

THOMAS HAMPSON, baritone  
CRAIG RUTENBERG, piano  
Sunday, May 31, 1998

Notes and Texts

Program Notes by Thomas Hampson and Carla Maria Verdino-Süllwold © 1998

*Please hold your applause until the end of each group.*

One of the most provocative dichotomies of the Romantic age was its yearning for freedom from stasis—for a relentless forward-thrusting dynamic—juxtaposed with its longing to return to a gentler time. This nostalgia was expressed vividly in the pan-European and American Folk Movements of the last two and a half centuries. In the late 1800s, reminiscences of a vanishing rural existence, together with the rising Romantic rebellion against the restraints of artistic formula and convention, prompted creative thinkers to plumb what Goethe called the *Volkslied* as a fount of fresh expressive possibilities and a source of unsullied truth. Wordsworth and Coleridge, echoing Robert Burns' democratic humanism ("A man's a man for all of that") sounded a battle cry in their 1797 publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, insisting poetry must be written in the language of the common man. Throughout Europe, poets, composers, and visual artists immersed themselves in the imagistic language of a folk tradition that dated back to medieval times; systematically, they set about to research those traditions while artistically, they absorbed them into their creative psyches to be reborn in new, modern works.

The program begins with a group of musically and poetically intertwined songs inspired by the Folk Movement. When Stephen Collins Foster determined to become America's first professional songwriter, he turned for inspiration to, among others, the Scots-Irish melodies of his childhood. Three seminal collections of the late 18th and early 19th centuries enjoyed overwhelming popularity not only in Europe, but in America as well: James Johnson's *Scots-Irish Musical Museum*, to which Robert Burns was a primary contributor; George Thomson's *National Airs*; and Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*. One of Foster's earliest musical memories was of his older sister Charlotte playing and singing Moore's haunting lyric, *Off in the Stilly Night*, and he surely had Burns' *My Love Is Like a Red, Red Rose* in mind when he composed his own *Ah, May the Red Rose Live Always!* Not only did Foster seek to emulate Burns' and Moore's tenderness of lyrical expression and passion for the common man, but he also sought to absorb their sentiment-rich vocabulary, their unerring instinct for capturing rhythms of their native dialects, and their belief that poetry consisted of words meant to be sung, not read! "There is blood on every page that Burns writes," Walt Whitman once declared. The same could have been said of Moore, whose unabashed Irish patriotism, as voiced in *The Minstrel Boy*, turned the drawing rooms of which he was an idol into salons of subtle subversiveness.

In George Butterworth's *A Shropshire Lad*, the

deceptively simple folk idiom lends an edge of bitter irony to the cycle, drawn from A.E. Housman's collection of poems of the same title. When the twenty-one year old Butterworth turned to Housman's poems in 1906, he was responding, as had five other contemporary composers, to the Edwardian poet's mask of self-imposed restraint which modulated into a seething emotional life beneath—to Housman's juxtaposition of regret and defiance, repression and longing, faith and despair—a blend of nostalgic metaphor and mood which seemed an highly appropriate antidote to the uncertain new century.

Housman, who had spent his life in the lonely ivory tower of a Classics scholar, who had translated the complete works of the Stoic Manlius, and who had taught Latin to generations of youths at London and Cambridge Universities, had written only three slim volumes of verse in his seventy-seven years, all born from the anguish of an unrequited attachment for his university comrade Moses Jackson, by his separation from Jackson who joined the military Raj, and ultimately by Jackson's death in 1923. Of these, the sixty-three poems he self-published in 1896 as *A Shropshire Lad* speak most fervently of what the poet himself called "a land of lost content"—a partly imaginary rural landscape where idyllic chimera link arms with the harsh realities of war, lost innocence, and lost love in a *danse macabre*, that for all its bleakness still sparkles with an unrepentant Romantic faith.

The first three songs, *Loveliest of trees*, *When I was one and twenty*, and *Look not in my eyes*, are simple, lyrical, and lilting in their vocal lines, as the poet and composer reflect on the transience of life, the brevity of beauty, and the folly of falling in love. The turning point arrives, however, in the jerking chords of *Think no more lads*, which paves the way for the impending doom of the war-bound lads at Ludlow fair and for *Is my team ploughing?*, the chilling dialogue between two comrades—one in his grave, the other his replacement in the arms of his beloved. The listener's knowledge that within ten years of composing this cycle Butterworth would be dead—killed at the Battle of Somme on August 5, 1916, at the age of thirty-one—serves only to intensify the crushing ironies and poignancy of the work.

