

A portrait of Miah Persson, a woman with blonde hair and blue eyes, wearing a blue off-the-shoulder top. She is looking upwards and to the right.

# Miah Persson Joseph Middleton

Howard Assembly Room  
23 October 2025, 7:45PM

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Leeds  
Song



HOWARD  
ASSEMBLY  
ROOM

# Programme

Miah Persson, Soprano

Joseph Middleton, Piano

**Ture Rangström** 1884-1947

Sommarnatten  
Den enda stunden  
Melodi  
Bön till natten  
Pan

**Gösta Nystroem** 1890-1966

*På reveln*  
På reveln  
Otrolig  
Havet sjunger

**Jean Sibelius** 1865-1957

Våren flyktar  
Första kyssen  
Bollspelet vid Trianon  
Säv, säv susa  
Var det en dröm

## Interval

**Alban Berg** 1885-1935

*Sieben frühe Lieder*  
Nacht  
Schilflied  
Die Nachtigall  
Traumgekrönt  
Im Zimmer  
Liebesode  
Sommertage

**Richard Strauss** 1864-1949

Ständchen  
Freundliche Vision  
Heimliche Aufforderung  
Morgen!  
Zueignung

# Texts and Translations

## Ture Rangström (1884-1947)

### Sommarnatten

På den lugna skogssjöns vatten  
satt jag hela sommarnatten  
och för böljans tropp ur båten  
slängde tanklös ut försäten.

Men en taltrast sjöng på stranden  
att han kunnat mista anden,  
tills jag halvt förtörnad sade:  
"Bättre, om din näbb du lade  
under vingen och till dagen  
sparde tonerna och slagen."

Men den djärve hördes svara:  
"Gosse, låt ditt metspö vara.  
Såg du upp kring land och vatten,  
kanske sjöng du, själv om natten."

Och jag lyfte upp mitt öga,  
ljus var jorden, ljus det höga,  
och från himlen, stranden, vågen  
kom min flicka mig i hågen;  
och som fågeln spått i lunden,  
sjöng jag denna sång på stunden.

*Text by Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1804-1877)*

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### Den enda stunden

Allena var jag, han kom allena;  
förbi min bana hans bana ledde.

Han dröjde icke, men tänkte dröja,  
han talte icke, men ögat talte.

Du obekante, du välbekante!  
En dag försvinner, ett år förflyter,  
det ena minnet det andra jagar;  
den korta stunden blev hos mig evigt,  
den bittra stunden, den ljuva stunden.

*Text by Johan Ludvig Runeberg*

*For copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce the translation of this song.*

### Melodi

*Text by Bo Bergman (1869-1967)*

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### Bön till natten

*Text by Bo Bergman (1869-1967)*

*For copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce the text of this song.*

### Pan

*Text by Bo Bergman*

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## Gösta Nystroem (1890-1966)

### På reveln

Text by Anders Österling (1884-1981)

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### Otrolig

Text by Einar Malm (1900-1988)

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### Havet sjunger

Text by Ebba Lindqvist (1908-1995)

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## Jean Sibelius (1885-1957)

### Våren flyktar hastigt

Våren flyktar hastigt,  
Hastigare sommarn,  
Hösten dröjer länge,  
Vintern ännu längre.  
Snart I sköna kinder,  
Skolen i förvissna  
Och ej knoppas mera.  
Gossen svarde åter:

Än i höstens dagar  
Gläda vårens minnen,

Än i vinterns dagar  
Räcka sommarns skördar.  
Fritt må våren flykta,  
Fritt må kinden vissna,  
Låt oss nu blott äska,  
Låt oss nu blott kyssas.

*Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1804-1877)*

### Den första kyssen

På silvermolnets kant satt aftonstjärnan,  
Från lundens skymning frågte henne tärnan:  
Säg, aftonstjärna, vad i himlen tänkes,

När första kyssen åt en älskling skänkes?  
Och himlens blyga dotter hördes svara:

På jorden blickar ljusets änglaskara,  
Och ser sin egen sällhet speglad åter;  
Blott döden vänder ögat bort och gråter.

*Johan Ludvig Runeberg*

### Spring is swift to fly

Spring is swift to fly away,  
Summer is swifter,  
Autumn lingers long,  
Winter still longer.  
Soon, o lovely cheeks,  
You will wither  
And bloom no more.  
The boy answered her back:

On an autumn day  
The memory of spring still makes us happy.

On a winter day  
The harvest of summer still suffices.  
What if springtime is fleeting?  
What if cheeks do wither?  
For now, let's just love,  
For now, let's just kiss.

### The first kiss

The evening star sat on the rim of silver mist.  
From the shadowy grove the maiden asked her:  
'Tell me, evening star, what do they think in heaven

When you give the first kiss to your lover?'  
And heaven's shy daughter was heard to answer:

'The angels of light look toward the earth  
And see their own bliss reflected back;  
Only death turns his eyes away and weeps.'

### Bollspelet vid Trianon

Det smattrar prat och slår boll och skrattar  
Emellan träden vid Trianon,  
Små markisinnor i schäferhattar,  
De le och gnola, lonlaridon.

Små markisinnor på höga klackar,  
De leka oskuld och herdefest  
För unga herdar med stela nackar,  
Vicomte Lindor, monseigneur Alceste.

