



Mary HOWE

SONGS AND DUETS

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INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

MARY HOWE – FINE BUT FORGOTTEN AMERICAN COMPOSER

by Mary Dibbern

Mary Howe (4 April 1882–14 September 1964) was a renowned American concert pianist and composer. Her versatility in all genres of classical music and her keyboard performances were greeted by excellent reviews in the United States and Europe. Her family wealth allowed her to receive training in composition on both continents, where she studied and absorbed modern trends in harmonic language and style, not least in the works of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel, while also participating in the developing Neo-Classicism of her contemporaries Marion Bauer (1882–1955), Sergei Prokofiev and Igor Stravinsky. Her enormous intellectual curiosity, access to private education and the cultural milieu of a well-heeled family allowed her to absorb and distil a myriad of influences for her large opus of instrumental and vocal music: compositions for solo piano, piano duo, organ, carillon, violin, cello, flute, chamber music, chorus, ballet, chamber orchestra and full orchestra. In her settings of poems in English, French, Spanish and German – 115 solo songs and duets for voice and piano – the richness and innovation of her talent are amply displayed. This album presents 22 of them.

During her lifetime, her compositions were performed in venues ranging from private house concerts to recital halls and concerts of the National Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, the NBC and BBC orchestras, and other orchestras in the United States, Europe and South America. Her compositions were recorded by RCA, Columbia, CRI and the Washington radio station WCFM. Her music was published, among others, by G. Schirmer, Carl Fischer, Composers Press Inc., Galaxy Corporation and Oxford University Press.

Howe's son, Bruce, described her as 'of medium height and build, elegantly dressed, and a fine hostess with aristocratic manners. She was quick of wit and laughter, a woman who could get things done and be able to relax at the end of the day'.¹ Born Mary Carlisle in Richmond, Virginia, she grew up in Washington, D.C., in an epoch that discouraged socially prominent young women from performing in public. In 1959 Howe self-published *Jottings*, a book of her thoughts and memoirs, where she wrote about the social restrictions of her early days:

The life of daughters in my family and generation was hedged about by the chaperone age, and you found your freedom as best you could, within it. [...] I have thought since those days, that Washington's diplomatic corps with its European etiquette might have been why things were strict here.²

As a child of a wealthy family, she was home-schooled in history, geography and mathematics and received weekly tutoring in German and French. Her family encouraged her avid love for music by arranging for private lessons with Mlle Herminie Seron, a French piano-teacher who also taught her music-theory and sight-reading. She practised her French conversation during these lessons.

The Carlisles took frequent trips to Europe, where Mary honed her skills in French, German and Spanish and received a broad, cosmopolitan world-view that became evident in the scope and variety of her compositions. Her father, Calderon Carlisle, insisted that she accompany him to visit art galleries. She remembered that he told her mother: 'When she looks at good design without effort and insistence, it will soon be natural to her, and when she is older the significance will sink in naturally'.³ A seminal event in her life was her father's premature death in 1901 at the age of 49. She wrote that he had been 'the prop and adviser of all our family, and my own irreplaceable friend and ally. I have never ceased wanting him back or feeling the emptiness without him'.⁴ Her

¹ Bruce Howe, 'Asides', unpublished notes (Berry Hill, Newport, Rhode Island, 15 August 1990) in Dorothy Indenbaum, *Mary Howe: Composer, Pianist and Music Activist* (PhD dissertation, New York University, 1993), p. 58.

² Mary Howe, *Jottings*, privately printed, Washington, D.C., 1959, pp. 67–68.

³ Indenbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁴ Howe, *op. cit.*, p. 60.



nostalgia for her father is subtly expressed in the elegance of the quiet postlude to her 1951 song *Horses* [20], where one senses her ever-present longing to see him again.

After her father's death, Howe and her mother travelled even more frequently to Europe, where in 1904 she studied piano with the German-American pianist and composer Richard Burmeister (a former student of Franz Liszt) in Dresden. Howe described herself at that time: 'I had taken the opportunity of playing with violinists, singers, cellists, string quartets but almost always amateurs, and when I went to Dresden one spring I was a fairly versatile musician, but still an inexperienced one'. In addition to her lessons, she set aside five hours a day for piano practice, and she listened to 'opera after opera'.⁵

Her formal piano studies in the USA did not begin until 1910, when she was 28 years old. Still unmarried, she pursued her growing commitment to music by commuting to the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore to work with the Australian pianist Ernest Hutcheson (1871–1951), whom she described as 'a magnificent teacher'.⁶ She was allowed to perform at private social gatherings, both as a soloist and as an accompanist for singers and instrumentalists. She played chamber music at the Friday Morning Music Club in Washington and was even a frequent guest pianist at the White House under the Theodore Roosevelt and Taft administrations. Her favourite compositions at that time were the Lieder of Richard Strauss and Debussy's piano music. These influences can be felt in her later compositions, where she incorporated Strauss' sweeping orchestral figurations and large, flowing vocal lines in her own Lieder, such as 'Liebeslied' [6] or 'Die Götter' [13]. Debussy's harmonic boldness is often echoed in her use of dissonance, as in *L'Amant des roses* [14] or the whole-tone scales of 'Herbsttag' [8].

In 1912, she married Walter Bruce Howe (1879–1954), the law partner of her brother Mandeville Howe. Although she continued to compose piano pieces, her main musical activity was in performance. During the years that she raised three children (Bruce, Calderon and Mary), she enjoyed a long-term collaboration as a two-piano team with the pianist and composer Anne Hull (1888–1984), who had also studied at Peabody.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

From 1920 to 1935, they performed not only in private venues, but also with orchestras that included the Russian Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony and the Cleveland Orchestra. In 1920, Howe felt that there were ‘many gaps’ in her musical knowledge and education and she began a formal study of counterpoint, fugue, harmony and composition at Peabody with Gustav Strube (1867–1953) and of form and analysis with Howard Thatcher (1878–1973), graduating with an Artist Diploma in 1922.⁷ This recording includes two of these early pieces, the duet *Music When Soft Voices Die* of 1921 [2] and *Berceuse cosaque* of 1922 [2]. As she began to have these and other works performed, Howe realised that one of the benefits was ‘the warm and interesting connections with other [...] musicians, composers, performers’.⁸

By 1924, her family duties began to allow her to take the time she required to integrate her studies fully with a passion for composition. She understood that when she composed, she felt ‘I had the *right* to be there doing it, because what I worked on was *myself*.⁹ In two of the 1925 songs, *Chanson souvenir* [3] and *Reach* [4], one can hear that she was at ease setting either French or English texts; by 1931, she would use her knowledge of German language and poetry to create four settings of Rilke’s poetry in her *Vier Gedichte* [5–8]. She explained in her journal that her harmonic language had been developed over the previous twenty years when

I had been listening to every available piece of music, probably with traditionally conservative ears, but pricked forward, alert for new sensations, like a Puritan on a holiday. I have always felt that one foot was in the past and the other stepping forward into the new elements of the future. I have never known any phase of modern music that was not natural to me, and have found all phases stimulating and many enlightening.¹⁰

Many American composers took the opportunity to study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979). Howe’s contact with her was termed a ‘consultation’, since she did not have time in the 1930s for extended stays abroad. During a 1933 trip to Paris,

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 89–90.

where Howe took her daughter Molly to give her the same educational advantage of foreign travel that Howe herself had enjoyed, she met Boulanger and was able to have four sessions with her. She appreciated Boulanger's vast experience and astuteness, even though her impression was 'she finds me of no particular importance. She thinks my writing – scoring – old-fashioned'.¹¹ Howe perhaps took Boulanger's advice to heart, since in 1941 Boulanger wrote to Howe that she 'liked and valued' her music.¹²

