



# Songs of Love and Loss

A virtual recital by Jack Swanson and Roderick Phipps-Kettlewell

## Overview

Jack Swanson and Roderick Phipps-Kettlewell present a virtual recital entitled "Songs of Love and Loss".

The hour long program includes songs by Schumann, Grieg, Puccini, Quilter, Rossini and several others and was recorded at the historic Triune Masonic Temple in St. Paul, Minnesota with audio recorded and mastered by Steve Kaul of Wild Sound Studio, and cinematography by Flight Creative Media.

Connect to the biggest screen and best speakers in your home in order to enjoy this cinematic recital at the highest quality with as close to a live-performance experience as is possible in these times.

## Jack Swanson

### Tenor

With an affinity for the high lyric repertoire, Richard Tucker Career Grant Winner Jack Swanson has quickly established himself as one of the most sought-after young tenors in opera. A string of impressive American and European debuts in recent seasons has included his debut at Oper Frankfurt as Rodrigo in Damiano Michieletto's new production of Rossini's *Otello*, his first Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* for Den Norske Opera, Sam Kaplan in Weill's *Street Scene* for Oper Köln, Conte Almaviva (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) for Glyndebourne on Tour, and *Candide* in concert at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and at the Los Angeles Opera alongside costars Kelsey Grammer and Christine Ebersole. This season Jack makes his debut in the title role in *Le Comte Ory* in a new production by Cal McCrystal and conducted by Valentina Peleggi for Garsington Opera, and returns to both Oslo and Cologne as Conte Almaviva, the latter in the classic staging by Ruth Berghaus. He also makes his Italian debut singing Rossini's *Stabat Mater* in Rome with Santa Cecilia under the baton of Myung-Whun Chung.

Following his studies at the University of Oklahoma and the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, Jack performed the title role in Britten's comic opera *Albert Herring* as a young artist with The Seagle Music Colony, and subsequently spent two years as an apprentice at the Santa Fe Opera. Jack has since returned to Santa Fe as Lindoro (*L'italiana in Algeri*) and added Belmonte (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) at Opera Omaha last season.

Equally comfortable on the concert and recital platforms, Jack sang selections from Schumann's *Dichterliebe* for his debut at the Kennedy Center in Washington, his first Rossini *Messa di Gloria* with Speranza Scappucci and the Insula Orchestra, and a series of concerts with Orchestre National de Lille for the Leonard Bernstein centenary. This season he gives his mainstage recital debut at Oper Frankfurt with Malcolm Martineau in a programme of Schumann, Liszt, Poulenc and Quilter.

Jack has had great competition success and has been the recipient of several prestigious awards in recent years, including first place in Florida Grand Opera's Young Patroness Competition, The San Antonio Music Club Competition, The National Opera Association Competition and The Hal Leonard Art Song Competition. He twice received the Richard Tucker Memorial award from Santa Fe Opera, and was a finalist in both Houston Grand Opera's Eleanor McCollum competition and Fort Worth Opera's McCammon Competition.

## Roderick Phipps-Kettlewell

### Piano

London-born pianist Roderick Phipps-Kettlewell's multifaceted musical career includes performing and recording solo piano recitals, song recitals, chamber music, and conducting choirs, orchestras and opera. Specializing in vocal repertoire, he worked closely with Alberta Masiello on Opera, Sir Peter Pears on works of Britten, Gérard Souzay on French Mélodies, Rudolf Piernay and Paul Hamburger on Lieder, and Paul Sperry on American Song Repertoire. His numerous vocal recitals have included recitals and tours with Stephen Salters, Dean Peterson, Jonathan Prescott, Patricia Kent, John Cimino, and tenor Jack Swanson. Together with Jack, they performed for Performance Today on NPR and he has presented many times on live radio and TV, including with Simon Estes on the Today show.

As a collaborative pianist he has performed with many fine instrumentalists, including from the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestra. This versatility and range adds richness and depth to his musical and artistic vision.

Roderick's performance aims were captured by the reviewer of his concert with soprano Patricia Kent in New York, who wrote: "There are concerts when the stars align such that one leaves this dimension entirely and for a blissful span resides in some world that is more beautiful, more profound, than anything imaginable... [His] contribution was of stunningly beautiful substance, his playing a continuum of every nuance, and replete with the variegated textures and colors that swim and sparkle in this repertoire [and] ... delivered a glittering performance of Ravel's Sonatine for piano solo. I've rarely heard the Steinway at Weill sound so good as he was able to coax it."

Currently he is finishing a memoir for Calumet Editions, incorporating his ideas on how to develop more imagination, creativity and expression in the training of musicians. He also has a vision to establish an innovative space for musicians to continue their growth after college and to expand their artistic and professional performance opportunities.

Roderick received his musical training in England at the Guildhall School, in France at the Académie Ravel and Fontainebleau, and at the Juilliard School, where he was the first to be awarded a degree in Collaborative Piano. In New York he worked with all the major voice teachers and coached singers such as Florence Quivar, Martina Arroyo, Marvis Martin and Harolyn Blackwell. He has performed throughout Europe and the United States (New York, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Hawaii, Minneapolis, Los Angeles and San Francisco), most notably

at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Alice Tully Hall and the Wigmore Hall, and has been based in London, New York, Boston and now Minneapolis.



