 where he died following an operation. She had been prone to depression all her life and committed suicide in Madras in 1904.

Her poems often used imagery and symbols from the North-West Frontier of India and the poets of Persia. She was a popular romantic poet of the Edwardian era and her poems are typically about unrequited love; many have an air of autobiography or confession.

19. I arise from dreams of thee

Quilter's setting of this song started life as a composition for tenor and orchestra (Opus 29) and was first performed at the Harrogate Festival in 1929. It is subtitled: *Serenade*. The voice and piano version was published in 1931. It is an extended song, much longer than most of Quilter's others, and is both wildly passionate and intimate; from stillness, to sensuously shifting impressionistic harmonies, and passionate outbursts, it is full of beautiful detail.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), born in Sussex, was one of the major English Romantic poets. A radical in his poetry as well as in his political and social views, Shelley did not achieve fame during his lifetime. This came after his death when he became an important influence on later poets. Shelley also wrote prose fiction and essays on political, social, and philosophical issues. Much of his work was not published in his lifetime, or only published in diluted form because of its controversial and provocative nature.

Despite a happy early childhood, his education was marred by his being bullied and by his expulsion from Oxford University. His life was marked by family crises, ill health, infidelity, debt, as well as criticism of his atheism, political views and defiance of social conventions. He went into permanent self-exile in Italy in 1818 and, over the next four years, produced some of his finest work. At the age of twenty-nine he died in a boating accident off the coast of Italy.

I arise from dreams of thee or *The Indian Serenade* is a dream-like lyrical love poem told from the perspective of a desperate lover. It was first published in 1822 as: *Song written for an Indian Air*, having been written for Sophia Stacey when she visited Shelley in Florence in 1819. Sophia was a good singer and asked Shelley to write some words to fit tunes she liked. He wrote *To Sophia*, *Love's Philosophy*, *The Indian Serenade*, and *To*, for her. Shelley considered these writings to be mere trifles and, although considered by some to be among his weakest poems, they contain a great deal of charm and appeal.

20. Journey's End

A large part of Bridge's reputation relies on the fact that he taught composition to Benjamin Britten. It is thought that Britten became almost like an adopted son to Bridge, certainly their relationship was close. Bridge's teaching style was unconventional and seems not to have focused on exhaustive technical training but more on aesthetic issues, writing idiomatically and with clarity. Britten spoke very highly of Bridge but, even well into his career, he still felt that he hadn't 'come up to the technical standards' that Bridge had required of him.

Humbert Wolfe (1885-1940) was an Italian-born, British poet and civil servant. From a Jewish family background, he converted to Christianity but never lost awareness of his Jewish heritage. He was brought up in Bradford, and was a pupil at Bradford Grammar School before attending Wadham College, Oxford.

Wolfe began publishing poetry in the 1920s and became very popular. He also translated works by European writers such as Heinrich Heine, Edmond Fleg (a Jewish/French writer) and the Hungarian Eugene Heltai (poet,

author and journalist). On the death of Robert Bridges in 1930, Wolfe was one of the favourites to become Poet Laureate.

Wolfe made his career in the Civil Service, beginning in the Board of Trade and later in the Ministry of Labour achieving a position of high responsibility by the end of his career. On the outbreak of the Second World War, Wolfe was one of those responsible for drawing up a list of writers who could better serve as propagandists than in the Armed Forces. He died on his fifty-fifth birthday.

Journey's End is a poem from Wolfe's: *The Unknown Goddess* published in 1925. Bridge's setting of the poem is from 1925 and was his last song for voice and piano. The music is barely tonal and was written at a time when Bridge had expressed the wish to 'push his music forward'.

It is a conversation between a father and his dead son. It is not a pleasant conversation for the father, as the son hasn't yet accepted that he has 'passed over'. Bridge depicts the son with an air of tranquil inquisition. As a good parent, and in order that the final realization will be a gentle transition, the father seeks to reassure his son. As he fails in his quest, the father's music winds up until desperation point is reached and all his pent up anguish is released in his final, brutal outburst: 'Son, you are not called when journey's done'.