One of the results of Howe's sojourns to Paris was her connection with its contemporary-music scene. She was impressed that the French valued their own music and that they put a premium on presenting living composers, both native and those working in Paris, as an important cultural element. She developed collegial relationships with such figures as the French composer Edgard Varèse (1883–1965) and the Polish-American violinist Roman Totenberg (1911–2012), and took advantage of performances of *Psaumes* by Lili Boulanger (1893–1918) and music by Igor Markevitch (1912–83), Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Milhaud, Berg and Florent Schmitt. After returning to the USA, she wrote an article on the Parisian music scene for the *Peabody Bulletin*, in which she explained that the United States would do well to emulate the French by presenting high-quality American music to the public, and Howe and her husband became quite influential in founding performance organisations to do exactly that. They were among the co-founders of the National Symphony Orchestra in 1931. She was a co-founder of the Chamber Music Society of Washington (later the Friends of Music of the Library of Congress) and the Society of American Women Composers. She was active in the National Federation of Music Clubs, the League of Composers and the National Association of American Composers and Conductors. Towards the end of her life, she was on the board of the National Cultural Center (later renamed the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts). Her other activities included becoming a fellow of the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, and the Huntington Hartford Foundation. Her efforts to compose and promote American music resulted in an honorary Doctor of Music degree from George Washington University in 1961.

¹¹ Letter to Anne Hull, dated 15 March 1933, quoted in Indenbaum, *op. cit.*, pp. 134–35.

¹² Nadia Boulanger to Mary Howe, dated 31 January 1941, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 135.

Complete catalogues of her works, manuscripts, writings, correspondence and reviews are today housed in The Mary Howe Papers of the New York Public Library of Performing Arts. Her life as a composer, performer and patron of music are found in 36.3 linear feet of documents dating from 1884 to 1964.

Mary Howe's stylistic characteristics

Eloquent descriptions of Howe's songs with piano accompaniment offer an indication of the importance of her contributions to the genre. The eminent critic Paul Hume wrote in *The Washington Post*: 'Richly varied and constant in beauty [...] Mary Howe's writing for voice is one of her finest accomplishments';¹³ *Musical America* described her as 'a sensitive and imaginative lyricist';¹⁴ and the New York-based *World-Telegram and The Sun* wrote that 'Mary Howe has found time to compose some of the most sensitive vocal music of the American repertory'.¹⁵

Unlike that of many composers, Howe's work is not easily divided into 'periods'. Her response is rather to illuminate the emotions and situations at hand, searching for the inner rhythms and associations found in each poem. She disavowed any allegiance to schools of composition, stating: 'If I want to use dissonance, I use dissonance. If I want to express feeling, I express feeling. I write what I want to write'.¹⁶

Her work stands apart from other American composers in her successful settings of poems in German, French and Spanish, as well as in her native tongue. She consistently received excellent reviews for her ability to wed foreign texts to appropriate music. She also wrote some of her own texts, occasionally under a variety of pseudonyms: M. Mahtrow, Marie Valeur or Maria Wert.¹⁷ The songs in English number 69, representing 46 poets, most often Elinor Wylie (1885–1928), but also better-known figures, ranging from Shakespeare and John Donne to Tennyson, Amy Lowell, G. K. Chesterton,

¹³ 'Pleasing Bill Offered by Mary Howe', *The Washington Post*, 20 March 1948, p. B8.

¹⁴ Quoted without attribution and date in 'Reviews and Comments', Howe, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

¹⁶ Quoted in Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music*, Amadeus Press, Portland (Oregon), 3rd edn., 2016, p. 197.

¹⁷ All three are derived from 'Wortham', her middle name.

Robert Frost and Walter de la Mare. Poems for Howe's French songs span the mid-nineteenth to twentieth centuries: Victor Hugo, Charles Baudelaire and Francis Vielé-Griffin (1864–1937). In her dozen or so French songs, six different poets are represented. For her songs in German, she took nine poems by Goethe and four by Rainer Maria Rilke.

This recording aims to reveal Howe's ability to create a style and atmosphere specific to each poet, whether in French, German or English. Like Wolf and Liszt, she recreates her musical style with each song, sometimes borrowing Stravinsky's jagged, curt drama for *The Ragpicker* [9], or intermingling Debussy's use of whole-tone scales with Richard Strauss' lush and climactic vocal lines in her collection *Vier Gedichte* [5–8]. She employs modern harmonic structures, often tinged with expressive chromaticism, yet based upon an intelligent understanding of traditional harmonic progressions. She selects dissonances to create dramatic effects, and occasionally creates moments of harmonic obscurity as a poetic undercurrent, as, for example, with Rilke's complex poetry. She also chooses shifting metres or rhythmic variations subtly to reflect the textual accents in each poem.

Howe's ability to set each poem in a uniquely appropriate musical style was assessed in a 1939 article by Ray C. B. Brown, in which he stated:

Mrs. Howe has a remarkable talent in lyric style. In the sense of mannerism, she has no style, but in the sense of inter-relation between form and content she is a stylist of indubitable sensitiveness and acumen. She does not bend the text to the melodic line or use any of the stratagems of emotional appeal. [...] Her music grows out of the text and exists with it in artistic symbiosis.¹⁸

The piano-writing of Howe's songs displays her skill as a performer, which allowed her to compose true vocal chamber music, as opposed to voice with supporting accompaniment. As in the songs of Robert Schumann, her pianistic inventions are vital to the dramatic effectiveness of each song, as she interweaves melody and harmony

¹⁸ Ray C. B. Brown, 'Relation Between Content and Form Makes a Style', *The Washington Post*, 16 April 1939.

with the voice. She also uses the full range of the keyboard, creating a palette of truly orchestral colours and effects.

The body of repertoire which Mary Howe added to the literature of the solo song in America and elsewhere is substantial. The importance of the songs lies not only in the quality of the works themselves but also in the fact that they constitute a major contribution from an American female composer at a time when most recognized composition was attributed to men.¹⁹

Courtney Maina, Christopher A. Leach and I present here many first recordings of Howe's songs with piano, both solos and duets. From 1922, when she began a professional career, to 1962, two years before her death, fully half of the over 200 works she composed are for voice with piano accompaniment. Our selections are taken from seven volumes (of a total of 49) published by Galaxy in 1959, along with two unpublished duets, *Chanson de Coulennes* [10] and *Music When Soft Voices Die* [22].

The published songs, referenced by Volume number in the notes below, are titled as follows:

- Volume 1. *Seven Goethe Songs*
- Volume 2. *English Songs: Part I*
- Volume 3. *Baritone Songs*
- Volume 4. *French Songs*
- Volume 5. *German Songs*
- Volume 6. *English Songs: Part Two*
- Volume 7. *English Songs: Part Three*

The Songs and their Poets

Music When Soft Voices Die [22] is an unpublished vocal duet, setting one of Shelley's best-known poems. It is recorded here by permission of Howe's grandson, John Howe; we obtained the manuscript courtesy of the New York Public Library. There is also a

¹⁹ Sandra Clemons McClain, 'The solo vocal repertoire of Mary Carlisle Howe with stylistic and interpretive analyses of selected works', ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, Ann Arbor (Michigan), 1992, p. 212.

version for *a cappella* chorus or with soprano solo, both scored with either piano or string quartet. The introduction and postlude of this sophisticated setting are mysterious quotations from an Italian song *Se tu m'ami*, attributed to Giovanni Pergolesi (1710–36). Although her earliest known song, *Memory*, dates from 1901, this 1921 duet, composed when Howe was 39, marks the beginning of her serious commitment to composition as her life's work.