That the American composer Samuel Barber was also drawn to Housman's poetry (*With rue my heart is laden*) is no surprise, given the spiritual and temperamental kinship poet and composer seemed to share. Both were patrician spirits who wore their articulate urbanity as a mask, and both were artists who struggled with the contradictions and correspondences between Classicism and Romanticism. The conflicts of intellect and emotion, of restraint and



abandon, of classical and modernistic reserve versus Romantic melody, of the simplicity of the folk idiom transformed into the sophistication of the art song all shaped the dynamics of Barber's work.

Nephew of the famed contralto Louise Homer and her song-writer husband, Sidney Homer, music was Samuel Barber's birthright. He studied piano at six, began composing at seven, served as church organist while still in his teens, and developed his attractive baritone voice to the point where he seriously considered becoming a professional singer. Trained at the Curtis Institute (with its faculty steeped in the 19th century European tradition) and in Rome, where he formed his life-long friendship with Giancarlo Menotti, Barber composed a wide range of stage, orchestral, piano, choral, and vocal works. Widely read in and deeply committed to poetry, he turned frequently to the English Romantics and mystics, the Georgian School, the Irish bards, and the French Symbolists for inspiration, cultivating their interest in nature, their economy of language and line, their ironic bent, and their distinctly modern pessimism.

The six songs of this evening's program reflect Barber's fascination with the Anglo-Celtic tradition. The group begins with the lilting folk-styled melody for James Stephens' *The Daisies* and ends with the whimsical detachment of *Solitary Hotel* from Joyce's *Ulysses*, meandering in between through the tight-lipped pathos of *With rue my heart is laden*, the demonic despair of W. H. Davies' *Night Wanderers*, and the grim melancholy of Joyce's *Rain has fallen* and his translation from Gottfried Keller of *Now I have fed and eaten up the rose*. Each is a miniature drama in which contemporary skepticism subtly gives way to persistent Romanticism, while never losing hold of the emotional and technical balance that characterize the Classical legacy.

The catholicity of Barber's taste in poetry provides an effective transition to the catholicity of musical styles used to set the texts of America's great 19th century poet, Walt Whitman, whose appeal as a poetic source for song composers was truly international. There are over four hundred known solo song settings of Whitman's poems by American, British, French, Scandinavian, German, Italian,

and Russian composers. The English-language group which concludes today's program samples some of that diversity of idiom, including four native-born American composers and three naturalized American citizens, who embraced Whitman as the voice of their new adoptive land.

Whitman, who once wrote, "*I am large, I contain multitudes*" would surely have delighted in the contrasts as well as the confluence of the seven songs that constitute the second half of tonight's program. These begin with the Afro centric rhythmic origins of Burleigh's *Ethiopia Saluting the Colors*; segueing to the nascent modernism that never quite loses sight of the richness of melody in Rorem's *As Adam Early in the Morning*, and on to the tripartite mini-cantata of Neidlinger's *Memories of Lincoln*, with its intimations of the ballad, choral, and ecclesiastical traditions in which the composer was nurtured. This modulates into the shimmering impressionism of Cairo-born Naginski's *Look Down Fair Moon*, followed by the spare simplicity of Hindemith's *Sing on There in the Swamp*, taken from his *Requiem* that was composed to celebrate his taking of American citizenship, before moving on to the pulsating *Dirge for Two Veterans* in which Weill fuses the percussive emotion of Whitman's *Drum Taps* with the plangent melodies of his Berlin homeland, and finally to the long-lined declamation ensconced in subtle pianistic rhetoric of Bernstein's *To What You Said*.

With Whitman, as with all the poets and composers of today's program, one hears a contrasting dynamic of propulsive narrative and lyric stasis, between the storyteller's drama of the ballad and the psychological drama of the *Lied*, between the nostalgia for a gentler, quieter world—now gone—and the need for a vigorous thrust forward into Whitman's "*unknown region where all awaits undream'd of*." The poet who, at the close of *Song of Myself*, writes, "*Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged, / Missing me one place search another, / I stop some where waiting for you*" extends the invitation to his reader to voyage, to become a wanderer who abandons stasis and embraces flux, discovering as Romantics from the 19th century to the present have, that mankind's fate appears to hinge on accepting the peregrinations of poetry and life.

## I.

THOMAS MOORE (1780-1852)

### Of in the Stilly Night

[Text by Thomas Moore]

Of in the stilly night,  
 Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,  
 Fond Memory brings the light  
 Of other days around me;  
 The smiles, the tears,  
 Of boyhood years,  
 The words of love then spoken;  
 The eyes that shone,  
 Now dimmed and gone,  
 The cheerful hearts now broken!

