



Leeds
Song

"Leeds Song Festival ... from inner city to international, world-class music making."
The Guardian

Music gives a soul to the universe

2026 Festival
Saturday 11 April at 1pm

Lunchtime Opening Recital

THE VENUE, LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



THE LIZ & TERRY BRAMALL
FOUNDATION

Director's Welcome

Music gives a soul to the universe

It is with great joy and delight that I welcome you to the Leeds Song Festival 2026, a week-long celebration of one of the most intimate, expressive, and endlessly fascinating forms of music: the art song. Across seven days and a variety of venues throughout Leeds, we have gathered some of the brightest stars, most compelling voices, and most visionary creators in the world of song to present a programme as diverse and vibrant as the city itself.

Buoyed by the extraordinary success of last year's Festival – which broke all previous box office records by 30% – we return in 2026 with renewed energy, ambition and gratitude. This momentum would not be possible without the loyal and generous support of our Friends, audiences, donors, and those trusts and foundations whose belief in our mission underpins everything we do. My heartfelt thanks to each of you.

Faced with an embarrassment of riches, it feels almost invidious to pick out highlights, but as you turn the pages ahead you'll notice programmes from internationally acclaimed singers Marianne Crebassa, Katharina Konradi, Axelle Fanyo, and Fleur Barron, who bring fresh energy to Leeds. British stars Dame Sarah Connolly, Louise Alder, Huw Montague Rendall and Roderick Williams return, delivering performances that showcase the very best of British artistry. The opening and closing evening recitals are especially packed with joyous fare.

Our commitment to supporting the finest rising stars includes recitals by Austrian mezzo-soprano Patricia Nolz, our first lute-accompanied recital with Nardus Williams (partnered by early music royalty Elizabeth Kenny), and a performance from recent Deutsche Grammophon signing Theodore Platt. Leeds Song Young Artist alumni are also represented: Héloïse Werner's *Knight's Dream* will be performed by Helen Charlston and Sholto Kynoch, while Keval Shah, Felix Gygli and Jong Sun Woo all make welcome returns.

Festival favourites Roderick Williams and Iain Burnside explore new compositions inspired by Japanese haiku from leading American composer Libby Larsen, and we are proud to present a Leeds Song commission: *Dunwich*: an intermedia première by Martin Iddon blending spoken word, piano and video in a powerful meditation on history and memory.



This year's masterclasses feature renowned artists including Bernarda Fink, Joan Rodgers CBE, Mark Padmore and Roger Vignoles, whose guidance offers invaluable insight into the art of interpretation.

Our community offering, *Bring and Sing!*, returns with Gareth Malone, inviting all to take part in a joyous performance of Haydn's *Nelson Mass*. Meanwhile, the *Composers & Poets Forum* and the Art Song Challenge winner, Gerda Iguchi, broaden the boundaries of the genre with bold, interdisciplinary work.

The festival concludes with a specially curated recital by Dame Sarah Connolly, joined by prize winners from the Northern Aldborough New Voices Singing Competition – a fitting finale, celebrating both excellence and the future of song.

Leeds Song Festival is not just a series of concerts; it is a vibrant gathering of artists, audiences, and ideas, a space where music's power to connect, move, and transform is celebrated in all its richness. Whether you are a lifelong devotee of art song or discovering it anew, we invite you to join us for what promises to be an unforgettable festival.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Middleton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Joseph Middleton
Director, Leeds Song

2026 Festival at a Glance

Saturday 11 April

1 – 2pm	Lunchtime Opening Recital: Patricia Nolz and Joseph Middleton	The Venue, LC
3 – 5.30pm	Bring and Sing! Rehearsal with Gareth Malone OBE	The Venue, LC
6pm	Bring and Sing! Concert with Gareth Malone OBE: Haydn <i>Nelson Mass</i>	The Venue, LC
6.30 – 7pm	Pre-concert Talk with Richard Stokes	HAR
7.30pm	Evening Opening Recital: Louise Alder, Huw Montague Rendall and Joseph Middleton	HAR