Berceuse cosaque [2] has two verses, one in French and one in English. Only the French text was recorded before now, but we have recorded both verses. Composed in 1922 and published in Galaxy Volume 4, it sets an English version of a poem translated from the Russian by Constance Purdy, with the French text provided by Mary Howe herself. She set it also for voice and string quartet. This song is among the Howe compositions first performed at her graduation recital in the Peabody Institute on 19 May 1922. It shows her familiarity with French, as well as her skill in setting both French and English versions, in that she created a melody that suited the lyrics in both languages, with accompaniment figures and harmonies that perfectly depict the image of a woman rocking her baby to sleep. Howe marked 1924 as the year she 'really started composing'²⁰.

Chanson souvenir [3] (written in 1925 and found in Galaxy Volume 4) sets a poem by Francis Vielé-Griffin. Born in the USA, Vielé-Griffin was nevertheless a leader of the French Symbolist and *vers-libre* poetry movements, along with his close friend Stéphane Mallarmé. The text is excerpted from a long poem, *La Partenza* (1899). The poet envisages the arrival of other lovers who will replace him after his departure, perhaps after his death, which the poem compares to an autumn journey. Howe sets three of its verses with bittersweet emotions, questioning memories of a past love.

Reach [4] (from 1925, in Galaxy Volume 3) sets a poem by Cecilia Lynch. This song is reminiscent of the Neo-Romantic style of Howe's friend and mentor, the American composer Amy Cheney Beach (1867–1944), who was a major force in American musical life both as composer and as concert pianist. Although women were only gradually

²⁰ Howe, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

allowed full participation in professional music performance and composition, those living in New England, including Beach and Howe, were better positioned to gain recognition. Beach recommended Howe for summer fellowships at the MacDowell Colony, where composers and authors were in residence for several weeks at a time, allowing them to work without distraction, all the while forming ongoing relationships with other creators. During the early 1920s through to 1947, Howe's circle came to include the composers Beach, Mabel Daniels (1878–1971) and Julia Smith (1905–89), as well as the authors Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869–1935) and William Benét (1886–1950). This early song may well have been composed during one of those retreats. Howe displays her ability to weave an orchestral texture in the piano part as it anticipates, echoes and supports a sensuously elegant vocal line.

Vier Gedichte [5]–[8] (in Galaxy Volume 5) are settings of poems by Rainer Maria Rilke. 'Der Einsame' [5], 'Liebeslied' [6] and 'Schlaflied' [7] were composed in 1931, the year when Howe seems finally to have attained confidence in her ability. She confided to her journal:

These are the mellow years. Let me not miss one minim of their quality and flavor. I am nearly fifty and this 'troublous and beautiful life' has truly spoke me fair. [...] the sum of what people achieve is only [as] precious as the true accounting of what they are – not measured in tangible terms. Character, courage, generosity in them – an eager facing of life.²¹

Howe completed the set with 'Herbsttag' [8] in 1934. These *Vier Gedichte* should be seen as a major work of mid-twentieth-century American art-song. An example of the enthusiastic reception they enjoyed is found in Ray C. B. Brown's review:

The peak of her accomplishment in song is reached in the settings of four poems by Rainer Maria Rilke which have the authentic 'stimmung' of the German *Lied*. Here a meticulous craftsmanship has been guided by intuition straight to the musical core of the words; the structure of the songs parallels, even to the natural rhythm of the spoken verses, the

²¹ 'Foreword: 1931', in Howe, *op. cit.*

integral meaning of the poems. The difficulty of this kind of writing is appreciated only by those who have been baffled and defeated by its subtleties.²²

The poem for ‘Der Einsame’ [5] is taken from Rilke’s *Der neuen Gedichte anderer Teil* of 1908. Rilke had lived in Paris for four years, working as secretary to the sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840–1917). Rodin’s increasing demands on his time and energy overwhelmed the young poet, and both their working relationship and friendship ended in 1906. Rilke remained in Paris during the summer of 1907, lonely and estranged from all of Rodin’s social circle. He lived in a disreputable, sordid hotel and suffered from intense depression when he wrote this poem, describing himself as a lonely man standing next to a tower, an outcast faced with the overwhelming presence of a god-like stone face, possibly a reference to Rodin.²³ Howe’s setting mirrors the turmoil of the poem, with tortured, chromatic chords that suddenly dissolve into raging arpeggios. Her continual use of syncopation with short, surging phrases adds to the intensity.

‘Liebeslied’ [6], which also exists in an unpublished version for orchestra and solo voice, also uses a poem from Rilke’s *Der neuen Gedichte anderer Teil*. The tranquil, deeply felt emotion of this elegant and peaceful setting establishes a true dialogue between piano and voice, expressing in eloquent detail the emotions of a tender love-song. This lyrical poem has attracted at least sixteen other musical settings of its original German, as well as numerous settings in translation. Leonard Bernstein (1918–90) set it in English as ‘When My Soul Touches Yours’ (1949), and more recently Lori Laitman (b. 1955) set it as ‘The Song’ in her cycle *Becoming a Redwood* (2003).

‘Schlaflied’ [7] was also set in an unpublished version, this time for string quartet and solo voice. Rilke affixed the notation ‘Paris, Frühsummer 1908’ ('early summer') to the poem. Howe’s almost peaceful piano introduction is tempered with a subtle dissonance that foreshadows the strange and conflicted emotions of the poet during the stillness of summer heat, as he watches his love sleep under the shade of a lime tree. Howe’s

²² Loc. cit.

²³ Related in Rachel Corbett, *You Must Change Your Life: The Story of Rainer Maria Rilke and Auguste Rodin*, W. W. Norton, New York, 2016, pp. 176–88.

pianistic writing incites the voice to blend with the timbres of the piano as it evolves from a gentle berceuse to the sudden arrival of a passionate embrace.

The last song of the set, ‘Herbsttag’ [8], in some documentation bears the title ‘October’ (in English). The poem is found in Rilke’s collection *Buch der Bilder* (1902–6). The expansive, dissonant chords of the piano introduction display Howe’s pianistic abilities as described by her son Bruce, who recalled that his mother’s hands were ‘big, generous, and easy, relaxed on the keys – ample and workmanlike’.²⁴ This poem may be one of the most autobiographical of the set, probably referring to Rilke’s growing frustrations with Rodin’s demands that he spend day and night keeping up with Rodin’s massive correspondence as part of his duties.²⁵ After intense frustration at what he saw as a waste of his precious creative energy, Rilke writes: ‘Herr, es ist Zeit’ (‘Lord, it is time’) – time to leave Rodin in the autumn of his life, and time for the young Rilke to walk away from the loneliness of Paris. The triumphant major tonality of the ending signals his resolve.

The Ragpicker [9] (possibly written in 1932, and published in Galaxy Volume 3) sets a poem by Frances Shaw (1872–1937), the author of several collections of poetry, including the privately printed *Ragdale Poems*, which may have included this poem. The bitter description of the old ragpicker’s hypnotic stare and the mechanical movement of her fingers as depicted by the piano contrast with the narrator’s ever-increasing frenzy as he fears that the old woman is trying to erase his feelings of love, just as she unravels the golden threads of a garment, transforming silk into rags.