Encore: How could I ever know (from *The Secret Garden*)

Lucy Elizabeth Simon (1940-2022), born in New York City, was an American composer of popular songs and musicals. She had an older sister, Joanna, who was an opera singer, and a younger sister, Carly, with whom she began her professional career (singing folk tunes) as 'The Simon Sisters'. She and her husband, David Lavine, won Grammy Awards in 1981 and 1983 for their recordings for children, and she was nominated for a Tony and Grammy Award for the musical *The Secret Garden* – based on Frances Hodgson Burnett's book of the same name. The musical premiered on Broadway in 1991 and ran for over seven hundred performances. Among her other shows are: *Doctor Zhivago* and *A...My name is Alice*. Simon died on October 20th 2022, aged eighty-two, at her home in Piermont, NY, just one day after the death of her sister Joanna.

Marsha Norman (b.1947) was born in Louisville, Kentucky. She is an American playwright, screenwriter and novelist. In her early career she taught young children and adolescents in mental institutions and hospitals. She also worked as a journalist for The Louisville Times newspaper and wrote for Kentucky Educational Television. In 1983 she won a Pulitzer Prize for Drama. She wrote the book and lyrics for *The Secret Garden* (for which she won a Tony Award and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Book of a Musical), *The Red Shoes*, the libretto for the musical *The Color Purple* and the book for the musical *The Bridges of Madison County*. Norman has served on the faculty of the Juilliard School as Co-Director of the American Playwrights Program, she was also Vice-President of the Dramatists Guild of America, and was honored at the 2011 William Inge Festival for Distinguished Achievement in the American Theatre.

The Musicians

Trevor Alexander, baritone

Trevor Alexander has enjoyed singing since he was very young. He trained and worked as a graphic artist, in the days when it was all done by hand. Aged seventeen he started taking singing lessons with Phyllis Pescod and, later, Soo Bee Lee. He gained a place to study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and thinks the best thing about his studies there was the work he did with the renowned English song scholar: Michael Pilkington. Since graduating Trevor has had an interesting and varied career, touring in opera, musicals, concert and oratorio, and even singing all of the male parts in Tom Lehrer's: *Tomfoolery* (but not at the same time!). He has sung with: the Royal Opera, English National Opera, D'Oyly Carte and the Royal Shakespeare Company and toured all over the Middle and Far East. He created the roles of George Bateson in *Promised Land* and Agnes Leadbetter in *Kentish Tales* (a role written especially for him) for the Canterbury Festival and went on to another role written especially for him – Hughes in *Sorbet! Sorbet!* at WEM07 Festival in Provence. He furthered his studies with Gerald Wragg, Jeff Talbot and Peter Gellhorn and feels privileged that he was asked to be a soloist in many of Peter's oratorio performances. English song has been one of the mainstays of his career and he is thrilled to pass on his knowledge and experience to his students at The City Literary Institute.

Peter Crockford, piano

Peter Crockford studied piano at the Birmingham School of Music (now the Royal Conservatoire) and then won a scholarship to study piano accompaniment at the Royal Northern College of Music. Most of his career has been spent working with singers both in opera and on the concert platform. He has been fortunate enough to travel over much of the world playing, conducting and coaching and feels he has hit both the heights and depths that this world can afford – recitals and concerts at the top of the world in Kathmandu and accompanying Janine Roebuck at the bottom of the world on a cruise through Antarctica! He has had two teachers who have had a particularly fundamental effect on his music making:- Peter Gellhorn and George Hurst. These two were exacting in their demands, without ego regarding the music, and imparted the sort of knowledge which is, unfortunately, not so readily available these days. There are many wonderful things that happen to performers during their career and among his own personal favourites (apart from the above) are: conducting the European Tour of West Side Story, being assistant to the General Music Director at the Stadt Theater, Freiburg, the many tours as Musical Director for operas and concerts all over the Middle and Far East, and, probably, most of all, working with the young performers of the National Youth Music Theatre and several extremely talented amateur groups. His ethos when working is to help the performer or student achieve their potential, awaken them to the joy of sharing music and above all to have humility in the face of any work being studied or performed.

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Dedication

In memory of our fathers, John Alexander and John Crockford, who were both enthusiastic supporters of this project.