Sunday 12 April

10am – 12.30pm	Festival Masterclass I: Bernarda Fink	The Venue, LC
2 – 3pm	Lunchtime Recital: Nardus Williams and Elizabeth Kenny	Royal Armouries Museum
4 – 5.30pm	Young Artists Study Event with Richard Stokes	Recital Room, LC
6 – 7pm	Friends of Leeds Song Private Reception	Rooftop Bar, LC
6.30 – 7pm	Pre-concert Talk with Richard Stokes	The Venue, LC
7.30pm	Evening Recital: Marianne Crebassa and Joseph Middleton	The Venue, LC

Monday 13 April

10am – 1pm	Friends' Festival Masterclass II: Bernarda Fink	Linacre Studio, HOC
2pm – 5pm	Friends' Festival Masterclass III: Mark Padmore CBE	Linacre Studio, HOC

Tuesday 14 April

10am – 1pm	Festival Masterclass IV: Bernarda Fink	Linacre Studio, HOC
6 – 8pm	Evening Recital: Roderick Williams OBE and Iain Burnside	The Venue, LC
9pm	Late Night Recital: <i>Dunwich</i> : An intermedia première by Martin Iddon	The Attic

Wednesday 15 April

5 – 7pm	Composers & Poets Forum Showcase and Exhibition: 'A Leeds Songbook'	Brodrick Hall, Leeds City Museum
8pm	Evening Recital: Helen Charlston and Sholto Kynoch	Left Bank Leeds

Thursday 16 April

12 – 1.30pm	Young Artists Showcase	HAR
3 – 6pm	Festival Masterclass V: Joan Rodgers CBE	Linacre Studio, HOC
6.30 – 7pm	Pre-concert Talk with Dr Katy Hamilton	HAR
7.30pm	Evening Recital: Axelle Fanyo, Fleur Barron and Julius Drake	HAR
9.45 – 11pm	Late Night Lieder Lounge with Leeds Song Young Artists	HAR Bar

Friday 17 April

10am – 12.30pm	Festival Masterclass VI: Roger Vignoles	Linacre Studio, HOC
1 – 2pm	Lunchtime Recital: Felix Gygli and Jong Sun Woo	HAR
3 – 6pm	Festival Masterclass VII: Anna Tilbrook	Linacre Studio, HOC
6.30 – 7pm	Pre-concert Talk with Mark Rogers	HAR
7.30pm	Evening Recital: Katharina Konradi and Joseph Middleton	HAR
9.45 – 11pm	Late Night Recital: Gerda Iguchi: Art Song Challenge 2025	HAR Bar

Saturday 18 April

11am – 12pm	Coffee Recital: Theodore Platt and Keval Shah	The Venue, LC
2 – 3.30pm	Young Artists Finale Concert	The Venue, LC
6 – 6.30pm	Pre-concert Talk with Dr George Kennaway	Rooftop Bar, LC
7pm	Festival Closing Recital: Dame Sarah Connolly and Joseph Middleton (and Northern Aldborough New Voices Singing Competition Prize Winners)	The Venue, LC

HAR = Howard Assembly Room | LC = Leeds Conservatoire | HOC = Howard Opera Centre

All information correct at the time of publication.

Leeds Song reserves the right to change artists, programmes and events if necessary.

Box Office: 0113 223 3600 | boxoffice@operanorth.co.uk | www.leedssong.com/whats-on

Saturday 11 April 2026, 1–2pm
THE VENUE, LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE



Lunchtime Opening Recital

Patricia Nolz mezzo-soprano
Joseph Middleton piano

Young mezzo-soprano Patricia Nolz is already recognised as one of Austria's most outstanding vocal talents. A protégé of Florian Boesch, she has swiftly established herself as an artist of exceptional calibre, regularly appearing at the Vienna State Opera in roles such as Cherubino, Zerlina, Annio, and Rosina. She made a notable Edinburgh Festival début as Cherubino with the Komische Oper Berlin and has performed with the Vienna Symphony and Gewandhaus Orchestras.