Men så med ett  
Vid närmsta stam  
Stack grovt och brett  
Ett huvud fram.

Vicomte skrek: „Voilà la tête là!“  
Och monseigneur slog förbi sin boll  
Och „Qu'est-ce que c'est?“ och  
„Qui est la bête là?“  
Det ljud i korus från alla håll.

Och näsor rynkas förnämt koketta,  
En hastig knyck i var nacke far  
Och markisinnorna hoppa lätt  
Och bollen flyger från par till par.

Men tyst därifrån  
Med tunga fjät  
Går dräggens son  
Jourdan Coupe-tête.

*Gustaf Fröding (1860-1911)*

### Säf, säf, susa

Säf, säf, susa,  
Våg, våg, slå,  
I sägen mig hvar Ingalill  
den unga mände gå?  
Hon skrek som en vingskjuten and,  
när hon sjönk i sjön,  
Det var när sista vår stod grön.  
De voro henne gramse vid Östanålid,  
Det tog hon sig så illa vid.  
De voro henne gramse för gods och gull  
Och för hennes unga kärleks skull.  
De stucko en ögonsten med tagg,  
De kastade smuts i en liljas dagg.  
Så sjungen, sjungen sorgsång,  
I sorgsna vågor små,  
Säf, säf, susa,  
Våg, våg, slå!

### Var det en dröm

Var det en dröm, att ljuvt en gång  
Jag var ditt hjärtas vän?  
Jag minns det som en tystnad sång,  
Då strängen darrar än.

Jag minns en törnros av dig skänkt,  
En blick så blyg och öm;  
Jag minns en avskedstår, som blänkt.  
Var allt, var allt en dröm?

En dröm lik sippans liv så kort  
Uti en vågrön ängd,  
Vars fågling hastigt vissnar bort  
För nya blommors mängd.

Men mången natt jag hör en röst  
Vid bittra tårars ström:  
Göm djupt dess minne i ditt bröst,  
Det var din bästa dröm!

*Josef Julius Wecksell (1838-1907)*

### Jeu de paume at Ytianon

There is chattering, a ball game and merriment  
among the trees of the Trianon.  
Little marquises wearing shepherdesses' hats  
smile and hum 'Lonlaridon'.

Little marquises with high-heeled shoes  
play the innocent, at being shepherdesses  
for young, stiff-necked shepherds,  
Viscount Lindor, Monseigneur Alceste.

But suddenly,  
from behind the nearest tree,  
a head sprang out,  
coarse and broad.

The viscount shouted 'Look at the head there!'  
and Monseigneur missed the ball;  
and 'What is it?', and  
'Who's that creature?'  
was heard in chorus all around.

And noses are turned up coquettishly;  
heads given a toss,  
and the marquises hop lightly  
and the ball flies from pair to pair.

But silently from there,  
with heavy footsteps,  
goes the boy of the gutter,  
Jordan with the broken head.

### Reeds, reeds, whisper

Reeds, reeds, whisper;  
Waves, waves, lap.  
Are you telling me where  
Young Ingalill has gone?  
She cried out like a wounded duck when She sank into  
the lake.  
It was when the spring was last green.  
They were envious of her at Östanålid,  
She took it so deeply to heart.  
They envied her wealth and worldly goods,  
And her young love.  
They pierced an eyeball with thorns.  
They spattered filth on a lily's dew.  
So sing your lament,  
You small sad waves,  
Reeds, reeds, whisper;  
Waves, waves, lap.

### Was it a dream

Was it a dream that once, in a wonderful time,  
I was your heart's true love?  
I remember it as a song fallen silent,  
of which the strains still echo.

I remember a rose you tossed,  
a glance so shy and tender;  
I remember a sparkling tear when we parted.  
Was it all, all a dream?

A dream as brief as the life of a cowslip  
in a green meadow in springtime,  
whose beauty soon withers away  
before a crowd of new flowers.

But many a night I hear a voice  
through the flood of my bitter tears:  
hide this memory deep in your heart,  
it was your best dream!

# Alban Berg (1885-1935)

## *Sieben frühe Lieder*

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### Nacht

Dämmern Wolken über Nacht und Thal,  
Nebel schweben. Wasser rauschen sacht.  
Nun entschleiert sich's mit einem Mal:  
O gieb acht! gieb acht!

Weites Wunderland ist aufgethan,  
Silbern ragen Berge traumhaft gross,  
Stille Pfade silberlicht thalan  
Aus verborg'nem Schoss.

Und die hehre Welt so traumhaft rein.  
Stummer Buchenbaum am Wege steht  
Schattenschwarz – ein Hauch vom fernen Hain  
Einsam leise weht.

Und aus tiefen Grundes Dusterheit  
Blinken Lichter auf in stummer Nacht.  
Trinke Seele! trinke Einsamkeit!  
O gieb acht! gieb acht!

### Schilflied

Auf geheimem Waldespfade  
Schleich' ich gern im Abendschein  
An das öde Schilfgestade,  
Mädchen, und gedenke dein!

Wenn sich dann der Busch verdüstert,  
Rauscht das Rohr geheimnisvoll,  
Und es klaget und es flüstert,  
Daß ich weinen, weinen soll.

