

Composing a musical life – A Pasticcio for voice and piano

1. Cécile Chaminade: *Mélodies* – Ma première lettre

Hélas! que nous oublions vite
J'y songeais hier en trouvant
Une petite lettre écrite
Lorsque je n'étais qu'une enfant.

Je lus jusqu'à la signature
Sans ressentir le moindre émoi,
Sans reconnaître l'écriture,
Et sans voir qu'elle était de moi.

En vain je voulus la relire,
Me rappeler, faire un effort . . .
J'ai pu penser cela, l'écrire,
Mais le souvenir en est mort!

Ô la pauvre naïve lettre,
Ecrive encor si gauchement . . .
Mais j'y songe, c'était peut-être
Ma première, un événement!

Jadis à ma mère ravie
Je l'ai montrée en triomphant.
Est-il possible qu'on oublie
Sa première lettre d'enfant!

Et puis le temps vient où l'on aime,
Et l'on écrit . . . et puis un jour,
Un jour on l'oubliera de même,
Sa première lettre d'amour!

Alas! How quickly we forget
That struck me yesterday, finding
A short letter written
When I was just a little girl.

I read as far as the signature
Without feeling the slightest commotion,
Without recognizing the hand
And without seeing that I had penned it.

In vain I tried to re-read it,
To remember, to rack my brains . . .
I'd been able to think and write those thoughts,
But the memory of them had died!

Oh the poor, naïve letter,
So clumsily written . . .
Yet, when I think of it, it was perhaps
My first, an important event!

Years ago I showed it triumphantly
To my delighted mother.
Can it be one forgets
The first letter one wrote as a child!

And then you fall in love
And you write . . . and then one day,
One day you will forget that too,
Your first love letter!

2. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *C Minor Mass* – Laudamus te

Laudamus te
Adoramus te
Benedicimus te
Glorificamus te

We praise you
We adore you
We worship you
We glorify you

3. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *K. 598* – Das Kinderspiel

Wir Kinder, wir schmecken
Der Freuden recht viel,
Wir schäkern und necken,
Versteht sich im Spiel;
Wir lärmern und singen
Und rennen rundum,

We children, we have a taste
For pleasure, we really like it,
We mess about and tease people,
When we are playing, needless to say;
We make a noise and we sing
And we run around,

Und hüpfen und springen
Im Grase herum.

And hop and jump
About in the grass.

Warum nicht? - Zum Murren
Ist's Zeit noch genug!
Wer wollte wohl knurren,
Der wär' ja nicht klug.
Wie lustig steh'n dorten
Die Saat und das Gras!
Beschreiben mit Worten
Kann keiner wohl das.

Why not? - Grumbling?
There will be enough time for that later!
Anybody who wanted to moan
Would not be very clever.
What fun there is out there
With the corn and the grass!
Describe it with words?
Nobody can ever do that.

Ha, Brüderchen, rennet
Und wälzt euch im Gras!
Noch ist's uns vergönnet,
Noch kleidet uns das!
Ach, werden wir älter,
So schickt's sich nicht mehr,
Dann treten wir kälter
Und steifer einher.

Hey, little brothers, run
And roll around in the grass!
We are still allowed to do that,
It is something that is still suitable for us to do!
Oh, when we are older
It will no longer be appropriate,
By then we will have a colder,
More rigid bearing.

Ach, geht sie schon unter,
Die Sonne, so früh?
Wir sind ja noch munter,
Ach, Sonne verzieh'!
Nun morgen, ihr Brüder,
Schlaft wohl, gute Nacht!
Ja, morgen wird wieder
Gespielt und gelacht.

Oh, is it going down already,
Is the sun setting so early?
But we are still up and about,
Oh sun, forgive us!
So, see you tomorrow brothers,
Sleep well, good night!
Yes, tomorrow we will again
Play and laugh.

4. Amy Beach: 3 *Browning songs*, Op. 44 – The Year's at the Spring

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearl'd;

The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world

5. Jan Sibelius – Op. 37 no 4 - Var det en dröm

Var det en dröm, att ljuvt en gång
jag var ditt hjärtas vän?
Jag minns det som en tystnad sång,
då strängen darrar än.

Was it a dream, that once upon a blissful time
I was your heart's friend?
I remember it like a silent song
Whose melody still lingers on.

Jag minns en törnros av dig skänkt,
en blick så blyg och öm;
jag minns en avskedstår, som blänkt.
Var allt, var allt en dröm?

I remember you gave me a rose
With a look so shy and tender,
I remember the glistening of a parting tear.
Was it all just a dream?

