

PROGRAMME for APRIL 12, 2018

Sieben frühe Lieder

Alban Berg
(1885-1935)

Nacht
Schilflied
Die Nachtigall
Traumgekrönt
Im Zimmer
Liebesode
Sommertage

Selections from the Italienisches Liederbuch

Hugo Wolf
(1880-1903)

O wär dein Haus durchsichtig
Gesegnet sei das Grün
Heut' Nacht erhob ich mich
Mein Liebster singt am Haus
Mein Liebster ist so klein
Nein, junger Herr
Mein Liebster hat zu Tische mich geladen
Wie lange schon
Du denkst mit einem Fädchen mich zu fangen
Wer rief dich denn?
Schweig einmal still
Ich hab in Penna einen Liebsten

INTERMISSION

Seis canciones castellanas

Jesús Guridi
(1886-1961)

Allá arriba, en aquella montaña
¡Serenos!
Llámale con el pañuelo
No quiero tus avellanas
¡Cómo quieres que adivine!
Mañanita de San Juan

Abril
Maig

Eduard Toldrà
(1895-1962)

Tu pupila es azul

Joaquín Turina
(1882-1949)

When, in the early part of the 20th century, Schoenberg undertook to completely remake the language of classical music, he did so not in a tearing down iconoclastic spirit, but rather in a gradually evolving way, with the belief that this was driven by forces within the music itself. His teaching of composition reflected this and he insisted that students should first be grounded thoroughly in the language of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner from which he saw his own evolving naturally, and he used this approach with Alban Berg. Berg began his studies with Schoenberg in 1904 and continued until 1911, but it was only from 1907 that the older composer regarded him as a composition student. Nevertheless, during the preparatory period in which they were concentrating on fundamental harmony and counterpoint Berg was encouraged to continue writing songs "for amusement". The *Seven Early Songs* mostly belong to this period. Although they weren't part of Schoenberg's formal instruction, he must have known some of them since he included *Die Nachtigall*, in a 1907 concert of music by his pupils. For Anthony Pople these songs "which respond in their momentary musical gestures to the inflections of the texts...[show] that innate strength of purpose that Schoenberg saw even in Berg's untutored work."

The Italian Songbook, forty-six songs composed in two phases between September 1890 and December 1891 and then in the spring of 1896, was Hugo Wolf's last great creative outburst before his decline into depression and insanity. In Paul Heyse's collection of translations of Italian poems, he was attracted by the playful lightness, the wit, and the Southern love of life. From Heyse's texts, Wolf mostly chose the "rispetti," short Tuscan love-poems, drawing musical portraits which reflect the moods and feelings – highs and lows, squabbles and joys – arising between lovers. These miniatures, precise, greatly contrasted, diversely coloured, display Wolf's masterly art of characterization in song.

Springing from its often tumultuous history, Spain has a rich and varied repertoire of folk music. This has been quarried both by Spanish composers, aiming to forge a national or regional identity, and by non-Spanish composers hoping to create a general feeling of exoticism and otherness in their music. The three composers on today's programme belong in the first group. The Basque composer, Jesús Guridi was born in 1886 and studied first in Bilbao and later in Paris, Liège, and Cologne. When he returned to Bilbao he earned his living as an organist and composed extensively for the church and large choral societies and also had considerable success with works for the theatre and the concert stage. The *Seis canciones castellanas* were published in 1941 and consist of popular Castilian melodies that Guridi supplied with imaginative and evocative accompaniments. Joaquín Turina, the oldest of the three composers was born in Seville in 1882, and studied in Madrid and later in Paris where he became part of a circle that included Falla and Albéniz. While in Paris, the three Spaniards often discussed the state of Spanish music and Turina especially was encouraged to seek inspiration in the heritage of his home country: "I suffered the most complete metamorphosis in my life ... We three Spaniards ... had to make great efforts for national music and for Spain." The *Tres poemas* were published in 1933 and are settings of poems by the important nineteenth-century Spanish poet and playwright who wrote under the name Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer.

John Mayo