Und ich mein', ich höre wehen  
Leise deiner Stimme Klang,  
Und im Weiher untergehen  
Deinen lieblichen Gesang.

### Die Nachtigall

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall  
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;  
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,  
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall  
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

Sie war doch sonst ein wildes Blut,  
Nun geht sie tief in Sinnen,  
Trägt in der Hand den Sommerhut  
Und duldet still der Sonne Glut  
Und weiß nicht, was beginnen.

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall  
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;  
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,  
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall  
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

### Traumgekrönt

Das war der Tag der weißen Chrysanthemen, –  
mir bangte fast vor seiner Pracht...  
Und dann, dann kamst du mir die Seele nehmen  
tief in der Nacht.

Mir war so bang, und du kamst lieb und leise, –  
ich hatte grad im Traum an dich gedacht.  
Du kamst, und leis wie eine Märchenweise  
erklang die Nacht....

### Night

Clouds loom over night and valley.  
Mists hover, waters softly murmur.  
Now at once all is unveiled.  
O take heed! take heed!

A vast wonderland opens up,  
Silvery mountains soar dreamlike tall,  
Silent paths climb silver-bright valleywards  
From a hidden womb.

And the glorious world so dreamlike pure.  
A silent beech-tree stands by the wayside  
Shadow-black – a breath from the distant grove  
Blows solitary soft.

And from the deep valley's gloom  
Lights twinkle in the silent night.  
Drink soul! drink solitude!  
O take heed! take heed!

### Along a secret forest path

Along a secret forest path  
I love to steal in the evening light  
To the desolate reedy shore  
And think, my girl, of you!

When the bushes then grow dark,  
The reeds pipe mysteriously,  
Lamenting and whispering,  
That I must weep, must weep.

And I seem to hear the soft sound  
Of your voice,  
And your lovely singing  
Drowning in the pond.

### Along a secret forest path

It is because the nightingale  
Has sung throughout the night,  
That from the sweet sound  
Of her echoing song  
The roses have sprung up.

She was once a wild creature,  
Now she wanders deep in thought;  
In her hand a summer hat,  
Bearing in silence the sun's heat,  
Not knowing what to do.

It is because the nightingale  
Has sung throughout the night,  
That from the sweet sound  
Of her echoing song  
The roses have sprung up.

### Along a secret forest path

That was the day of the white chrysanthemums –  
Its brilliance almost frightened me ...  
And then, then you came to take my soul  
at the dead of night.

I was so frightened, and you came sweetly and gently,  
I had been thinking of you in my dreams.  
You came, and soft as a fairy tune  
the night rang out ...



### Im Zimmer

Herbstsonnenschein.  
Der liebe Abend blickt so still herein.  
Ein Feuerlein rot  
Knistert im Ofenloch und loht.

So, mein Kopf auf deinen Knie'n,  
So ist mir gut.  
Wenn mein Auge so in deinem ruht,  
Wie leise die Minuten zieh'n.

### Liebesode

Im Arm der Liebe schliefen wir selig ein,  
Am offenen Fenster lauschte der Sommerwind,  
Und unsrer Atemzüge Frieden  
Trug er hinaus in die helle Mondnacht. –

Und aus dem Garten tastete zagend sich  
Ein Rosenduft an unserer Liebe Bett  
Und gab uns wundervolle Träume,  
Träume des Rausches – so reich an Sehnsucht!

### Sommertage

Nun ziehen Tage über die Welt,  
Gesandt aus blauer Ewigkeit,  
Im Sommerwind verweht die Zeit.  
Nun windet nächstens der Herr  
Sternenkränze mit seliger Hand  
Über Wander- und Wunderland.  
O Herz, was kann in diesen Tagen  
Dein hellstes Wanderlied denn sagen  
Von deiner tiefen, tiefen Lust:  
Im Wiesensang verstummt die Brust,  
Nun schweigt das Wort, wo Bild um Bild  
Zu dir zieht und dich ganz erfüllt.

### Night

Autumn sunshine.  
The lovely evening looks in so silently.  
A little red fire  
Crackles and blazes in the hearth.

Like this! – With my head on your knees. –  
Like this I am content;  
When my eyes rest in yours like this.  
How gently the minutes pass!

### Night

In love's arms we fell blissfully asleep.  
The summer wind listened at the open window,  
and carried the peace of our breathing  
out into the moon-bright night. –

And from the garden a scent of roses  
came timidly to our bed of love  
and gave us wonderful dreams,  
ecstatic dreams – so rich in longing!

### Night

Days, sent from blue eternity,  
journey now across the world,  
time drifts away in the summer wind.  
The Lord at night now garlands  
star-chains with his blessed hand  
across lands of wandering and wonder.

In these days, O heart, what can  
your brightest travel-song say  
of your deep, deep joy?  
The heart falls silent in the meadows' song,  
words now cease when image after image  
comes to you and fills you utterly.

## Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

### Ständchen

Mach auf, mach auf, doch leise mein Kind,  
Um keinen vom Schlummer zu wecken.  
Kaum murmelt der Bach, kaum zittert im Wind  
Ein Blatt an den Büschen und Hecken.  
Drum leise, mein Mädchen, daß nichts sich regt,  
Nur leise die Hand auf die Klinke gelegt.