Last season, the Wiener Konzerthaus named her a "Great Talent," programming her extensively in both recitals and orchestral concerts. For Leeds Song, Nolz presents a programme steeped in the intensity of German Romanticism, featuring works by Wolf and Zemlinsky, culminating in Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben* – his 1840 song cycle that traces the joys and sorrows of a woman's journey through love and life.

Leeds Song has a proud tradition of introducing exceptional young European artists to UK audiences – this recital promises to be yet another milestone about which you'll want to say, "I was there."

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

Auf einer Wanderung
Um Mitternacht
Begegnung
Das verlassene Mägdlein
Heimweh

Alexander von Zemlinsky (1871-1942)

6 Gesänge nach Maeterlinck
Die drei Schwestern
Die Mädchen mit den verbundenen Augen
Lied der Jungfrau
Als ihr Geliebter schied
Und kehrt er einst heim
Sie kam zum Schloß gegangen

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Frauenliebe und -leben
Seit ich ihn gesehen
Er, der Herrlichste von allen
Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben
Du Ring an meinem Finger
Helft mir, ihr Schwestern
Süßer Freund, du blickst
An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust
Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan

Texts and Translations

If you are using a printed copy of this programme, please turn the pages quietly to avoid disturbing the performers and other audience members

Hugo Wolf

Eduard Mörike (1804-1875)

Auf einer Wanderung

In ein freundliches Städtchen tret ich ein,
In den Strassen liegt roter Abendschein.
Aus einem offenen Fenster eben,
Über den reichsten Blumenflor
Hinweg, hört man Goldglockentöne schweben,
Und eine Stimme scheint ein Nachtigallenchor,
Dass die Blüten beben,
Dass die Lüfte leben,
Dass in höherem Rot die Rosen leuchten vor.

Lang hielt ich staunend, lustbeklommen.
Wie ich hinaus vors Tor gekommen,
Ich weiss es wahrlich selber nicht.
Ach hier, wie liegt die Welt so licht!
Der Himmel wogt in purpurnem Gewühle,
Rückwärts die Stadt in goldnem Rauch:
Wie rauscht der Erlenbach,
Wie rauscht im Grund die Mühle!
Ich bin wie trunken, irreführt—
O Muse, du hast mein Herz berührt
Mit einem Liebeshauch!

Um Mitternacht

Gelassen stieg die Nacht ans Land,
Lehnt träumend an der Berge Wand,
Ihr Auge sieht die goldne Waage nun
Der Zeit in gleichen Schalen stille ruhn;
Und kecker rauschen die Quellen hervor,
Sie singen der Mutter, der Nacht, ins Ohr
Vom Tage, vom heute gewesenem Tage.

Das uralte alte Schlummerlied,
Sie achtet nicht, sie ist es müd;
Ihr klingt des Himmels Bläue süsser noch,
Der flüchtigen Stunden leichgeschwungnes Joch.
Doch immer behalten die Quellen das Wort,
Es singen die Wasser im Schlafe noch fort
Vom Tage, vom heute gewesenem Tage.

On a Walk

I arrived at a friendly little town,
Crimson evening light lay over the streets.
And out of an open window,
Over a colourful riot of flowers
I heard the golden chiming of bells,
And one voice sounds like a choir of nightingales
Making the flowers shiver
And the air tremble,
Making the red glow of the roses even deeper.

I stood transfixed for a long time, oppressed by joy.
How I got past the door
I really don't know myself.
Oh here, how golden the world seems!
Purple clouds swarm in the sky,
And behind the town lies in a golden haze:
How the alder stream murmurs,
How in the background the mill roars!
I am intoxicated, confused —
O Muse, you have stirred my heart
With your breath of love!

At midnight

Night slowly climbs over the land,
Leaning dreamily on the mountain wall,
Her eye beholds the golden scales of time
Perfectly balanced at this time of day;
More boldly springs gush forth,
And sing in the ear of their mother, the night.
Of the day, of the day that was today.