Continued in next column...

Thus in the stilly night,  
 Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,  
 Sad Memory brings the light  
 Of other days around me.  
 When I remember all  
 The friends so linked together,  
 I've seen around me fall,  
 Like leaves in wintry weather;  
 I feel like one,  
 Who treads alone,  
 Some banquet-hall deserted,  
 Whose lights are fled,  
 Whose garlands dead,  
 And all but he departed!  
 Thus in the stilly night,  
 Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,  
 Sad Memory brings the light  
 Of other days around me.



**ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796)**

**My Love Is Like a Red, Red Rose**

*[text by Robert Burns]*

O, my Luve's like a red, red rose,  
That's newly sprung in June.  
O, my Luve's like the melody  
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in love am I;  
And I will love thee still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:  
I will love thee still, my dear,  
While the sands o' life shall run:

And fare thee weel, my only luve!  
And fare thee weel, a while!  
And I will come again, my luve,  
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

**STEPHEN C. FOSTER (1826-1864)**

*[Text by Stephen Foster]*

**Ah! May the Red Rose Live Always!**

Ah! may the red rose live always,  
To smile upon earth and sky!  
Why should the beautiful ever weep!  
Why should the beautiful die?

Lending a charm to ev'ry ray  
That falls on her cheeks of light,  
Giving the zephyr kiss for kiss,  
And nursing the dewdrop bright.

Spreading their petals in mute delight  
When morn in its radiance breaks,  
Keeping a floral festival  
O'Till the night loving primrose wakes

Long may the daisies dance the field,  
Frolicking far and near!  
Why should the innocent hide their heads?  
Why should the innocent fear?

Lulled be the dirge in the cypress bough,  
That tells of departed flowers!  
Ah! that the butterfly's gilded wing  
Fluttered in evergreen bowers!

Sad is my heart for the blighted plants  
Its pleasures are ay as brief;  
They bloom at the young year's joyful call,  
And fade with the autumn leaf.

**THOMAS MOORE**

**The Minstrel Boy**

*[Air: The Moreen; text by Thomas Moore]*

The Minstrel-Boy to the war is gone,  
In the ranks of death you'll find him:  
His father's sword he has girded on,  
And his wild harp slung behind him—  
"Land of song!" said the warrior-bard,  
"Tho' all the world betrays thee,  
"One sword, at least, thy rights shall guard,  
"One faithful harp shall praise thee!"

The Minstrel fell!—but the foeman's chain  
Could not bring his proud soul under;  
The harp he loved n'er spoke again,  
For he tore its chords asunder;  
And said, "No chains shall sully thee,  
"Thou soul of love and bravery!  
"Thy songs were made for the pure and free,  
"They shall never sound in slavery."

**II - GEORGE BUTTERWORTH (1885-1916)**

**Six Songs from a Shropshire Lad**

*[Poems by A.E. Housman (1859-1936)]*

I.  
Loveliest of trees, the cherry now  
Is hung with bloom along the bough,  
And stands about the woodland ride  
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,  
Twenty will not come again.  
And take from seventy springs a score,  
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom  
Fifty springs are little room,  
About the woodlands I will go  
To see the cherry hung with snow.

II.  
When I was one-and-twenty  
I heard a wise man say,  
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas  
But not your heart away;  
Give pearls away and rubies  
But keep your fancy free."  
But I was one-and-twenty,  
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty  
I heard him say again,  
"The heart out of the bosom  
Was never given in vain;  
'Tis paid with sighs a plenty  
And sold for endless rue."  
And I am two-and-twenty,  
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

**Please turn page quietly when the song is finished.**



III.

Look not in my eyes, for fear  
They mirror the sight I see,  
And there you find your face too clear  
And love it and be lost like me.  
One the long nights through must lie  
Spent in star-defeated sighs,  
But why should you as well as I  
Perish? gaze not in my eyes.

A Grecian lad, as I hear tell,  
One that many loved in vain,  
Looked into a forest well  
And never looked away again.  
There, where the turf in springtime flowers,  
With downward eye and gazes sad,  
Stands amid the glancing showers  
A jonquil, not a Grecian lad.

IV.

Think no more, lad; laugh, be jolly:  
Why should men make haste to die?  
Empty heads and tongues a-talking  
Make the rough road easy walking,  
And the feather pate of folly  
Bears the falling sky.

Oh, 'tis jesting, dancing, drinking  
Spins the heavy world around.  
If young hearts were not so clever,  
Oh, they would be young forever:  
Think no more; 'tis only thinking  
Lays lads underground.