Chanson de Coulennes [10] (composed in 1933 and unpublished) is a duet for two voices and piano; there is also a 1936 version for voice, flute and strings, as well as an unaccompanied vocal-duet version (1932). This duet version was recorded by permission of the composer’s grandson, John Howe, who allowed access to the manuscript in the New York Public Library. The text is attributed to Marie Valeur, Mary Howe’s pseudonym derived from her middle name, Wortham. Some unpublished programme notes explain the origin of the work. From the 1930s through to the 1950s, Howe visited the Château des Coulennes (in Loué, in the Sarthe region, west of Le Mans), the home

²⁴ Bruce Howe, telephone interview, New York, 25 May 1992, quoted in Indenbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

²⁵ Corbett, *op. cit.*, pp. 136–37.

of her childhood friend Katherine (Woods) Dunlap. Howe was fascinated by the songs of the blackbirds and notated several of their calls, using them in this duet as well as for several other works: two separate pieces for soprano and flute solo (*Chanson de Coulennes* and *Merles de Coulennes*) and a work for two voices and chamber orchestra (*Coulennes: Tableau de Genre, Louis III*). The feudal chateau of the Coulennes was built around the year 1000 and later remodelled as a peaceful country retreat, complete with tall lime trees and apple orchards. Howe's programme notes explain that the musical material is built from the calls of the blackbirds (*merles* in French), along with a pairing of a short *bergerette* (an early form of a French rustic song) with a pastoral love-song:

The variety of short songs sung by the merles is unbelievable; probably they have been learning and passing them on for hundreds of years. These little themes form the entire minuet, and also the counter-themes in the love-song. The countryside and the merles evoke images of the past in the grounds of a sixteenth century château, where, despite the insouciance of the shepherdess and the gentle plaint of the lover – a moment of parting, or tragedy, comes. The song persists as a memory ... the landscape blurs ... the song of the merles fades out with a final chirp.²⁶

Now Goes the Light [11] (from 1935, in Galaxy Volume 3) sets a poem by Cecilia Lee. The intense emotion expressed in the shifting, blues-like harmonies here are related to Howe's artistic credo, expressed in a sealed letter addressed to her friend Hans Kindler in October 1937. She asked her family to deliver it only after her death:

Composing, I always felt as if I was coming into my heritage. I had more freedom there than in any other part of my life. If some of this imprisonment and escape has got into my music it may set a glow for someone – and in this strange world the smallest glow should live. [...] You know all that I would say: How much the music lived together meant; the seeing eye to eye; the power; the surmounting; the pain in those years; the ready hand grasp and the instant tears, the steady caring.²⁷

²⁶ Indenbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

²⁷ Mary Howe to Hans Kindler, Hot Springs, VA, October 1937, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 176.

This song uses a poetic conceit that Howe frequently exploits: the emotion found in waning light, whether of autumn or of daylight. The descending three-note patterns in the piano form an *ostinato* under the eloquent melody and are expanded to six notes at the climactic resolution of the final description of autumn light and its 'liquid gold'.

The Horseman [1] (from 1940, in Galaxy Volume 7) is a duet for two voices and piano; a manuscript version has the alternative title of *The Huntsman*. Its British poet, Walter de la Mare (1873–1956), is best remembered for his works for children and his evocations of the supernatural. Howe's sensitive setting captures the ghostly atmosphere of the poem, as the two voices, beginning *a cappella*, describe the unseen horseman. The piano enters halfway through the song with a repetitive figure that sustains the strange atmosphere. This duet also exists in manuscript as an unaccompanied vocal duet and separately as a vocal duet with accompaniment by string quartet.

'Am Flusse' [12] and 'Die Götter' [13] are two of seven Goethe settings from Howe's set *Sieben Goethe-Liedchen* from 1940 (Galaxy Volume 1). Setting Goethe's texts became customary for all major nineteenth-century Lieder composers, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Loewe, Wolf and Brahms among them; and in the twentieth century, many composers still looked to Goethe for musical inspiration, including Ives, Joseph Marx, Berg and Schoenberg, as well as Mary Howe. The text of 'Am Flusse' [12] was first published as *An meine Lieder* (1799) in Schiller's *Musen-Almanach*. Among some fifteen settings are two by Schubert, one by Catharina Baum (d. 1876) and one by Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805–47). Howe's setting was composed in 1940. Although Schubert's setting is known for its fluid piano figurations and gracious melodies depicting flowing water, Howe's setting seems to capture the atmosphere of the poem as a whole. Arpeggiated figures in the left hand support the flow of the vocal line with a countermelody in the right hand, giving way to an almost plodding figure supporting the heavy despair of the poet; then the piano pulls the voice back into the healing flow of the gentle music made by the water. 'Die Götter' [13] is a majestic setting of Goethe's poem. In contrast with 'Am Flusse' and its swirling figures, the piano herein begins with organ-like pillars of sound, sustaining the slowly evolving vocal line as it describes the gods' endless love for humanity. The song seems to end there, when suddenly an agitated

and dramatic outburst from both performers reveals the unceasing pain that the gods share with humanity.

L'Amant des roses [14] (from 1942, in Galaxy Volume 4) sets a poem by Jules Ruelle (1834–92), a French music-critic and librettist who wrote song texts and opera librettos, as well as making translations. He translated this text from the Russian of an 1813 poem by Ivan Ivanovich Kozlov (1779–1840), which in turn was based upon a text in English by Lord Byron (1788–1824):

This rose to calm my brother's cares
a message from the Bulbul bears;
It says to-night he will prolong
For Selim's ear his sweetest song;
And though his note is somewhat sad,
He'll try for once a strain more glad,
With some faint hope his alter'd lay
May sing these gloomy thoughts away.

Byron's 'Bulbul' is a songbird found in Africa and the Middle East. Ruelle translates it into the more familiar 'rossignol' (nightingale), whose song was thought to be a powerful temptation. Howe's only songs written in 1942, presented here and in the following settings of poems by Mirza Schaffy, use two recurring motifs from Persian poetry, the rose and the nightingale, with the rose as a metaphor for perfection and beauty and the nightingale representing the lover, as expressed in the voice of the poet. In the poem, it could be a symbol for Zuleika (Suleika), a female temptress in Jewish and Muslim traditions, or the gorgeous heroine found in Byron's *The Bride of Abydos* (1813) or Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan* (1819).

Howe's *Two Mirza Schaffy Settings* (composed in 1942, and found in Galaxy Volume 5) are 'Nicht mit Engeln' [15] and 'Mein Herz' [16]. Shafi (?1794–1852) was an Azerbaijani poet who wrote in both Azerbaijani and Persian under the pseudonym Vazeh. *Die Lieder des Mirza Schaffy*, published in 1851, was a translation by Friedrich von Bodenstedt (1819–92), a professor at the University of Munich and a former

student of Shafi. In ‘Nicht mit Engeln’ [15] a pattern of five descending notes evokes continuously pealing church bells in this description of the stages of grief after the loss of a loved one. In contrast, the joyous atmosphere of ‘Mein Herz’ [16] shows the musical influence of Richard Strauss, one of Howe’s preferred composers, with its long, sustained vocal phrases over large piano figures and the final triumphantly ascending vocal line of the last page.