To the ancient lullaby
she pays no attention; she is weary.
To her, the heaven's blue sounds sweeter,
The curved span of the fleeting hours.
Yet the springs keep up their murmuring,
The waters keep singing in their sleep
Of the day, of the day that was today.

Begegnung

Was doch heut nacht ein Sturm gewesen,
Bis erst der Morgen sich geregt!
Wie hat der ungebetne Besen
Kamin und Gassen ausgefegt!

Da kommt ein Mädchen schon die Strassen,
Das halb verschüchtert um sich sieht;
Wie Rosen, die der Wind zerblasen,
So unset ihr Gesichtchen glüht.

Ein schöner Bursch tritt ihr entgegen,
Er will ihr voll Entzücken nahn:
Wie sehn sich freudig und verlegen
Die ungewohnten Schelme an!

Er scheint zu fragen, ob das Liebchen
Die Zöpfe schon zurecht gemacht,
Die heute Nacht im offnen Stübchen
Ein Sturm in Unordnung gebracht.

Der Bursche träumt noch von den Küssen,
Die ihm das süsse Kind getauscht,
Er steht, von Anmut hingerissen,
Derweil sie um die Ecke rauscht.

Das verlassene Mägdlein

Früh, wann die Hähne krähn,
Eh die Sternlein schwinden,
Muß ich am Herde stehn,
Muß Feuer zünden.

Schön ist der Flammen Schein,
Es springen die Funken;
Ich schaue so darein,
In Leid versunken.

Plötzlich, da kommt es mir,
Treuloser Knabe,
Daß ich die Nacht von dir
Geträumet habe.

Träne auf Träne dann
Stürzet hernieder;
So kommt der Tag heran—
O ging er wieder!

Encounter

What a storm that was last night,
Raging till the morning stirred itself!
How that uninvited broom
Swept clean the chimneys and the streets!

A young girl is coming along the street,
Looking half-scared, glancing around her.
Like roses, blasted by the wind,
Her face glows and pales.

A handsome lad steps up to meet her.
Approaches her enchanted,
How joyfully and awkwardly
The novice rascals look at each other.

He appears to ask his sweetheart
If she has tidied her plaits,
Which last night in her open chamber
A storm dishevelled.

The lad is still dreaming of the kisses
Which his sweetheart exchanged with him,
He stands enraptured by her charm
While she rushes away round the corner.

The abandoned girl

Early, when the cock crows,
Before the little stars disappear,
I have to be at the hearth
To light the fire.

The glow of the flames is beautiful.
The sparks fly;
I gaze at them
Lost in misery.

Suddenly it occurs to me,
Faithless boy,
That last night
I dreamt of you.

Streams of tears
Flow down,
And so the day begins —
If only it would end!

Heimweh

Anders wird die Welt mit jedem Schritt,
Den ich weiter von der Liebsten mache;
Mein Herz, das will nicht weiter mit.
Hier scheint die Sonne kalt ins Land,
Hier däucht mir alles unbekannt,
Sogar die Blumen am Bache!
Hat jede Sache
So fremd eine Miene, so falsch ein Gesicht.
Das Bächlein murmelt wohl und spricht:
Armer Knabe, komm bei mir vorüber,
Siehst auch hier Vergissmeinnicht!
—Ja, die sind schön an jedem Ort,
Aber nicht wie dort.
Fort, nur fort!
Die Augen gehn mir über!