V.

The lads in their hundreds to Ludlow come in for the fair,  
There's men from the barn and the forge  
and the mill and the fold,  
The lads for the girls and the lads for the liquor are there,  
And there with the rest are the lads  
that will never be old.

There's chaps from the town and the field  
and the till and the cart,  
And many to count are the stalwart,  
and many the brave,  
And many the handsome of face  
and the handsome of heart,  
And few that will carry their looks  
or their truth to the grave.

I wish I could know them, I wish there were tokens to tell  
The fortunate fellows that now  
you can never discern;  
And then one could talk with them friendly  
and wish them farewell  
And watch them depart on the way  
that they will not return.

But now you may stare as you like and there's  
nothing to scan;  
And brushing your elbow unguessed-at  
and not to be told  
They carry back bright to the coiner the mintage of man,  
The lads that will die in their glory and never be old.

VI.

"Is my team ploughing,  
That I used to drive  
And hear the harness jingle  
When I was man alive?"

Ay, the horses trample,  
The harness jingles now;  
No change though you lie under  
The land you used to plough.

"Is football playing  
Along the river shore,  
With lads to chase the leather,  
Now I stand up no more?"

Ay, the ball is flying,  
The lads play heart and soul;  
The goal stands up, the keeper  
Stands up to keep the goal.

"Is my girl happy,  
That I thought hard to leave,  
And has she tired of weeping  
As she lies down at eve?"

"Is my friend hearty,  
Now I am thin and pine,  
And has he found to sleep in  
A better bed than mine?"

Yes, lad, I lie easy,  
I lie as lads would choose;  
I cheer a dead man's sweetheart,  
Never ask me whose.

III - SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)

**The Daisies**, Opus 2, No. 1  
[Text by James Stephens (1882-1950)]

In the scented bud of the morning O,  
When the windy grass went rippling far!  
I saw my dear one walking slow  
In the field where the daisies are.

We did not laugh, and we did not speak,  
As we wandered happ'ly to and fro,  
I kissed my dear on either cheek,  
In the bud of the morning O!

A lark sang up from the breezy land;  
A lark sang down from a cloud afar;  
As she and I went hand in hand,  
In the field where the daisies are.

**With rue my heart is laden**  
[Text by A.E. Housman (1859-1936)]

With rue my heart is laden  
For golden friends I had,  
For many a rose-lipt maiden  
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping  
The lightfoot boys are laid;  
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping  
In fields where roses fade.



## Night Wanderers

[Text by W.H. Davies (1871-1940)]

They hear the bells of midnight toll,  
And shiver in their flesh and soul;  
They lie on hard, cold wood or stone,  
Iron, and ache in every bone;  
They hate the night; they see no eyes  
of loved ones in the starlit skies.  
They see the cold, dark water near;  
They dare not take long looks for fear  
They'll fall like poor birds that see  
A snake's eyes staring at their tree.  
Some of them laugh, half mad; and some  
All through the chilly night are dumb,  
Like poor, weak infants some converse,  
And cough like giants, deep and hoarse.

## Now I Have Fed and Eaten Up the Rose

[Text by James Joyce  
after Gottfried Keller (1819-1890)]

Now I have fed and eaten up the rose  
Which then she laid within my stiffcold hand.  
That I should ever feed upon a rose  
I never had believed in livemean's land.

Only I wonder was it white or red  
The flower that in the darkness my food has been.  
Give us, and if Thou give, thy daily bread.  
Deliver us from evil, Lord, Amen.

## Rain has fallen

[Text by James Joyce (1882-1941)]

Rain has fallen all the day.  
O come among the laden trees:  
The leaves lie thick upon the way  
Of memories.

Staying a little by the way  
Of memories shall we depart.  
Come, my beloved, where I may  
Speak to your heart.

## Solitary Hotel

[Text by James Joyce]

Solitary hotel in mountain pass.  
Autumn.  
Twilight.  
Fire lit.  
In dark corner young man seated.  
Young woman enters.  
Restless.  
Solitary.  
She sits.  
She goes to window.  
She stands.  
She sits.  
Twilight.  
She thinks.  
On solitary hotel paper she writes.  
She thinks.  
She writes.  
She sighs.

Wheels and hoofs.  
She hurries out.  
He comes from his dark corner.  
He seizes solitary paper.  
He holds it towards fire.  
Twilight.  
He reads.  
Solitary.  
What?  
In sloping, upright and backhands.  
Queen's hotel,  
Queen's hotel,  
Queen's ho-...