Lullaby for a Forester’s Child [17] (from 1945, in Galaxy Volume 2) – one of Howe’s finest songs – is a setting of Frances Frost (1905–59), a prolific American poet, novelist and children’s writer. Frost spent six summers at the MacDowell Colony between 1931 and 1937, where she certainly would have joined Howe’s circle. The rocking motion of the $\frac{5}{4}$ metre describes the swaying of large trees, alternating with descriptions of the child’s dreams in a slow waltz in $\frac{6}{4}$. One can imagine that it is the Forester himself who has taken the baby out to the forest and settled it comfortably among the ‘sweet boughs’. Howe’s use of shifting metres and dissonance perfectly illustrates her stated philosophy of composition: ‘I have realized that the way I like music [...] reaches back and reaches forward simultaneously, and the quickest way I can say that is: spanning and bridging. [...] It all depended on what I wanted to say as to how I wanted to say it.’²⁸

Rêve [18] (from 1945, in Galaxy Volume 4) sets an excerpt from Victor Hugo’s long poem ‘Un peu de musique: chanson poétique’. Howe creates a multi-sectioned *scena* of storytelling, alternating with quasi-operatic writing, accompanied orchestrally by the piano, and with a grand interlude that returns to a soaring vocal line, extended by the piano before his surprise muted conclusion. In a 1948 review, Paul Hume lauded Howe’s ability to sustain a mood throughout a long song such as *Rêve*, a talent that he felt was ‘found far too seldom today’.²⁹

Spring Come Not Too Soon [19] (written in 1947, and published in Galaxy Volume 3) sets a poem by Charles Norman, a Russian-born poet and author, who joined the poets and musicians at the MacDowell Colony from 1946 to 1960. Norman wrote successful

²⁸ Howe, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

²⁹ Hume, *loc. cit.*

works for young readers, with nature as one of his favourite themes, and he was also the biographer of E. E. Cummings, Ezra Pound and other literary figures. In his nostalgic descriptions of lavender, pear and peach, Norman depicts a springtime that he aches to delay, possibly in response to post-Second World War angst, for this spring will not be the same as others. The poem begs spring not to come, and yet Howe sets it in a way that almost contradicts the message, using jubilant music that might have been used to describe its happy arrival – but even so, she bookends her song with the two first words, ‘spring come’, to be sung ‘half voice’, which she sets both times in parenthesis. The opening reiteration is also marked with the instruction *pensero* (‘brooding’). The dissonances of the piano betray the joy of the following music, and the final bars, with clashing chords and jagged rhythms, show the angst of denying the joy that spring should have brought.

Horses [20] (from 1951, in Galaxy Volume 2) is a charming setting of an old Danish rhyme. The translation is by Rose Fyleman (1877–1957), one of the most successful British writers for children, best known for her poem ‘There are Fairies at the Bottom of our Garden’ (1917), set to music by Liza Lehmann. From the rocking figure in the piano that suggests a child astride a rocking horse, the song slowly transforms into an image of the father riding away on his own steed, never to return. It is here that one may hear Howe’s enduring sorrow at the loss of her own father.

Little Fiddler’s Green [21] (composed on 11 May 1952, and published in Galaxy Volume 3) has a long history. The poem ‘Fiddler’s Green’ first appeared in an 1856 novel by Frederick Marryat (1792–1848). ‘Fiddler’s Green’ refers to a joyous image of sailors’ after-life, filled with mirth and music. The poem was adapted anonymously in 1923 and published as ‘The Cavalrymen’s Poem’ in *The Calvary Journal* of the US Army. It was in turn revised by a certain Alexander Gordon. It describes souls of dead troopers camped in an ‘eternal resting place’. Howe’s efficient two-page setting captures both the nostalgia and the pride of those cavalrymen who anticipate their own deaths as they look forward to a joyous reunion with those who have gone before them.

Howe’s autobiographical book *Jottings* includes a chapter entitled ‘Epitome’, in which she describes her relationship with music:

I always knew that the greatest of the arts was MUSIC. First of all, it's intangible. Second, sound has always been, since our beginning. But besides these elusive qualities, Music is an art, a belief, a reality. I go much further and say 'Music is one of the elements', the companion of the others, air, fire, light, water – Music. [...] Music has a language that one can't trace. One understands it without speech, or even power of description. The ear comes out to meet it. It explains and proves without words. Its range of beauty and power and strength and intention is unlimited. [...] It has stood me in good stead always and never failed me. It never lets you down, because it is always above you, and leads you onward and upward. If there is eternity – back of us, and ahead of us – music will always be; and the world – and I – could never have done without it.³⁰

In 1962 Mary Howe was honoured by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation of the Library of Congress with a surprise concert of her works in celebration of her 80th year. Several hundred admirers gathered in the Colonial Room of the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. Among the songs presented for this concert were the *Lullaby for a Forester's Child* [7], *The Ragpicker* [9] and *Berceuse cosaque* [2]. At the end of the concert, she walked around the huge circular birthday cake and blew out each of the 80 candles. She died two years later at her home in Washington. In a letter written to her son Calderon, which was to be opened after her death, she asked him to make all decisions concerning the publication of her works.

It may be that none should be published; it may be that none are wanted ... I wrote them because I wanted to and had the urge to, and I thank God – or whoever it is I feel grateful to – for the urge and the ability to respond. I liked being considered seriously as a musician and a composer; I liked having works published and performed. Inside I feel grave and humble about any work of mine that speaks truly aloud. In some ways I feel there may be a place for my music.³¹

³⁰ Howe, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

³¹ Mary Howe to Calderon Howe, *Collection of Calderon Howe* (Newport, R.I., 1945), in Indenbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

Courtney Maina, a Houston native currently residing in Dallas, Texas, received a Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Performance from Sam Houston State University in 2012, where she portrayed Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Papagena (*The Magic Flute*) and Belinda (*Dido and Aeneas*). She then earned a Master's Degree in Vocal Performance at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, where she appeared as Mrs Hayes (in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*) and Serpetta (*La finta giardiniera*). She worked in The Dallas Opera Education Outreach programme for four seasons as a Teaching Artist and was featured with the programme as Despina (in *The Three Little Pigs*, based on music by Mozart) and Dorabella (in *The Bremen Town Musicians*, based on music by Donizetti, Offenbach, Rossini, Sullivan and Verdi). She has returned to the Outreach programme as Adina (*The Elixir of Love*) and makes her Dallas Opera main stage debut as Berta in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. She is a frequent recitalist in the North Texas area, performing for such organisations as St Matthews Cathedral Arts, The Puccini Society and the Winnsboro Center for the Arts.



Christopher A. Leach, a native of Kingsville, Texas, is currently singing the role of Nemorino in The Dallas Opera's Education production of *The Elixir of Love* and was most recently heard in the TDO 2021 Hart Institute for Women Conductors showcase concert in music by Beethoven, Gounod and Mazzoli. With the Fort Worth Opera, he premiered the role of Senator Ralph Yarborough in David T. Little's opera *JFK* (2016). Other notable roles for TDO include the title role of Bizet's *Doctor Miracle*, Eddie Pensier (*The Bremen Town Musicians*), Miguel (Offenbach's *Pépito*), Don Giovanni (in the Mozart-based *The Three Little Pigs*) and Dandini (*The Billy Goats Gruff*, which uses music by Donizetti, Mozart and Rossini). He has also sung Don Basilio (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Donald (in Douglas Moore's *Gallantry*), Don Hilarión (*La verbena de la paloma, a zarzuela*



by Tomás Bretón) and Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*). He is also active as a recitalist in the North Texas area, in performances for The Dallas Opera Guild, The Puccini Society, St Matthew's Cathedral Arts and Winnsboro Center for the Arts, among others, where he is showcasing works of nineteenth- and twentieth-century women composers in order to bring their extraordinary music into the modern repertoire. He is marking the release of this recording of Mary Howe's songs with a concert tour in Texas and France.

Mary Dibbern is an internationally known specialist in vocal coaching and accompaniment. She has a special interest in working with emerging singers and pianists to help them make the transition from higher-education studies to careers as professional musicians. She has been Music Director of Education and Family Programs at The Dallas Opera since 2012 and is at present adjunct faculty for Opera Coaching at the University of North Texas, as well as Artistic Director for Secular Performances with St Matthew's Cathedral Arts. Her career has embraced recitals, operatic coaching, recordings, master-classes, young-artist programmes and television and radio appearances in Europe, North America and Asia.