Mit Tritten, wie Tritte der Elfen so sacht,  
Um über die Blumen zu hüpfen,  
Flieg leicht hinaus in die Mondscheinnacht,  
Zu mir in den Garten zu schlüpfen.  
Rings schlummern die Blüten am rieselnden Bach  
Und duften im Schlaf, nur die Liebe ist wach.

Sitz nieder, hier dämmert's geheimnisvoll  
Unter den Lindenbäumen,  
Die Nachtigall uns zu Häupten soll  
Von unseren Küssen träumen,  
Und die Rose, wenn sie am Morgen erwacht,  
Hoch glühn von den Wonnenschauern der Nacht.

*Adolf Freidrich Graf von Schack (1815-1894)*

### Freundliche Vision

Nicht im Schlafe hab' ich das geträumt,  
Hell am Tage sah ich's schön vor mir:  
Eine Wiese voller Margeriten;  
Tief ein weißes Haus in grünen Büschen;  
Götterbilder leuchten aus dem Laube.  
Und ich geh' mit Einer, die mich lieb hat,  
Ruhigen Gemütes in die Kühle  
Dieses weißen Hauses, in den Frieden,  
Der voll Schönheit wartet, daß wir kommen.

*Otto Julius Bierbaum (1865-1910)*

### Waldseligkeit

Der Wald beginnt zu rauschen,  
Den Bäumen naht die Nacht,  
Als ob sie selig lauschen,  
Berühren sie sich sacht.  
Und unter ihren Zweigen,  
Da bin ich ganz allein,  
Da bin ich ganz mein eigen :  
Ganz nur Dein!

*Richard Fedor Leopold Dehmel (1863-1920)*

### Heimliche Aufforderung

Auf, hebe die funkelnde Schale empor zum Mund,  
Und trinke beim Freudenmahle dein Herz gesund.  
Und wenn du sie hebst, so winke mir heimlich zu,  
Dann lächle ich und dann trinke ich still wie du...

Und still gleich mir betrachte um uns das Heer  
Der trunknen Zecher - verachte sie nicht zu sehr.

Nein, hebe die blinkende Schale, gefüllt mit Wein,  
Und laß beim lärmenden Mahle sie glücklich sein.

Doch hast du das Mahl genossen, den Durst gestillt,  
Dann verlasse der lauten Genossen festfreudiges Bild,  
Und wandle hinaus in den Garten zum Rosenstrauch,  
Dort will ich dich dann erwarten nach altem Brauch,  
Und will an die Brust dir sinken, eh du's gehofft,

Und deine Küsse trinken, wie ehemals oft,  
Und flechten in deine Haare der Rose Pracht.  
O komm, du wunderbare, ersehnte Nacht!

*John Henry Mackay (1864-1933)*

### Serenade

Open the door, open the door quietly, my child,  
So as not to wake anyone from sleep.  
The brook hardly murmurs, in the wind hardly  
A leaf stirs in the bushes and hedges.  
So gently, my love, so that nothing stirs.  
Just gently put your hand on the latch.

With steps as light as the elves'  
When they hop over the flowers,  
Fly softly out into the moonlit night,  
Slip out here to me in the garden.  
The sleeping flowers along the whispering brook  
Perfume the air in their sleep, only love is awake.

Sit down, it's dark and secret here  
Under the linden trees,  
The nightingale over our heads  
Will dream of our kisses,  
And when the rose awakes in the morning,  
It will glow with wonder at our night's rapture.

### Friendly vision

I didn't dream it in my sleep,  
I saw it clearly before me in broad daylight:  
A field full of daisies.  
Deep in the green bushes stands a white house;  
Statues of gods gleam through the foliage.  
And I wander with one who loves me  
Calmly into the coolness  
Of this white house, into the peace,  
Which, full of beauty, is waiting for us.

### Forest rapture

The forest begins to rustle,  
Night descends to the trees,  
As if they were blissfully listening  
They gently touch each other.  
And beneath their branches  
I am quite alone,  
That's where I belong only to myself,  
Only to you!

### Secret invitation

Come, raise the sparkling goblet to your lips,  
And drink your heart to health at this joyful feast.  
And when you raise it, give me a secret sign,  
Then I will smile, and drink quietly like you...

And quietly, like me, look around at the army  
Of drunken imbibers — don't despise them too much,  
No, raise the glittering goblet, filled with wine  
And let them be happy at this riotous feast.

But once you have enjoyed the meal and drunk your fill,  
Then leave the noisy company of happy revellers,  
And come out into the garden, to the rose bush  
And I shall wait for you there as usual,  
And I shall sink down on your breast, before you  
could wish it,

And drink your kisses, as so often before,  
And I will weave the splendid roses into your hair,  
Oh come quickly, you wondrous, longed-for night!



### **Morgen**

Und morgen wird die Sonne wieder scheinen,  
Und auf dem Wege, den ich gehen werde,  
Wird uns, die Glücklichen, sie wieder einen  
Inmitten dieser sonnenatmenden Erde . . .  
Und zu dem Strand, dem weiten, wogenblauen,  
Werden wir still und langsam niedersteigen,  
Stumm werden wir uns in die Augen schauen,  
Und auf uns sinkt des Glückes stummes Schweigen.

*John Henry Mackay*

### **Zueignung**

Ja, du weißt es, teure Seele,  
Daß ich fern von dir mich quäle,  
Liebe macht die Herzen krank,  
Habe Dank.