## Program Notes:

### Schumann's Dichterliebe

#### Robert Schumann (1810 - 1856), Dichterliebe, Op 48

In 1840, Robert Schumann was looking forward to the likelihood of finally winning legal permission to marry Clara Wieck, over her father's strenuous objections. In the meantime, Schumann's happiness generated a wave of creative energy that showed itself in a frenzied outpouring of songs—his first song compositions in twelve years. In the last week of May he composed at a feverish pace, the twenty songs originally destined for Dichterliebe (Poet's Love), of which four were later removed and published separately. Of the four major song cycles thus composed within three months, Dichterliebe is the only one to contain an implicit story, created through Schumann's arrangement of the Heine texts in a way to suggest a young lover whose sentiments are not returned and who gradually realizes the illusory nature of his passion. Heine's texts are small gems of German lyric poetry, though their frequent ironic tone is often muted in Schumann's settings. The sixteen songs that comprise the final cycle are linked by melodic and harmonic connections tying the whole together from beginning to end. The final epilogue for the piano allows the lover's bitterness to achieve a degree of consolation. Schumann is, of course, one of the most original and inventive of all composers for the piano, and the accompaniments of his songs show an independence (though always intertwined with the voice part) that marks an important stage in the development of the German art song. His reaction to Heine's text is immediate and varied, ranging from the utmost delicacy to powerful declamation.

-Description by Steven Ledbetter

### Edvard Grieg

Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907) was a Norwegian composer and pianist. He is best known for his Piano Concerto in A minor and Peer Gynt (which includes Morning Mood and In the Hall of the Mountain King). Edvard Grieg is to Norway what George Washington is to America and William Shakespeare to England: his country's most celebrated human icon.

Life and Music:

Writing to his American biographer, Henry Finck once explained: "The traditional way of life of the Norwegian people, together with Norway's legends, Norway's history, Norway's natural scenery, stamped itself on my creative imagination from my earliest years."

Grieg appears to have dedicated himself to establishing single-handedly a national identity for classical music in Norway.

Grieg was desperately unhappy at school, regularly suffering torment and abuse from his fellow students.

During a visit to Copenhagen in 1862 Grieg met the young composer Rikard Nordraak, whose passionate interest in the sagas, landscape and music of his homeland inspired Grieg to take up the musical cudgels on behalf of Norway.

In 1866 - the year of Nordraak's premature death - Grieg gave a concert of his own music, including some piano miniatures and the First Violin Sonata, which proved something of a sensation.

Following his marriage to Nina Hagerup and the birth of their baby daughter, Alexandra, he composed his first and most enduring masterpiece, the A minor Piano Concerto, in a flurry of inspiration.

In 1885 the essentially shy composer took up residence in Troldhaugen (near Bergen) where he was to stay for the next 20 years.

In the summer of 1906 he penned his final composition - the Four Psalms - and then, seriously weakened, left for the comparative warmth of a hotel in Christiania. He was on the verge of undertaking a journey to Britain in the autumn of 1907 when he suffered a massive heart attack, dying in hospital shortly after arrival.

[-ClassicFM](#)

## **Quilter's Shakespeare Songs:**

Roger Quilter's first group of songs setting texts of Shakespeare, from 1905, was so successful that the composer was often (and with similar success) to return to the Bard's work. Quilter was, of course, only one of the legion of composers who found inspiration in Shakespeare, but his sensitive, artistic settings are a breed apart. The three songs of Op. 6 are among the best of English art songs from the early twentieth century.

The first song, "Come away, Death," from Twelfth Night, achieves a state of melancholy but avoids depression, which is appropriate for its context in the play. Quilter uses melodic sequence and repetition in creating a highly singable melodic line. As often occurs in Quilter's songs, the second verse is varied in the accompaniment rather than the melody, and the piano wreathe arpeggiated triplets around the melodic line.

"O Mistress mine," also from Twelfth Night, is a charmingly persuasive air notable for its consistently disjunct melodic line. Yet in Quilter's hands the intervals always make vocal sense. The accompaniment and vocal line coexist flirtatiously, echoing the ambiguous

relationship of the singer and his intended: sometimes meeting up, and sometimes going separate ways.

The final song, "Blow, blow, thou Winter Wind," is a fitting end to the set, combining elements of the previous two songs. The text, from *As You Like It*, combines a bitter verse with a less pessimistic refrain. Quilter sets the verse in minor and the refrain in the parallel major, resulting in an infusion of optimism. Two different time signatures also enhance the difference between the two sections, one funereal and one dancelike. The accompaniment, notably, is identical between the two stanzas.

Each of the three songs, like so many of Quilter's others, are in a modified strophic form, with a single repetition. As a unit, they coexist remarkably well, for example in their tonal structure: the minor of the first gives way to its relative major in the second, and then returns to the minor for the third. Quilter orchestrated the three songs as well, for piano and strings, but much later, near the conclusion of his compositional career, in 1944 and 1945.

