

2. Spleen

The mood could not be more contrasting: The roses are too red, the ivy too black: Any movement of my lover makes me anxious, I'm afraid he will flee from me.

I am so tired of it all: the holly tree and the boxwood – and everything in this rural landscape – but alas: I am not tired of him.

Two songs by Debussy, published posthumously:

L'apparition (lyrics by Stéphane Mallarmé)

I saw angels crying in the white of the moonlight – it is the day I received my first kiss from you. My thoughts torment me, though I feel intoxicated by the perfume of sadness.

I was walking down the street, sun in my hair, when you appeared to me, laughing – I thought I had encountered the fairy from the dreams of my spoilt childhood, who would drop white bouquets of scented stars out of her carelessly closed hand.

Pierrot (lyrics by Théodore Faullin de Banville)

This poem is a homage to the famous mime Jean Gaspard Debureau (1796-1846).

After his latest performance, Debureau is walking down the Boulevard du Temple, is teased by a little girl – but the moon, in the sign of the Taurus, casts a winking eye to his old friend.

INTERVAL

Richard Strauss 1864-1949 – as selection of songs for high voice and piano

The songs we have selected out of a vast number of compositions for voice and piano

-Richard Strauss was married to the soprano Pauline De Anna and also composed several operas – show variety of style of composition, all full of the rich and amazing harmonic language that marks his music.

The songs below were composed at different times- so the order is our choice, designed to make up a little story from the moment of early love to the bliss of a long, mature relationship, finishing off on a lively, ironical note.

Hat's gesagt, bleibt's nicht dabei (They said it, it won't be so)

**– from “Des Knaben Wunderhorn” a collection of old German songs,
published by Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano**

My father wants me to rock the baby...he has promised me three boiled eggs
from the goose. I know that, though he will boil them for me, he will also eat two
– I’m not rocking any child for just one egg!

My mother wants me to tell on the servant girls. She has promised me three
cooked birds – but I know she is going to eat two of them – and I’m not betraying
anyone for the pleasure of just one bird.

My lover asked me to think of him – he has promised me three kisses, if I do...

If he gives me three kisses, it surely won’t stop at that....!

What am I doing worrying about birds and eggs!

**Traum durch die Daemmerung (Dream through dusk) – poem by Otto
Julius Bierbaum**

I’m walking through meadows, in the grey of dusk, on my way to my beautiful
lover.

Slowly, not in a rush, I feel pulled by a soft band of velvet. I’m in the land of love,
moving into a mild, blue light.

Heimliche Aufforderung (Secret Invitation) – poem by John Henry Mackay

We are at a banquet amidst a loud and drunken crowd – but let us drink and be
merry, as I hope you will join me at the rose bush in the garden afterwards –
where we shall kiss and I’ll wind the branches of the rose into your hair.

O come, wonderful, yearned-for night!

Das Rosenband (Fetter of roses) – poem by Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock

I found him in the shade of spring, and bound him with fetters of roses – he did
not notice, but remained in slumber. I looked at him, my whole life hung with
this glance on his...I sensed it, but did not know. But I lisped to him, soundlessly,
rustling the fetters of roses – he woke up from his slumber. He looked at me, his
whole life hung with this glance on mine – and around us, around us- it was
Elysium.

Glückes genug (Enough bliss) – poem by Detlev von Liliencron

When you slept, softly, in my arms – I heard your breath – you called my name in
your dream, smiling – enough bliss.

And when, on a hot, serious day, you cast away (my) deep worries – when I
would lay in your embrace and forgot all about tomorrow – enough bliss.

Nichts! (Nothing!)- poem by Hermann von Gilm

You ask me, who I would deem to be the queen of song? Fools that you are, I
know her least of all! Ask me about the colour of her eyes – ask about her gait,
her dancing, her posture: What do I know of this?

Is not the sun the source of all life, of all light? And what do I, or you, or any of us,
know about her? Nothing. Nothing!

*Thank you very much for coming tonight – and we hope you have enjoyed the
programme as much as we enjoyed preparing it.*

Refreshments will be available during the interval and after the performance.

Please turn over for some information about ourselves:

Gisela Meyer, soprano

was born in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. She studied piano and cello in Frankfurt and piano solo in Weimar. In London, she obtained a Masters in Performance (accompaniment) at the GSMD.

Gisela's subsequent work as accompanist brought her to the path of singing, and she is now studying singing privately with Jessica Cash.

Gisela is a freelance musician and teacher for piano, singing, cello and theory/aural. As accompanist she is regularly hired for concerts, exams and final recitals.

She is tutor for Chamber Ensembles, Piano and Singing at the City Lit and also works for the college as accompanist and deputy cello tutor.

Gisela performs regularly in concerts as a soloist and in ensembles, as a pianist as well as a singer.

She is most passionate about classical music- but as accompanist, enjoys playing and performing in a range of styles and has, a few years ago, collaborated with Indian composer Baluji Shrivastav in his Urdu opera "Sohini and Mahival" which was performed at the Southbank in 2015.

Gisela lives in Islington with her three children and enjoys learning languages, reading, meditating and lots of coffee...

For more information and to sign up for Gisela's concert mailing list, please visit: giselameyer.me.uk

John Human, piano

was born in Chelmsford. He studied with Phyllis Palmer in Cambridge and at the Guildhall School in London with Elisabeth Newson, and took a B.A. and M.A. at Sussex University.

John is passionate about exploring the diverse capabilities of the piano in a multitude of musical styles and improvised genres and has performed at the South Bank, National Theatre, Kings Place, The Albert Hall, National Trust properties, and for numerous music societies and festivals.

John has enjoyed examining all over the world for 20 years, initially for Guildhall, and then with Trinity College London, and has been contributing to syllabus development and giving representations.

Teaching has always been an important part of his life and John has held posts at The American Community School in Cobham and as Head of County Jazz for Herts Music Service, and currently at Haberdasher Aske's in New Cross, alongside running a busy private practice. He was also Chairman of the Croydon Performing Arts Festival from 2015-2017.

He lives in South London with his partner, Cellist Una Birtchnell and their three musical children, and loves Arsenal, red wine and walking.