En dröm lik sippans liv så kort
uti en vågrön ängd,
vars fågring hastigt vissnar bort
för nya blommors mängd.

Men mången natt jag hör en röst
vid bittra tårars ström:
göm djupt dess minne i ditt bröst,
det var din bästa dröm!

A dream like a wildflower's life,
So brief in the verdant meadow,
Whose beauty quickly withers away
Within an ocean of new flowers

But on many a night I hear a voice
Through a stream of bitter tears.
Hide this memory deep in your heart
For this was your best dream.

6. Jan Sibelius: *Op. 37 no. 5 – Flickan Kom Ifrån Sin Älsklings Möte*

Flickan kom ifrån sin älsklings möte,
kom med röda händer. Modern sade:
"Varav rodna dina händer, flicka?"
Flickan sade: "Jag har plockat rosor
och på törnen stungit mina händer."

Åter kom hon från sin älsklings möte,
kom med röda läppar. Modern sade:
"Varav rodna dina läppar, flicka?"
Flickan sade: "Jag har ätit hallon
och med saften målat mina läppar."

Åter kom hon från sin älsklings möte,
kom med bleka kinder. Modern sade:
"Varav blekna dina kinder, flicka?"
Flickan sade: "Red en grav, o moder!
Göm mig där och ställ ett kors däröver,
och på korset rista, som jag säger:

En gång kom hon hem med röda händer,
ty de rodnat mellan älskarns händer.
En gång kom hon hem med röda läppar,
ty de rodnat under älskarns läppar.
Senast kom hon hem med bleka kinder,
ty de bleknat genom älskarns otro."

The maiden came from her lover's tryst,
Came with red hands. The mother said:
"Whence redden your hands, maiden?"
The maiden said: "I have picked roses
And stung my hands on the thorns."

Again she came from her lover's tryst,
Came with red lips. The Mother said:
"Whence redden your lips, maiden?"
The maiden said: "I have eaten raspberries
And with the juices painted my lips."

Again she came from her lover's tryst,
Came with pale cheeks. Her mother said:
"Whence pale your cheeks, maiden?"
The maiden said: "Make me a grave, o mother!
Hide me there and put a cross on top,
And on the cross carve, what I say:

Once she came home with red hands,
As they had reddened between her lover's hands.
Once she came home with red lips,
Since they reddened under her lover's lips.
Lastly she came home with pale cheeks,
Since they had paled with her lover's
unfaithfulness.

7. Reynaldo Hahn: *Venezia – La Barchetta*

La note è bela,
Fa presto, o Nineta,
Andemo in barcheta
I freschi a ciapar!
A Toni g'ho dito
Ch'el felze el ne cava
Per goder sta bava

The night is beautiful,
Hurry, oh little Nina,
Let us go in [a] little boat
To take the fresh air!
I told Toni
To row to the cave
To enjoy this breeze

Che supia dal mar. Ah!

Che gusto contarsela
Soleti in laguna,
E al chiaro de luna
Sentirse a vogar!
Ti pol de la ventola
Far senza, o mia cara,
Chè zefiri a gara
Te vol sventolar. Ah!

Se gh'è tra de lori
Chi troppo indiscreto
Volessa da pèto
El velo strapar,
No bada a ste frotole,
Soleti za semo
E Toni el so' remo
Lè a tento a menar. Ah!

8. Sebastian Yradier – El Arreglito

Chit... ¿Eh? ¿Ven? ¿Por qué?
Chinita mía ven por aquí
que tú ya sabes que muero por ti.
No voy allí porque
no tengo confianza en ti.

¿Qué, sí?
Que no.
Si tú me quieres
dilo quedito y en seguidita
seré tu arreglito y enamorados
sin abusar una dancita vamos a bailar.

Vidita mía, mi dulce amor,
te estoy queriendo,
con tanto ardor
que el alma mía con ilusión
por ti se abrasa, paloma mía,
por ti palpita mi corazón.
Si tú me dieras, niña preciosa,
cara de rosa, tu corazón
mil y mil veces te adoraría.
Te pediría, sí, sí, en santa unión.

Si tú me juras serás constante
y que a mí sola adorarás.
Cuenta conmigo, tierno Pepito,
yo te lo juro que tu arreglito

Which blows from the sea. Ah!

What pleasure to recount it
Alone in the lagoon,
And by the light of the moon
To hear him row!
You can do without a fan
Oh my dear,
Since the zephyrs
Want to fan you. Ah!

If there is among them
One, too indiscreet,
Who wishes from your breast
The veil to uncover,
Do not heed these tall tales,
We are alone
And Toni has his oar
To guide us carefully. Ah!