Einst hielt ich, der Freiheit Zecher,  
Hoch den Amethysten-Becher,  
Und du segnetest den Trank,  
Habe Dank.

Und beschworst darin die Bösen,  
Bis ich, was ich nie gewesen,  
Heilig, heilig ans Herz dir sank,  
Habe Dank.

*Hermann von Gilm zu Rosenegg (1812-1864)*

### **Tomorrow**

And tomorrow the sun will shine again,  
And on the path that I will take,  
It will unite us, we happy ones, again,  
In the midst of this sun-breathing earth.....  
And we will go quietly and slowly down  
To the wide blue-waved beach,  
Mutely we will gaze into each other's eyes,  
And the silence of happiness will envelop us.

### **Dedication**

Yes, you know, my dear one,  
That I am in torment far away from you,  
Love makes hearts suffer,  
Take my thanks.

Once I, the taster of freedom,  
Held high the Amethyst goblet,  
And you blessed the drink,  
Take my thanks.

And you banished the evil spirits,  
Until I, as I never had been before,  
Blessed, blessed, sank on your heart.  
Take my thanks

# Programme Notes

## **Ture Rangström 1884-1947**

Sommarnatten  
Den enda stunden  
Melodi  
Bön till natten  
Pan

Ture Rangström was a contemporary of Nielsen and Sibelius. He studied in Stockholm (where he was born), and for a short period, with Pfitzner in Berlin. However, as a composer he was largely self-taught, and his singing studies with Julius Hey in both Berlin and Munich were more influential. He was music director for the Gothenburg Orchestral Society (1922–25), a critic for several Stockholm newspapers, a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music (1919), and a recipient of the 'Litteris et artibus' medal (1944). He was associated with Swedish dramatist Strindberg; his first symphony was 'August Strindberg in memoriam', and his first opera, *Kronbruden* ('The Crown Bride'), was also based on Strindberg. Rangström was one of Sweden's leading composers of art songs in the first half of the 20th century, composing more than 250 – he was even known as 'the Swedish Schubert' – but composed in other instrumental and vocal genres as well. His songs fall roughly into four types: songs with a single musical motif and an arch structure; direct dramatic declamation; influenced by folk music and simple strophic forms; and using a more operatic idiom. The last three songs in this group set poems by Bo Bergman, the writer who Rangström set more than any other. 'Sommarnatten' (1917) was also set by Sibelius. The dialogue between the bird and the young man is illustrated by the piano's birdsong flourishes and the more sustained vocal line, which become more animated when the bird sings. Within the overall mood there is subtle variation. 'Den enda stunden' is a touching song whose understatement almost suggests Fauré, and 'Bön till natten' uses a similar straightforward accompaniment supporting an exquisite melody. 'Melodi' is more ornate, and the piano writing suggests the Strauss of 'Heimliche Aufforderung'. 'Pan' (1924) has the Greek god sitting with his back against the trunk of a spruce tree, out of which Rangström conjures up a hymn to nature. He uses varying bar-lengths here but the phrases flow seamlessly, like the waving corn and the trees.

## **Gösta Nystroem 1890-1966**

*På reveln*  
På reveln  
Otroilig  
Havet sjunger

Gösta Nystroem was born in Sweden and spent most of his childhood near Stockholm. In his youth, Nystroem was both a composer and a painter (one of the first Swedish Cubists), but when he was about thirty years old, he decided to focus on music. He studied composition in

Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Paris. After living in France for several years, he moved to Gothenburg in the 1930s, where he worked as a music critic and as the curator of the Göteborgs Konsthall, a major Swedish art gallery – he later settled near Gothenburg. In Sweden, Nystroem was regarded as a modernist in the 1930s, but he seems less so in hindsight. His music is French-influenced but still has a Nordic, romantic tone, and is often melancholic. His songs are among Nystroem's most appreciated works, although he also composed six symphonies. Nystroem was very sympathetic to the poetry of the Swedish writer Ebba Lindqvist (1908-1995), with whom he shared a deep love of the sea, setting five of her poems. *På reveln* (At the reef, 1948) is one his most widely known collections. The title song (there are three altogether) opens impressionistically with a suggestion of whole-tone harmony. 'Otroilig' is a child-like song, marvelling at the day, and 'Havet sjunger' conveys the deep of the sea.

## **Jean Sibelius 1865-1957**

Våren flyktar  
Första kyssen  
Bollspelet vid Trianon  
Säv, säv susa  
Var det en dröm