After completing her Master of Music at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, she moved to Paris to work with Dalton Baldwin, Pierre Bernac, Nadia Boulanger and Gérard Souzay. She continued her study and performances of concert-song repertoire at the Orford Arts Centre in Quebec, the Geneva Conservatoire, Westminster Choir College in Princeton and the Franz-Schubert-Institut in Baden-bei-Wien, Austria, where she studied with Jörg Demus, Hans Hotter and Erik Werba, and was awarded the Franz Schubert Prize for Lieder Accompaniment. Other notable vocalists with whom she has recorded include Laurence Albert, Brigitte Balley, Danielle Borst, Philippe Huttonlocher, Kurt Ollmann and Jared Schwartz. Her discography includes *Mélodies de Jacques Leguerney* (two LPs released by Harmonia Mundi France), *Jacques Leguerney: 28 Mélodies* (Claves), which received a Grand Prix du Disque from the Académie Charles Cros, *Under Her Spell: The Viardot Effect* (Duelin' Sopranos), *Negro Spirituals* (Foxglove Audio), *Lotte Lehmann: To Honor Her Legacy* (Arabesque Recordings), *Le Chant de la Mer* (Aziles), *Le Premier Matin du Monde* (Cambria) and *Mélodies françaises* (JBT Prod). For Toccata Classics, she was the Artistic



Director for *Gabriel Fauré: Songs for Bass Voice and Piano* with Jared Schwartz and pianist Roy Howat (TOCC 0268). In 2016 she accompanied Jared Schwartz for *Ange Flégier: Mélodies for Bass Voice and Piano* (TOCC 0306). *Voix des Arts* (September 2016) wrote that 'the interaction between singer and pianist is a model of the art that conceals art, their collaboration having been refined to the point of seeming as much biological as artistic without sounding in any way artificial or studio-bound. [...] Schwartz and Dibbern heighten appreciation of the quality of Flégier's music by exploring every recess of angst and ambiguity without overextending the dimensions of the music. [...] they craft a performance that is a splendid service to both composer and poet'. In 2017 she continued her collaboration with Jared Schwartz for *Franz Liszt: Songs for Bass Voice and Piano* (TOCC 0441), awarded Best Lieder CD of 2017 by *Voix des Arts* and by Theater Jones.

Mary Dibbern has been guest vocal coach at the Opéra National de Paris and the Opéra-Comique; at the operas of Bordeaux, Châtelet, Dijon, Lyons, Nice and Toulouse; at the Festival de Radio France-Montpellier, the Théâtre Municipal de Lausanne, the Círculo Portuense de Ópera in Oporto, the Lithuanian National Opera, the Latvian National Opera and the Shanghai Opera and Dance Theatre, where she was in charge of musical and language preparation for French- and Italian-language productions. In the United States she was guest coach at Seattle Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Kentucky Opera, Opera Memphis and Hawaii Opera Theatre, as well as at the University of Miami in Salzburg for fifteen summer seasons. She served as Head of Music at the Minnesota Opera from 2009 to 2012.

Mary Dibbern's books are published by Pendragon Press. She is the author of Performance Guides for *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Carmen*, *Faust*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Werther* and *Manon*. She is co-author (with Carol Kimball and Patrick Choukroun) of *Interpreting the Songs of Jacques Leguerney: A Guide for Study and Performance* and (with Hervé Oléon) of the bilingual publication *Massenet: General Catalogue of Works*. She translated from the French Anne Massenet's *Massenet and His Letters: A New Biography*. She has also translated operas from French, Italian and German for The Dallas Opera's Education Department performances. Her editions of French songs and chamber music are published by Editions Max Eschig (Paris), Musik Fabrik (Lagny-sur-Marne) and Classical Vocal Reprints (Fayetteville).

Texts and Translations
Translations by Mary Howe unless otherwise noted

[1] The Horseman

Poem by Walter de la Mare

I heard a horseman ride over the hill
The moon shone clear, the night was still.
His helm was silver and pale was he
And the horse he rode was of ivory.

[2] Berceuse cosaque

Fais dodo, mon petit brave,
Bayushki, bayu.
Vois la lune qui te regarde,
Ronde comme un sou.

Dans la grande nuit tu sais
Le bon Dieu vieille sur nous;
Fais dodo, mon petit brave,
Bayushki, bayu.

Fermes tes jolis yeux, mon brave,
Bayushki, bayu.
C'est ta mère qui bien te garde
Et te chante doux.
Rêve des jolies choses, et va

Cossack Cradle Song

Translated from the Russian by Constance Purdy

*Go to sleep, my little warrior,
Bayushki, Bayu.
See the silver moon in Heaven
Shining down on you.*

*All the great long night
The dear God watches over you;
Go to sleep, my little warrior,
Bayushki, Bayu.*

*Close your pretty eyes, my brave one,
Bayushki, Bayu.
Here's your mother close beside you,
Singing just to you.
Dream of lovely things,*

En grand voyage partout,
Le matin reviens me dire,
Bayushki, bayu.

*And have a happy voyage or two,
In the morning come and tell me,
Bayushki, Bayu.*

[3] Chanson souvenir

Poem by Francis Vielé-Griffin

D'autres viendront par la prée
S'asseoir au banc de la porte;
Tu souriras belle et parée,
Du seuil, à ta jeune escorte.

Ils marcheront à ta suite
Aux rayons de ton printemps.
Qu'ont-ils à courir si vite?
Moi, j'eus, aussi, leurs vingt ans.

Ils auront ton sourire
Et ta jeunesse dorée.
Qu'importe! Qu'en sauront-ils dire?
Moi seul, je t'aurai chantée.

Souvenir Song

*Others will come through the fields to you
And sit at your threshold.
And you will smile, in beauty clad,
On all your brave young squires.*

*They follow close on your footsteps
In the rays of your own spring.
Why must they now run so quickly?
I, too, was twenty years old.*

*They will have had your smile
And, too, your youth of gold.
No matter! What could they yet tell me?
'This I who sang to thee.*

4 Reach

Poem by Cecilia Lynch

So far away,
so near to me,
and gone the day
so dear to me.

I hear you still,
I know your voice
I know the look of you.
I think my fill
on all the ways of you,
the heart of you.

Your very voice rings in my ears,
the time so long and full of tears.
But still I hold you fast the while I think of you,
you cannot go from out the heart that holds
a part of you.

So near to me and thee.

Vier Gedichte

Poems by Rainer Marie Rilke

5 No. 1, Der Einsame

Nein: ein Turm soll sein aus meinem Herzen
und ich selbst an seinen Rand gestellt:
wo sonst nichts mehr ist, noch einmal
Schmerzen
und Unsäglichkeit, noch einmal Welt.

Noch ein Ding allein im Übergroßen,
welches dunkel wird und wieder licht,
noch ein letztes, sehndes Gesicht
in das Nie-zu-Stillende verstoßen,

noch ein äußerstes Gesicht aus Stein,
willig seinen inneren Gewichten,
das die Weiten, die es still vernichten,
zwingen, immer seliger zu sein.

6 No. 2, Liebeslied

Wie soll ich meine Seele halten, daß
sie nicht an deine röhrt? Wie soll ich sie
hinheben über dich zu andern Dingen?
Ach gerne möcht ich sie bei irgendwas
Verlorenem im Dunkel unterbringen
an einer fremden stillen Stelle, die
nicht weiterschwingt, wenn deine Tiefen
schwingen.