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## INTERMISSION

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## IV - SONGS TO TEXTS BY WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892)

### HENRY THACKER BURLEIGH (1886-1949) Ethiopia Saluting the Colors

Who are you dusky woman, so ancient hardly human,  
With your woolly-white and turban'd head,  
and bare bony feet?  
Why rising by the roadside here, do you the colors greet?

('Tis while our army lines Carolina's sands and pines,  
Forth from thy hovel door thou Ethiopia com'st to me,  
As under doughty Sherman I march toward the sea.)

*Me master years a hundred since from my parents  
sunder'd,  
A little child, they caught me as the savage beast  
is caught,  
Then hither me across the sea the cruel slaver brought.*

No further does she say, but lingering all the day,  
Her high-borne turban'd head she wags, and rolls her  
darkling eye,  
And courtesies to the regiments, the guidons moving by.

What is it fateful woman, so bleary, hardly human?  
Why wag your head with turban bound, yellow, red,  
and green?  
Are the things so strange and marvelous you see  
or have seen?

### NED ROREM (b.1923) As Adam Early in the Morning

As Adam early in the morning,  
Walking forth from the bower refresh'd with sleep,  
Behold me where I pass, hear my voice, approach,  
your hand to my body as I pass,  
Be not afraid of my body.

*Please turn page quietly when the song is finished.*

*Continued in next column...*



**WILLIAM NEIDLINGER (1863-1924)**

**Memories of Lincoln**

Beat! beat! drums!--blow! bugles! blow!  
Through the windows--through the doors--burst like a  
ruthless force,  
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,  
Beat! beat! drums!--blow! bugles! blow!  
Are beds prepared for the sleepers at night in the houses?  
no sleepers must sleep in those beds ,  
You bugles wilder blow, blow! bugles! blow!

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,  
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky  
in the night,  
O mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning  
spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,  
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,  
And thought of him I love.

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought  
is won,  
But O heart! heart! heart!  
O the bleeding drops of red,  
Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

**CHARLES NAGINSKI (1909-1940)**

**Look Down Fair Moon**

Look down fair moon and bathe this scene,  
Pour softly down night's nimbus floods on faces ghastly,  
swollen, purple,  
On the dead on their backs with arms toss'd wide,  
Pour down your unstinted nimbus sacred moon.

**PAUL HINDEMITH (1895-1963)**

**Sing on There in the Swamp**

Sing on there in the swamp,  
O singer bashful and tender, I hear your notes,  
I hear your call,  
I hear, I come presently, I understand you,  
But a moment I linger for the lustrous star has  
detain'd me,  
The star, my departing comrade, holds and detains me.

**KURT WEILL (1900-1950)**

**Dirge for Two Veterans**

The last sunbeam  
Lightly falls from the finish'd Sabbath,  
On the pavement here, and there beyond it is looking,  
Down a new-made double grave.

Lo, the moon ascending,  
Up from the east the silvery round moon,  
Beautiful over the house-tops, ghastly, phantom moon,  
Immense and silent moon.

I see a sad procession,  
And I hear the sound of coming full-key'd bugles,  
All the channels of the city streets they are flooding,  
As with voices and with tears.

I hear the great drums pounding,  
And the small drums steady whirring  
And every blow of the great convulsive drums,  
Strikes me through and through.

For the son is brought with the father,  
(In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they fell,  
Two veterans son and father dropt together,  
And the double grave awaits them.)

And nearer blow the bugles,  
And the drums strike more convulsive,  
And the daylight o'er the pavement quite has faded,  
And the strong dead-march enwraps me.

In the eastern sky up-buoying,  
The sorrowful vast phantom moves illumin'd,  
( 'Tis some mother's large transparent face,  
In heaven brighter growing.)

O strong dead-march you please me!  
O moon immense with your silvery face you soothe me!  
O my soldiers twain! O my veterans passing to burial!  
What I have I also give you.

The moon gives you light,  
And the bugles and the drums give you music,  
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,  
My heart gives you love.

**LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918-1990)**

**To What You Said**

To what you said, passionately clasping my hand,  
this is my answer;  
Though you have strayed hither, for my sake,  
you can never belong to me, nor I to you,  
Behold the customary loves and friendships  
—the cold guards,  
I am that rough and simple person.  
I am he who kisses his comrade lightly on the lips  
at parting, and I am one who is kissed in return,  
I introduce that new American salute.

Behold love choked, correct, polite, always suspicious.

Behold the received models of the parlors  
—What are they to me?  
What to these young men that travel with me?

*continued in next column...*