Sibelius was the central figure in creating a Finnish voice in music in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Throughout the 20th century Finland regarded him as a national hero and its most renowned artist, although outside Finland, his reputation has been volatile, with passionate claims made on both sides. His music drew frequently on archetypal folk myths or ideas from natural landscapes, and he grounded much of his music in his own conception of the Finnish national temperament. His most significant output was orchestral, but he wrote many songs throughout the period 1888 to 1925. During the 1890s Sibelius was working in two styles: 'Finnish', based on ancient national myth, 'Swedish-Finnish', aimed at a larger, more international audience on traditional terms. The latter style was particularly used for the (Swedish-language) 'romantic' *Lied*. The op. 13 collection of seven songs to poems by Johan Runeberg (1892), which included *Våren flyktar*, was his first publication with his name on the title-page. When Brahms heard another song from this collection in 1895, he is reported to have said that 'Something will become of him'. A few years later, Sibelius's career was progressing, with many more performances of his music outside Finland. He composed his most frequently performed songs during this period (opp. 36 to 38). The most characteristic songs are deeply melancholy. 'Våren flyktar' is a fairly conventional poem urging lovers to make the most of the moment,

but Sibelius's setting is notable for its melancholy opening in E flat minor before its shift to the major for the poem's message. 'Första kyssen', from Sibelius's op. 37, opens in the dark twilight of B flat minor before the girl asks here question in the relative major. She is answered by the voice of the star in a radiant E major, but Death, announced by the 'Tristan' chord, ends the song in C sharp minor. The op. 36 *6 Songs* (1900) frequently express feelings of loneliness and death. 'Bollspelet vid Trianon' and 'Säv, säv, susa' both use poems by the Swedish poet Gustav Fröding. 'Bollspelet' features unusually stylish piano writing, with a light-hearted fast waltz depicting the aristocrats amusing themselves with a pastoral game of tennis. The peasant's son interrupts the game, and he goes away in slow recitative. 'Säv, säv, susa' is sometimes known as 'Ingalill', the poem's heroine. The piano writing here recalls a similar passage in his *Kullervo* where the hero considers suicide. 'Var det en dröm' creates a wash of rhythms that creates the rhapsodic atmosphere of a dream – the singer is mostly using longer duplet rhythms while the piano is in effect in both 6/4 and 12/8.

### Alban Berg 1885-1935

#### *Sieben frühe Lieder*

Nacht  
Schilflied  
Die Nachtigall  
Traumgekrönt  
Im Zimmer  
Liebesode  
Sommertage

Songs for voice and piano constitute the greater part of Alban Berg's earliest compositions. Between 1901 and 1908 he composed approximately 150 songs and ensembles for voices with piano accompaniment. His *Seven Early Songs* (c1905 to 1908) were written while Berg was a student of Schoenberg's. Before he started his studies with Schoenberg in 1904, Berg had been unable to write anything but songs and even after this date he produced little else until he completed his *Piano Sonata* op.1 in 1908 – at which point his formal studies with Schoenberg ended. These songs combine the rich harmonic language of the German *fin de siècle* with his teacher's rigorous approach to composition. Richard Strauss can be heard here, along with some influences from Debussy and Mahler. The songs were first written for a medium voice and piano; they were revised for high voice and orchestra in 1928. Berg uses small repeated musical ideas which are manipulated and combined in various ways, using techniques which would become much more extensively used in later works by Berg, Schoenberg and, most strikingly of all, Webern. But the musical language here is still that of late romanticism – highly chromatic, ambiguous, often unresolved, and with harmonic progressions that simply move between neighbouring chords.

### Richard Strauss 1864-1949

Ständchen  
Freundliche Vision  
Heimliche Aufforderung  
Morgen!  
Zueignung

Though Strauss was a prolific composer, he did not always find it easy – unlike Saint-Saëns, he did not produce music like apples growing on a tree. He wrote to a friend that if he could not find the right poem, he would pick one at random, 'but the process is slow, the result is artificial, the melody has a viscid flow, and I have to draw on all my technical resources'. On the other hand, if he found a suitable poem by good luck, 'a satisfactory song results'. 'Ständchen' is from Strauss's op. 17 group of six songs published in 1887, all to poems by Adolf Friedrich von Schack. It was first performed in Weimar in 1889, when it was repeated by popular demand. The glittering piano part creates a mood of joy, dropping in pitch for the dusk of the third stanza and then rising up again for the rose that glows from the night's embraces. 'Freundliche vision' is the first of a set of five songs by Strauss composed in 1900 (the year of his first opera *Feuersnot*) and published in Berlin in 1901. The singer sleeps in C sharp major, but wakes to the day in D major. 'Heimliche Aufforderung' is one of a set of four songs composed in 1894. The text is by the Scottish poet John Henry Mackay (1864-1933). Mackay was born in Scotland but grew up in Germany, and was known as an anarchist writer who also wrote on homosexuality. Strauss had met Mackay in Berlin and set several others of his poems, as did Schoenberg. Strauss composed the song on 22 May 1894 and gave it as a wedding present to his wife, the soprano Pauline de Ahna. During their American tour in 1904, Pauline Strauss sang this song as the concluding piece in her Carnegie Hall debut on 1 March. 'Morgen', composed in 1894, is another Mackay setting. He originally wrote 'Ständchen' for voice and piano, but then added the violin, and in 1897 he made an orchestral version with solo violin which is one of Strauss's most often performed songs. 'Zueignung' is one of Strauss's most simple and straightforward songs, set in modified strophic form and without harmonic complexities; its three largely similar strophes, with the refrain 'habe Dank!', are supported by an accompaniment of constant triplet movement over rich, full chords.