Shhh... Huh? See? Why?
My little girl, come this way as you know I'm dying
for you.
I'm not going there because
I don't trust you.

Yes (you do)?
No (I don't).
If you love me,
say it softly and right away
I'll be your little arrangement, and we'll be in love
without exaggerating, we'll dance a little dance.

My little life, my sweet love,
I am loving you,
with such ardor
that my soul burns with longing
for you, my dove,
for you my heart beats.
If you would give me, precious girl,
rose-like face, your heart
I would adore you a thousand times.
I would ask you, yes, yes, in holy union.

If you swear to me you will be faithful
and that you will adore me alone.
Count on me, sweet Pepito,
I swear that your little arrangement

por ningún caso te faltará.

En ese caso, prenda, querida,
bien de mi vida, dame tu amor.
Yo te lo juro,
seré constante y te querré,
sí, con gran furor.
¡Ay! que feliz momento, ¡ay!
No lo olvidaré, ay,
quíereme, paloma,
que yo te juro amor y fe.

will never fail you.

In that case, darling, my dear,
my love, give me your love.
I swear,
I will be faithful and I will love you,
yes, with great passion.
Oh! What a happy moment, oh!
I will never forget it, oh,
love me, my dove,
for I swear my love and faith to you.

9. Xavier Montsalvage: *Cinco Canciones Negras, no. 4 – Canción de cuna*

Ninghe, ninghe, ninghe,
tan chiquitito,
el negrito
que no quiere dormir.

Cabeza de coco,
grano de café,
con lindas motitas,
con ojos grandotes
como dos ventanas
que miran al mar.

Cierra los ojitos,
negrito asustado;
el mandinga blanco
te puede comer.
¡Ya no eres esclavo!

Y si duermes mucho,
el señor de casa
promete comprar
traje con botones
para ser un 'groom'.

Ninghe, ninghe, ninghe,
duérmete, negrito,
cabeza de coco,
grano de café.

Lullay, lullay, lullay,
tiny little child,
little black boy,
who won't go to sleep.

Head like a coconut,
head like a coffee bean,
with pretty freckles
and wide eyes
like two windows
looking out to sea.

Close your tiny eyes,
frightened little boy,
or the white devil
will eat you up.
You're no longer a slave!

And if you sleep soundly,
the master of the house
promises to buy
a suit with buttons
to make you a 'groom'.

Lullay, lullay, lullay,
sleep, little black boy,
head like a coconut,
head like a coffee bean.

10. Benjamin Britten: *A charm of lullabies – A charm*

Quiet!
Sleep! or I will make
Erinnys whip thee with a snake,
And cruel Rhadamanthus take

Quiet!
Sleep! or thou shalt see
The horrid hags of Tartary,
Whose tresses ugly serpents be,

Thy body to the boiling lake,
Where fire and brimstones never slake;
Thy heart shall burn, thy head shall ache,
And ev'ry joint about thee quake;
And therefor dare not yet to wake!
Quiet, sleep!
Quiet, sleep! Quiet!

And Cerberus shall bark at thee,
And all the Furies that are three
The worst is called Tisiphone,
Shall lash thee to eternity;
And therefor sleep thou peacefully
Quiet, sleep!
Quiet, sleep! Quiet!

11. Antonin Dvorak: *Ciganske Melodie Op.55* – A les je tichý kolem kol

A les je tichý kolem kol,
jen srdce mír ten ruší,
a černý kouř, jenž spěchá v dol,
mé slze v lících, mé slze suší.

All around the woods are so still and silent,
My heart beats so fearfully;
The black smoke sinks ever deeper
And dries the tears on my cheek.

Však nemusí jich usušit,
necht' v jiné tváře bije.
Kdo v smutku může zazpívat,
ten nezhyne, ten žije, ten žije!

Ah, my tears do not dry,
You must seek out other cheeks!
He who can praise his pain in song,
Will not curse death.

12. Antonin Dvorak: *Ciganske Melodie Op.55* – Když mne stará matka

Když mne stará matka zpívat, zpívat učívala,
podivno, že často, často slzívala.
A teď také pláčem snědé líce mučím,
když cigánské děti hrát a zpívat učím!

When my old mother taught me songs to sing,
Tears would well strangely in her eyes.
Now my brown cheeks are wet with tears,
When I teach the children how to sing and
play!

13. Felicia Donceanu: *Mărgele* – Bălci in Aldebaran

Hai mărgele! Ia mărgele!
Cerul meu e plin de ele.
Giuvaere, cruci, podoabe,
Cate trei si patru boabe,
Cu scantei mai tari, mai slabe.