Four Poems

The Lonely One

*No! My heart is like a very tower,
and I stand upon its outer rim,
where naught is left me, but pain and sorrow,
the unspeakable, again the world.*

*One more thing is yet immense before me
darkling now and then again a light,
still one lost and longing face is near
with the thrust that never more has stillness.*

*Yet I see the outer face of stone,
willing from an inner weighting's its own
that the distance altho' scorned forever
drives them always happier to be.*

Love-Song

*How shall I hold my very soul,
now that it does not touch on yours? How can I
lift it upward over you to others near me?
O gladly would I take it other where
and lost and sad in darkness lay it down there
unto a stranger stiller dwelling, which
no further swings, when all thy depths are
swinging.*

Doch alles, was uns anröhrt, dich und mich,
nimmt uns zusammen wie ein Bogenstrich,
der aus zwei Saiten eine Stimme zieht.

Auf welches Instrument sind wir gespannt?
Und welcher Geiger hat uns in der Hand?
O süßes Lied.

[7] No. 3, Schlaflied

Einmal, wenn ich dich verlier,
wirst du schlafen können, ohne
dass ich wie eine Lindenkrone
mich verflüstere über dir?

Ohne dass ich hier wache und
Worte, beinah wie Augenlider,
auf deine Brüste, auf deine Glieder
niederlege, auf deinen Mund?

Ohne dass ich dich verschließ
und dich allein mit Deinem lasse
wie einen Garten mit einer Masse
von Melissen und Stern-Anis.

*Yet all things that have moved us, you and me,
bring us together as the player's bow
may from two voices draw a single sound.
O where the instrument that holds our span?
And which violinist has us in his hand?
O lovely Song.*

Slumber Song

*Some day when I lose you here
will you sleep without my hov'ring o'er you
just as the linden flutters
whisp'rning gently in your ear?*

*Lest I'm watching beside you with
phrases akin to gentle eyelids
drooped on your sweet breast, laid on yourself
on all your beauty swift to your mouth?*

*Lest I close thee softly in
and leave thee there alone and lovely
as in a garden, with all its blossoms
of sweet bergamot and anis star.*

8 No. 4, Herbsttag

Herr; es ist Zeit. Der Sommer war sehr groß.
Leg deinen Schatten auf die Sonnenuhren,
und auf den Fluren laß die Winde los.
Befiehl den letzten Früchten voll zu sein;
gib ihnen noch zwei südlichere Tage,
dränge sie zur Vollendung hin und jage
die letzte Süße in den schweren Wein.
Wer jetzt kein Haus hat, baut sich keines mehr.
Wer jetzt allein ist, wird es lange bleiben,
wird wachen, lesen, lange Briefe schreiben
und wird in den Alleen hin und her
unruhig wandern, wenn die Blätter treiben.

Autumn Day

*Lord: time is come. The summer has been vast.
Lay now your shadow on the sunny dial,
and on the fields let loose the wind at last.
Command the last of all the fruits to fill;
vouchsafe them yet two mellow southern days,
crowd them into completion still and drive thou,
the last rich sweetness into pow'rful wine.
Who now no house has, let him build no more.
Who now alone is, will yet lonely be,
will wake and read, and write him many a
lengthy screed
and will along the byways here and there
restlessly wander, when the leaves are driving.*

9 *The Ragpicker*

Poem by Frances Shaw

The ragpicker sits and sorts her rags
Silk and homespun and thread of gold.
She plucks to pieces and marks with tags,
And her eyes are ice and her fingers cold.

The ragpicker sits in the back of my brain.
Keenly she looks me through and through.
One flaming shred I have hidden away.
She shall not have my love for you.

10 Chanson de Coulennes

Poem by Mary Howe

[Female voice] Ah! Qu'il revienne

(Que la vie est amère.)

Ah! Qu'il revienne,

Celui qui m'est si cher.

Tra la la la.

J'entends les merles qui chantent, doux,

Comme autrefois.

Loin de moi là-bas,

Que fait-il donc?

Non! Ne me dites pas!

[Male voice] Ah! Qu'elle revienne

Celle qui m'est chère.

La vie est dure, si dure.

J'écoute bien les merles chantant

Comme autrefois

Si elle me voyait ainsi

Que dirait ma mie?

[Both voices] La petite bergère va dans la plaine

Elle garde bien ses moutons dans les champs.

The Song of Coulennes

*Ah! If only he would return,
(Life is so bitter.)*

*Ah! If only he would return,
The one I so dearly love.*

Tra la la la.

*I hear the blackbirds singing sweetly
As they did before.*

Far from me, over there,

What is he doing now?

No! Do not tell me!

*Ah! If only she would return
The one I so dearly love.*

Life is hard, so hard.

*I clearly hear the blackbirds singing
As they did before.*

*If she were to see me this way
What would she think?*

*The young shepherdess walks in the meadow
She tends her sheep in the fields.*

[1] Now Goes the Light

Poem by Cecilia Lee

Now goes the light,
And in the frail embrace of leaves
The last sweet murmur of the day has died.

So when the heart is still
Will come a blessed night
Heavy with pain and burdened with the weariness of love.

Take then my heart
Fulfilled for your delight
And know wherein the precious day has died.

Leaving its beauty
Poured in liquid gold
Darkened and made more beautiful tonight.

Two Goethe Settings

[12] No. 1, Am Flusse

Verfließet, vielgeliebte Lieder,
Zum Meere der Vergessenheit!
Kein Knabe sing' entzückt euch wieder,
Kein Mädchen in der Blütenzeit.

Ihr sanget nur von meiner Lieben;
Nun spricht sie meiner Treue Hohn.
Ihr wart ins Wasser eingeschrieben;
So fließt denn auch mit ihm davon.

[13] No. 2, Die Götter

Alles geben die Götter, die unendlichen,
Ihren Lieblingen ganz,
Alle Freuden, die unendlichen,
Alle Schmerzen, die unendlichen, ganz.

By the River

*Flow away then, well beloved melody
To oceans of forgetfulness!
No youth shall sing you in his happiness,
No maiden in her blossoming day.*

*You only sang of her my true love;
She holds my faithfulness in scorn.
You were in water ever written;
So flow with it away.*

The Gods

*All things give the eternals now
To their loved ones entire,
Ev'ry gift of joy, the eternal ones,
Ev'ry torment, the eternal ones whole.*

[14] *L'Amant des roses*

Poem by Jules Ruelle

L'amant des fleurs, le rossignol
Ce soir chantant parmi les roses
Dans l'ombre vers toi prends son vol
Mais ses refrains seront moroses!

Lover of Roses

*Lover of flowers, the nightingale
Tonight singing among the roses
From out the shadow takes his flight to you
But his refrain will ever sad be!*

Chagrine, Zuleika, soupire
Le chanteur, que doit-il dire?
Peut-être, à son amour rêvant,
Soudain il chantera gaiment.

Alors vers toi, ma Zuleika,
Joyeux aussi mon cœur ira,
Pour dire à ton cœur de douces choses,
Avec l'amant des roses.

*Ah mourn, my Zuleika, and sigh now.
The singer, what can he tell me?
Perhaps he is dreaming of his love
Suddenly sings he then gaily.*

*And so to thee, my Zuleika,
My heart will go with joy to thee,
To tell to thy heart the sweetest story,
Of the lover of roses.*

Two Mirza Schaffy Settings

*Translated into German from the Persian
by Friedrich von Bodenstedt*

[15] No. 1, Nicht mit Engeln

Nicht mit Engeln im blauen Himmelszelt,
Nicht mit Rosen auf duftigem Blumenfeld,
Selbst mit der ewigen Sonne Licht
Vergleich' ich Zuleikha, mein Mädchen, nicht.