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# Miah Persson

## Soprano

Since her operatic début as Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* in 1998, Swedish soprano Miah Persson has distinguished herself as one of the world's principal Mozart interpreters, leaving a lasting legacy on those lyric soprano roles for which she has become most celebrated: Susanna, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Poppea in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and later Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* and Contessa in *Le nozze di Figaro*. Having "added a burnish of gold to the silvery soprano that served her so well in Mozart roles" (*The Sunday Times*), Persson has now "cemented her place as one of the most intelligent Strauss sopranos of our time at the peak of her powers" (Bachtrack), with impactful role débuts as the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Countess in *Capriccio*.

Persson's 2025/26 season opens with performances of Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with the Budapest Festival Orchestra conducted by Iván Fischer at Müpa Budapest and on tour to Vicenza's Teatro Olimpico and the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden. She goes on to perform Mahler's *Das klagende Lied* with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Ryan Bancroft, a programme of Haydn and Berlioz with the Gävle Symfoniorkester conducted by Magnus Fryk, Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Matthew Halls, and Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* conducted by Alexander Shelley with both the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra in Florida and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa. In addition, she gives a New Year's concert with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra conducted by Andreas Hansson, performs Strauss's orchestrated songs in Denmark with the Aarhus Symfoniorkester conducted by Ramon Tébar, and Mahler's *Symphony No. 4* in Bochum and at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw with the Bochum Symphony Orchestra conducted by Tung-Chieh Chuang. Persson will give recitals at the Leeds Lieder Festival with pianist Joseph Middleton, at Antwerp's LiedFest with pianist Malcom Martineau and for San Francisco Performances with pianist Magnus Svensson.

Throughout her distinguished career, Persson has performed Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Gretel in Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel* and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Metropolitan Opera; Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* for the Royal Ballet & Opera, Covent Garden; the title role in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and the Governess in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* at Teatro alla Scala and in concert with the Budapest Festival Orchestra; Fiordiligi, Sophie and Susanna at the Wiener Staatsoper; Governess, Fiordiligi, Donna Elvira and Anne Trulove in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Donna Elvira at the Théâtre Champs Élysées Paris and at the Liceu Barcelona; Fiordiligi at the Bayerische Staatsoper, Hamburgische Staatsoper, New National Theatre Tokyo, in Stockholm and for a Deutsche Grammophon recording at the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden; Iris in Michael van der Aa's *Sunken Garden* for Dallas Opera and Poppea at Carnegie Hall. Persson has sung Solomon's Queen in Handel's *Solomon* on tour with Harry Bicket and The English Concert, performing at Carnegie Hall, LA Opera, San

Francisco, in London and Madrid. She also created the central role in van der Aa's *Blank Out* for the Netherlands Opera with performances in Amsterdam, Rome and at the Park Avenue Armory, New York.

Persson's concert repertoire includes Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with both the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Zubin Mehta and at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin conducted by Simone Young; Mozart's *Requiem* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Gustavo Dudamel; Bach's *Mass in B Minor* at Teatro La Fenice; Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with the Rotterdam Philharmonic; Bach's *St John Passion* in Chicago with Music of the Baroque conducted by Jane Glover; Verdi's *Requiem* with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Vasily Petrenko and the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland conducted by Jaime Martín; Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Jurowski at the BBC Proms and with the Orchestre National de Lyon and Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider; Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin conducted by Vladimir Jurowski; Brahms *Requiem* with the State Symphony Orchestra of Russia, the Gulbenkian Foundation and the London Philharmonic Orchestra; Grieg's *Peer Gynt* with the Vienna Symphony; Haydn's *Nelson Mass* at the Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg; Haydn's *Creation* with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal conducted by Bernard Labadie and at the Verbier Festival; Haydn's *The Seasons* with the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic; Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with the Orchestre National de Lyon, Swedish Radio Orchestra, MDR Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk, London Symphony, Teatro alla Scala, Philharmonie Luxembourg and Boston Philharmonic Orchestra; Mahler's *Symphony No. 4* with the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra, Basque National Orchestra, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lille and at the BBC Proms with BBC National Orchestra of Wales conducted by Ryan Bancroft; Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* for the Gulbenkian Foundation; Schumann's *Faust Szenen* with the Leipzig Gewandhausorchester; Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder* at New York's Lincoln Center with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Santtu-Matias Rouvali, at the Muziekgebouw Eindhoven with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Mark Elder, with the Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana conducted by Harmat Haenchen, with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orkester Berlin, the Budapest Festival Orchestra and Montreal Symphony Orchestra.

Persson has appeared in recital at London's Wigmore Hall, Wiener Konzerthaus, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin's Pierre Boulezsaal, Victoria de los Angeles Festival in Barcelona, Stockholm Konserthus, Spivey Hall, the Schubert Club of St Paul, Cal Performances at Berkeley, Vancouver Playhouse and New York's Carnegie Hall.

Miah Persson was appointed Hovsångerska, Court Singer, by H.M. the King of Sweden in 2011.

# Joseph Middleton

## Piano

Joseph Middleton is widely regarded as one of the most exceptional and creative pianists of his generation, specialising in song accompaniment and chamber music at the highest international level. Hailed by Gramophone as "the absolute king of programming," and by the New York Times as "the perfect accompanist" he collaborates with many of the world's foremost singers, performing at venues and festivals across Europe, North America, and Asia.