Come on, beads! Get the beads!
My sky is full of them.
Jewels, crosses, ornaments,
Three and four grains each,
With stronger, weaker sparks.

Vand si un margaritar,
Cinci ocale la cantar.
Dar pacat de greutate,
Ca scade la jumatate
Si pierde cate-o catime
De crampei din ingustime.

I'm selling a pearl too,
Five ounces on the scale.
But a shame about the weight,
Because it drops by half
And loses a pound each
From the cramps of the narrowness.

Vineri seara, la lucarne,
O sa-l am cu doua coarne.
Dar aduce si noroc,
Ca se face iar la loc...

Friday evening, at the dormer,
I'll have it with two horns.
But it also brings luck,
Because it's made again...

Toata noaptea tiu deschis:
Vand pe dragoste si vis
Si numai pe datorie.
Plata de Sfanta Marie,
Ori la un soroc, stiu eu?
Cand o vrea si Dumnezeu.

Ia numai un pumn si du-te;
Intr-o palma tii opt sute.
Daca merge bine treaba
Dau si Carul mic degeaba.

Cand lumina se aciua,
In oblon se face ziua.
Incui usa pe la clanta
Si strang bolta-n taraboanta
Si o car tiptil acasa:
Zorile sa nu ma vaza,
Vantul sa nu ma miroasa.
Azi, mi-a mai ramas o stea.
Fetelor, care o ia?

I'm open all night:
I'm selling for love and a dream
And only for debt.
Saint Mary's payment,
Or for a term, I know?
When God wants it.

Just take a handful and go;
In one palm you can hold eight hundred.
If the job goes well
I'll give the Little Chariot for free.

When the light comes on,
In the shutter it's day.
I close the door with the handle
And I close the door with a bang
And go home in a whisper:
May the dawn not see me,
May the wind not smell me.
Today, I have one star left.
Girls, who will take it?

14. George Enescu: 3 *Mélodies*, Op.4 – Le Desert

Je rêve le front lourd et les yeux las, devant
Les ondulations de ces dunes stériles,
Mer fauve, mer ardente aux vagues
immobiles,
Sur qui tombe le poids d'un soleil étouffant;

Et je me sens si loin de tout être vivant,
Et du bruit fraternel des hommes et des villes,
Si loin des ruisseaux clairs, des champs, des
fleurs fragiles,
Et des feuillages frais où murmure le vent,

Que je me crois perdu dans une autre planète
Où, sans que rien se meuve et sans que rien
végète,
Seul flambe tristement le monde minéral;

Et que cet infini de lumière et de sable,
Cette absence de vie à la mienne semblable,
Cette immensité jaune et morte me fait mal.

I dream with a heavy brow and weary eyes, before
The undulations of these sterile dunes,
A tawny sea, a burning sea with motionless waves,
Upon which falls the weight of a stifling sun;

And I feel so far from every living being,
And from the fraternal noise of men and cities,
So far from clear streams, fields, fragile flowers,
And fresh foliage where the wind murmurs,

That I believe myself lost on another planet
Where, with nothing moving and nothing
growing,
Only the mineral world sadly blazes;

And this infinity of light and sand,
This absence of life similar to mine,
This yellow and dead immensity pains me.

15. Sergei Rachmaninoff: *Op.14 no.8* – O mne grusti

О, не грусти по мне!
Я там, где нет страданий
Забудь былых скорбей мучительные сны.
Пусть будут обо мне твои воспоминанья
Светлей, чем первый день весны.

О, не тоскуй по мне!
Меж нами нет разлуки,
Я так же, как и встарь, душе твоей близка.
Меня по-прежнему твои волнуют муки,
Меня гнетет твоя тоска.

Живи! Ты должен жить!
И если силой чуда
Ты здесь найдёшь отраду и покой,
То знай, что это я
Откликнулась оттуда
На зов души твоей больной.

Oh do not grief for me!
For I am where there is no suffering
Forget the former sorrows and torturous dreams.
Let your memories of me be
Lighter than the first day of spring.

Oh do not pine for me!
There is no separation for us,
I am, as ever, close to your soul.
I am still touched by your griefs,
And still saddened by your sorrow.

Live! You must live!
And if by a miracle
You find here joy and peace,
Then know that it was me
Answering from another world
The call of your pained heart.

16. Sergei Rachmaninoff: *Op. 34 no. 14* – Vocalise

Translations: Richard Stokes, Malcolm Wren, Jacqueline Cockburn, Garret Medlock, Maria Forsström, David McCleery