Alexander von Zemlinsky

6 Gesänge nach Maeterlinck

Friedrich von Oppeln-Bronikowski (1873-1936)
Based on a text in French by Maurice Maeterlinck
(1862-1949)

Die drei Schwestern

Die drei Schwestern wollten sterben,
Setzten auf die güldnn Kronen,
Gingen sich den Tod zu holen.
Wähnten ihn im Walde wohnen.
Wald, so gib uns, daß wir sterben,
Sollst drei güldne Kronen erben.
Da begann der Wald zu lachen
Und mit einem Dutzend Küssen
Ließ er sie die Zukunft wissen.
Die drei Schwestern wollten sterben,
Wähnten Tod im Meer zu finden,
Pilgerten drei Jahre lang.
Meer, so gib uns, daß wir sterben,
Sollst drei güldne Kronen erben.
Da begann das Meer zu weinen,
Ließ mit dreimal hundert Küssen
Die Vergangenheit sie wissen.
Die drei Schwestern wollten sterben,
Lenkten nach der Stadt die Schritte;
Lag auf einer Insel Mitte.
Stadt, so gib uns, daß wir sterben,
Sollst drei güldne Kronen erben.
Und die Stadt tat auf die Tore
Und mit heißen Liebesküssen
Ließ die Gegenwart sie wissen.

Homesickness

The world changes with every step
That takes me further from my beloved;
My heart doesn't want to come with me.
Here the sun shines down coldly,
Here everything is unfamiliar,
Even the flowers by the stream!
Everything
Looks so strange and false.
The stream murmurs and speaks:
Poor boy, come over to me,
Look, here are forget-me-nots!
Yes they are beautiful everywhere,
But not like here.
Forward, forward!
My eyes fill with tears!

6 songs after poems by Maeterlinck

The Three Sisters

The three sisters wanted to die,
Put on their golden crowns
And went to look for death.
They thought he lived in the forest.
Forest, grant us that we may die
And you will inherit three golden crowns.
The forest began to laugh
And with a dozen kisses
Told them what the future held.
The three sisters wanted to die,
Thought they could find death in the sea,
Searched for three long years.
Sea, please if you grant that we may die
You will inherit three golden crowns.
Then the sea began to cry.
Told them with three times a hundred kisses
What the past had been.
The three sisters wanted to die,
Turned their steps towards the city,
Laying in the middle of an island.
City, if you grant that we may die,
You will inherit three golden crowns.
And the city opened up its gates
And with passionate kisses of love
And let them know the present.

Die Mädchen mit den verbundenen Augen

Die Mädchen mit den verbundenen Augen
Tut ab die goldenen Binden!
Die Mädchen mit den verbundenen Augen
Wollten ihr Schicksal finden.

Haben zur Mittagsstunde.
Laßt an die goldenen Binden!
Haben zur Mittagsstunde das Schloß
Geöffnet im Wiesengrunde.

Haben das Leben begrüßt.
Zieht fester die goldenen Binden.
Haben das Leben begrüßt,
Ohne hinaus zu finden.

Lied der Jungfrau

Allen weinenden Seelen,
aller nahenden Schuld
Öffn' ich im Sternenkränze
meine Hände voll Huld.

Alle Schuld wird zunichte
vor der Liebe Gebet,
Keine Seele kann sterben,
die weinend gefleht.

Verirrt sich die Liebe
auf irdischer Flur,
So weisen die Tränen
zu mir ihre Spur.

Als ihr Geliebter schied

Als ihr Geliebter schied,
Ich hörte die Türe gehn.
Als ihr Geliebter schied,
Da hab ich sie weinen gesehn,

Doch als er wieder kam,
Ich hörte des Lichtes Schein
Doch als er wieder kam,
War ein anderer daheim.

Und ich sah den Tod,
Mich streifte sein Hauch
Und ich sah den Tod,
Der erwartet ihn auch.

The girls with the bound eyes

The girls with the bound eyes
(Take off the golden coverings!)
The girls with the bound eyes
Wanted to find their destiny.

At midday
(Leave on the coverings!)
At midday they opened
They opened the castle on the grassy plain.

They greeted life
(Make tighter the golden blindfolds!),
They greeted life
Yet did not find their way out.

The Maiden's Song

To all weeping souls
To all sinners who approach
Haloed by stars I open
My arms, full of grace.

All sin will perish
Before love's prayer,
No soul can die
Which, weeping, repents

If love goes astray
On the path here below
Its tears will show me
To the right path.