A passionate advocate for the power of song, Joseph is the Artistic Director of Leeds Song, praised by The Guardian for its "world-class" programming and by The Times as a "Northern powerhouse of song." He also curates series' for BBC Radio 3, Wigmore Hall, and the University of Cambridge, where he founded and directs their Lieder Scheme. Joseph is Musician in Residence at Pembroke College. He is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music, where he is Professor of Ensemble Piano, and was made a Bye-Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge by Lord Chris Smith. Joseph is the first—and to date, only—accompanist to receive the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Artist Award, the UK's most prestigious recognition for a classical musician.

Joseph appears regularly at leading international venues including Wigmore Hall, where he has been a featured artist with series' on Ravel, Mahler and Strauss; Royal Opera House, Barbican and Southbank Centre; Alice Tully Hall and Park Avenue Armory in New York; Concertgebouw Amsterdam; Vienna Konzerthaus and Musikverein; Hamburg Elbphilharmonie; Berlin BoulezSaal and Philharmonie; Cologne Philharmonie; Madrid's Teatro de la Zarzuela; Baden-Baden Festspielhaus; Zurich Tonhalle; Paris's Musée d'Orsay; and Oji Hall Tokyo. Festival highlights include Aix-en-Provence, Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Heidelberger Frühling, Munich, San Francisco, Ravinia, Schubertiade Hohenems and Schwarzenberg, Seoul, Toronto and Vancouver.

He has enjoyed include fruitful partnerships alongside Sir Thomas Allen, Louise Alder, Mary Bevan, Ian Bostridge, Allan Clayton, Dame Sarah Connolly,

Marianne Crebassa, Veronique Gens, Iestyn Davies, Fatma Said, Huw Montague Rendall, Christiane Karg, Sir Simon Keenlyside, Elsa Dreisig, Angelika Kirchschlager, Katharina Konradi, Dame Felicity Lott, Christopher Maltman, John Mark Ainsley, Ann Murray DBE, James Newby, Mark Padmore, Konstantin Krimmel, Mauro Peter, Miah Persson, Sophie Rennert, Dorothea Röschmann, Carolyn Sampson, Nicky Spence and Roderick Williams.

His award-winning discography on Warner, Harmonia Mundi, BIS, Chandos and Signum, amongst others, includes multiple honours: the Diapason d'Or, Edison Award, and Prix Caecilia, alongside nominations for Gramophone, Opus Klassik, BBC Music Magazine, and International Classical Music Awards. Committed to expanding the song repertoire, he has commissioned and premiered works by composers including Thomas Adès, Helen Grime, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Hannah Kendall, Errollyn Wallen, Mark Simpson and Nico Muhly. At the 2018 BBC Proms he premiered recently discovered songs by Benjamin Britten, alongside Dame Sarah Connolly. He is frequently called upon to give masterclasses, recent seasons taking him to Toronto Summer Music, Ravinia in Chicago, Britten-Pears in Aldeburgh, deSingel Antwerp, Samling and the Royal Opera House, London.

Highlights of the 2025-26 season include recitals alongside Dorothea Röschmann, Fatma Said, Louise Alder, Elsa Dreisig, Dame Sarah Connolly, Huw Montague Rendall, Hera Hyesang Park, Katharine Konradi, Carolyn Sampson, and Hugh Cutting at venues including London's Wigmore Hall, the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, Valencia, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Amsterdam's Muziekgebouw and Prinzregententheater Munich. With Elsa Dreisig he will also perform Schumann Frauenliebe und -leben in staged performances at the Staatsoper Hamburg. His recording projects include an ongoing 5-album set of Mahler Lieder for Signum Records.



# Upcoming Events

## Ailish Tynan Soprano Joseph Middleton Piano

Friday 14 November 2025  
7:30PM–9:30PM

Tickets £15.00  
Free to students

Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall,  
University of Leeds

*Programme to include*

**Maurice Ravel**  
*Shéhérazade*

**Francis Poulenc**  
*La Courte Paille*

*And songs by*

**Erik Satie**  
**Manuel Rosenthal**

Renowned for her radiant voice and captivating stage presence, Irish soprano Ailish Tynan joins Joseph Middleton for a richly varied celebration of French song.

Their programme includes Ravel's sensual and exotic *Shéhérazade*, Poulenc's whimsical *La Courte Paille*, and rarely heard gems by Erik Satie and Manuel Rosenthal—songs that sparkle with wit, elegance, and emotional depth.

Presented in partnership with the University of Leeds, this recital forms part of a wider celebration of French Song and takes place the day before Dame Felicity Lott's masterclass on the same theme.



## James Newby Baritone Joseph Middleton Piano

Saturday 31 January 2026  
7:30PM–9:30PM

Tickets £25.00  
Free to students

The Venue  
Leeds Conservatoire

*Programme to include*

Works by **Franz Schubert**

**Benjamin Britten**  
*Songs and Proverbs of William Blake*

On the first page of his *Songs & Proverbs* of William Blake, Benjamin Britten wrote 'For Dieter: the past and the future'. 'Dieter' is the baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau who premiered this work some sixty years ago with the composer himself at the piano. In their Leeds Song recital Newby and Middleton perform exactly the same songs that Fischer-Dieskau and Benjamin Britten performed together on 8 June 1972 during the illustrious festival at the Snape Maltings Concert Hall in Aldeburgh. A festival that made history with its exciting combination of old and new music, featuring world-renowned artists and young up-and-coming talents. The same energy is on show at Leeds Song Festivals!





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