-Description by Thomas Oram

## **Songs by Francis Poulenc**

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) was in many ways the most "typical" of the group of French composers known as Les Six, and he represents a trend of 20th-century music that is characteristically French.

Francis Poulenc was born in Paris to a family that was artistic, musical, and affluent. His mother was a fine pianist, and Francis began lessons at the age of 5. Later he studied with Ricardo Vines, a friend of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel who had played the first performances of much of their piano music. While still in his teens Poulenc met Erik Satie, who left a permanent mark on his musical ideals.

When Poulenc was 18, he wrote *Rapsodie nègre* for baritone, string quartet, flute, and clarinet. Its lighthearted irreverence and music-hall atmosphere established his right to be a charter member of Les Six when the group was formed a few years later. He spent most of his life in Paris, except for concert tours that included several trips to the United States after World War II, where he accompanied baritone Pierre Bernac, who specialized in singing his songs.

Poulenc's gift was lyric; he was at his best when he was setting words to music. As the composer of over 150 songs with piano accompaniment, he is perhaps the most important songwriter of his time. He usually set the verses of poets he knew: Guillaume Apollinaire, Jean Cocteau, Paul éluard, and Max Jacob; he performed the same service for these poets that Debussy did for the symbolists.

Poulenc's two operas differ strikingly from each other. *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (1944) is a risqué, surrealist farce; *Les Dialogues des Carmélites* (1957) is a serious and moving

account of the spiritual development of a nun during the French Revolution. His religious choral works, particularly the Litanies à la Vierge noire (1936) and a Stabat Mater (1950), are frequently performed. He also wrote numerous piano solos, a sonata for two pianos, and concertos for piano, two pianos, organ, and harpsichord. Among chamber works there are sonatas for various instruments and piano and a sextet for piano, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn.

Poulenc avoided large, dramatic gestures. He accepted his natural limitations and was content to write music in the spirit of the composers he most admired: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Frédéric Chopin, Debussy, and Igor Stravinsky.

[For more information on Poulenc, click here](#)

## **Leonard Bernstein**

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) was an American composer, conductor, and pianist. His special gifts in bridging the gap between the concert hall and the world of Broadway made him one of the most glamorous musical figures of his day.

Leonard Bernstein was born Louis Bernstein in Lawrence, Massachusetts, on August 25, 1918, to Russian-Jewish immigrants. He changed his name to Leonard at the age of sixteen. The family soon moved to Boston, where Leonard studied at Boston Latin School and Harvard University. Although he had taken piano lessons from the age of 10 and engaged in musical activities at college, his intensive musical training began only in 1939 at the Curtis Institute. The following summer, at the Berkshire Music Festival, he met Serge Koussevitsky, who was to be his chief mentor in the early years.

Despite health problems, Bernstein continued to tour the world in 1990 before returning to Tanglewood for an August 19th concert. He had first conducted a professional orchestra there in 1940, and this performance, 50 years later, was to be his last. He died in New York, on October 14, 1990, of a heart attack brought on by emphysema and other complications

[For more information on Bernstein, click here.](#)

## **Danny Boy**

Many Irish people have a love/hate relationship with the popular song "Danny Boy." The opening lyrics are sure to draw a few voices of dissent from the crowd if a singer takes it upon themselves to belt out one of the most overplayed songs in the history of overplayed songs and yet, the same dissenters will willingly join in if the mood strikes and they're feeling particularly homesick.

[For more info on Danny Boy, click here](#)

## **Giacomo Puccini**

Giacomo Puccini, in full Giacomo Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria Puccini, (born December 22, 1858, Lucca, Tuscany [Italy]—died November 29, 1924, Brussels, Belgium), Italian composer, one of the greatest exponents of operatic realism, who virtually brought the history of Italian opera to an end. His mature operas included *La Bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900), *Madama Butterfly* (1904), and *Turandot* (left incomplete).

[For more information on Puccini, click here.](#)

## **Gioachino Rossini**

Gioachino Rossini, in full Gioachino Antonio Rossini, (born February 29, 1792, Pesaro, Papal States [Italy]—died November 13, 1868, Passy, near Paris, France), Italian composer noted for his operas, particularly his comic operas, of which *The Barber of Seville* (1816), *Cinderella* (1817), and *Semiramide* (1823) are among the best known. Of his later, larger-scale dramatic operas, the most widely heard is *William Tell* (1829).

[For more information on Rossini, click here.](#)

## **Links for translations to:**

[\*\*Schumann's Dichterliebe\*\*](#)

## **Francis Poulenc:**

[\*\*Voyage a Paris\*\*](#)

[\*\*C\*\*](#)

[\*\*Paganini\*\*](#)

[\*\*Bleuet\*\*](#)

## [Puccini's Morire](#)

## [Rossini's La Danza](#)

For more information regarding the artists:

**Jack Swanson's Website:**

[Jackswansontenor.com](http://Jackswansontenor.com)

**Roderick Phipps-Kettlewell's website:**

<https://amademusic.com/>

Special Thanks to:

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