Denn der Engel Busen ist liebe leer,
Unter Rosen drohen die Dornen her,
Und die Sonne verhüllt des Nachts ihr Licht.
Sie alle gleichen Zuleikha nicht!

Nichts finden, so weit das Weltall reicht,
Die Blicke, was meiner Zuleikha gleicht –
Schön, dornlos, voll ewigem Liebesschein,
Kann sie mit sich selbst nur verglichen sein.

Not with Angels

*Not with angels in Heaven's azure tent
Not with Roses in sweetest of flower fields
Even with eternal Sun's own light
Can I ever compare Zuleika, compare her not.*

*For the angel's bosom contains no love
And beneath the Rose press the sharp thorns there,
And the Sun hides its light when night draws down
Among them none can with Zuleika compare.*

*Through all the wide world is nothing found
To match the look of Zuleika mine
Fair, thornless, bright with love's own light
Only with herself can compare aright.*

[16] No. 2, Mein Herz

Mein Herz schmückt sich mit dir, wie sich
Der Himmel mit der Sonne schmückt—
Du gibst ihm Glanz, und ohne dich
Bleibt es in dunkle Nacht entrückt.

Gleichwie die Welt all ihre Pracht
Verhüllt, wenn Dunkel sie umfließt,
Und nur, wenn ihr die Sonne lacht,
Zeigt, was sie Schönes in sich schließt!

My Heart

*My soul is deck'd with thee, like to
The Heavens with the sun a-shine –
You glowed there, and without thee
Dark of the night alone is mine.*

*So when the earth its splendor
Hoards within, when darkness overflows,
Only when the sun breaks forth,
Then, all its beauty glows!*

[17] *Lullaby for a Forester's Child*

Poem by Frances Frost

Cradled in a high wind
Nestled in a low wind
Sleep
Riding in the green boughs
Swinging in the sweet boughs
Dream
Shadow above this bed
Stars above this head
Keep watch,
Let hemlock branch
Hush the avalanche of
Stream
And make of falling water

A song of sleepy laughter
Child
Spruce and fir and pine
Murmur you are mine.
Deep cradled in a low wind,
Curled down in a slow wind,
Sleep.

[18] Rêve

Poem by Victor Hugo

Et voie qu'a travers la grande forêt brune
Qu'emplit le réverie immense de la lune
On entend frissonner, et ce frisson
Devient une vague chanson:

'Si tu veux, faisons un rêve,
Montons sur deux palefrois,
Tu m'emmènes, je t'enlève,
Loiseau chante dans les bois.

(Entends le doux bruit des chaînes
Que tu m'as mises au cœur.)

Allons nous en sur la terre
Sur nos chevaux charmants,
Dans l'azur, dans le mystère,
Dans les éblouissements.

Dream

*In this place across the forest's darkling grandeur
That brims with all the reverie of the moon,
One can hear a quiv'ring sound
And the quiv'ring becomes a misty song:*

*If you will, let's dream a dream,
We'll mount our two palefrois.
You allure me, I take thee away,
And the lark sings in the woods.*

*(O hear the soft sweet noise of fetters
That thou has cast round my heart.)*

*Let us go forth round the wide world
On our two charming steeds,
Through the azure filled with a mystery
Into the dazzling day.*

Tu seras dame et moi comte,
Viens, mon cœur s'épanouit!
Viens, nous conterons ce conte
Aux étoiles de la nuit.'

La mélodie se traîne
Par la lune sereine,
Tremble, expire.

La voix qui chantait
Se tait comme un oiseau qui pose.
Tout se tait.

[19] Spring Come Not Too Soon
Poem by Charles Norman

Spring come not too soon
Come not too fast
It is not the same with me
This year as last.

Buds like fledgling birds
Light not on the bough
There is no time
For gazing at you now.

Hold back thy lavender,
Thy pear, thy peach
On loveliest of Springs
And out of reach.

*Thou'l be my lady, I thy true love,
Come, my heart is all alright.
Come, we'll tell the story over
To the shining stars of night.'*

*The lovely song is trailing
Through the mist of the moonglow,
Trembles, is dying.*

*The voice that has sung
Is silent like a bird who poses.
All is still.*

[20] Horses
*Poem by Rose Fyleman (translated from an old
Danish rhyme)*

My father has four horses
Each in its stall
Mine is the brown one,
He's the best of all.

You can have the gray one,
Lars can have the black.
But father always rides the mare
Into town and back.

[21] Little Fiddler's Green
Poem by Alexander Gordon

Where have I heard that song before?
Come tell me where I've been?
'None but the souls of Cavalrymen
dismount at Fiddler's Green.'
My heart grows warm, my eyes are mist;
and still I think I've seen
the face I love, a rare content
that blooms in Fiddler's Green.
I've ridden and fought and almost died
in all those years between.
But all is right for I've come home
to Little Fiddler's Green.

[22] Music, When Soft Voices Die
Poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley

Music when soft voices die
Vibrates in the memory
Odours when sweet violets sicken
Live within the sense they quicken.

Roses when the rose is dead
Are heaped for the beloved's bed.
So thy thoughts when thou are gone
Love himself shall slumber on.

*Mary Howe with the conductor
Hans Kindler (1872–1949), founding
director and conductor of The National
Symphony Orchestra, Washington, D.C.,
from 1931 to 1948*





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Recorded on 16–17 June 2021 in St Matthew’s Episcopal Cathedral, Dallas, Texas

Schimmel piano courtesy of St Matthew’s Cathedral Arts

Piano technician: David C. Brown

Recording engineer: David Siu, assisted by Andrés Palencia

Editing and mastering: Adaq Khan, Empiric Sound

Artistic director: Mary Dibbern, assisted by Jordan Hammons

Text and interpretation consultant: Ryan Lescalheet

German-language consultant: Pia Pausch



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This recording is dedicated to the memory of Margaret Mary Kalaugher Paques (18 October 1934–13 June 2021).

Booklet essay: Mary Dibbern

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MARY HOWE Songs and Duets

1	<i>The Horseman</i> (1940)**	1:25
2	<i>Berceuse cosaque</i> (1922)*	3:52
3	<i>Chanson souvenir</i> (1925)	2:41
4	<i>Reach</i> (1925)*	3:02
Vier Gedichte		13:17
5	No. 1 Der Einsame (1931)*	2:48
6	No. 2 Liebeslied (1931)	3:50
7	No. 3 Schlaflied (1931)*	3:10
8	No. 4 Herbsttag (1934)*	3:29
9	<i>The Ragpicker</i> (1932)**	1:18
10	<i>Chanson de Coulennes</i> (1933)*	6:14
11	<i>Now Goes the Light</i> (1935)*	3:39
Two Goethe Settings (1940)*		5:43
12	No. 1 Am Flusse	2:47
13	No. 2 Die Götter	2:56
14	<i>L'Amant des roses</i> (1942)*	4:27
Two Mirza Schaffy Settings (1942)		7:34
15	No. 1 Nicht mit Engeln*	4:22
16	No. 2 Mein Herz**	3:12
17	<i>Lullaby for a Forester's Child</i> (1945)**	3:46
18	<i>Rêve</i> (1945)*	5:37
19	<i>Spring Come Not Too Soon</i> (1947)*	2:08
20	<i>Horses</i> (1951)*	1:26
21	<i>Little Fiddler's Green</i> (1952)*	1:20
22	<i>Music When Soft Voices Die</i> (1921)**	1:53

Courtney Maina, soprano 1–2 4 10–13 15–16 19–20 22

TT 69:24

Christopher A. Leach, tenor 1 3 5–10 14 17–18 21–22

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