When her lover left

When her lover left
(I heard the door close.)
When her lover left
I saw her crying.

But when he came back,
(I heard the light go on)
But when he came back
Someone else was there.

And I saw death
(Its breath touched me lightly)
And I saw death
Which also waited for him.

Und kehrt er einst heim

Und kehrt er einst heim,
was sag ich ihm dann?
Sag, ich hätte geharrt,
bis das Leben verrann.

Wenn er weiter fragt
und erkennt mich nicht gleich?
Sprich als Schwester zu ihm;
er leidet vielleicht.

Wenn er fragt, wo du seist,
was geb ich ihm an?
Mein' Goldring gib
und sieh ihn stumm an...

Will er wissen, warum
so verlassen das Haus?
Zeig die offene Tür,
sag, das Licht ging aus.

Wenn er weiter fragt
nach der letzten Stund'...
Sag, aus Furcht, daß er weint,
lächelte mein Mund.

Sie kam zum Schloß gegangen

Sie kam zum Schloß gegangen
Die Sonne erhob sich kaum
Sie kam zum Schloß gegangen,
Die Ritter blickten mit Bangen
Und es schwiegen die Frauen.

Sie blieb vor der Pforte stehen,
Die Sonne erhob sich kaum
Sie blieb vor der Pforte stehen,
Man hörte die Königin gehen
Und der König fragte sie:

Wohin gehst du? Wohin gehst du?
Gib acht in dem Dämmerlicht!
Wohin gehst du? Wohin gehst du?
Harrt drunten jemand dein?
Sie sagte nicht ja noch nein.

Sie stieg zur Fremden hernieder
Gib acht in dem Dämmerlicht
Sie stieg zu der Fremden hernieder
Sie schloß sie in ihre Arme ein.
Die beiden sagten nicht ein Wort
Und gingen eilends fort.

And if he comes back one day

And if he comes back one day
What should I say to him?
Say that I waited
Till my life ebbed away.

And if he asks more
And doesn't recognise me?
Speak to him as a sister,
Maybe he is suffering,

If he then asks where you are,
What should I say?
Give him my gold ring
And look at him silently ...

And if he wants to know
Why the house is deserted?
Show him the open door
And say the lamp has gone out.

And if he asks more
About your last hour?
Tell him, for fear lest he weeps,
That I smiled.

She came to the castle

She came to the castle,
The sun was hardly up,
She came to the castle
The knights watched fearfully
And the ladies grew silent.

She stood at the gate,
The sun was hardly up
She stood at the gate.
The queen's footsteps were heard,
And the king asked her:

Where are you going? Where are you going?
Take care in this dim light!
Where are you going?
Is someone waiting for you down there?
She answered neither yes nor no.

She climbed down to the stranger
- Take care in this dim light,
She climbed down to the stranger
She enclosed her in her arms.
Neither said a word
And they hurried away.

Robert Schumann

Frauenliebe und -leben

Adelbert von Chamisso (1781-1838)

Seit ich ihn gesehen,

Seit ich ihn gesehen
Glaub ich blind zu sein;
Wo ich hin nur blicke,
Seh ich ihn allein;
Wie im wachen Traume
Schwebt sein Bild mir vor,
Taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel,
Heller nur empor.
Sonst ist licht- und farblos
Alles um mich her,
Nach der Schwestern Spiele
Nicht begehrt ich mehr,
Möchte lieber weinen,
Still im Kämmerlein;
Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub ich blind zu sein.

Er, der Herrlichste von allen

Er, der Herrlichste von allen,
Wie so milde, wie so gut!
Holde Lippen, klares Auge,
Heller Sinn und fester Mut.
So wie dort in blauer Tiefe,
Hell und herrlich, jener Stern,
Also er an meinem Himmel,
Hell und herrlich, hehr und fern.
Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen,
Nur betrachten deinen Schein,
Nur in Demut ihn betrachten,
Selig nur und traurig sein!
Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,
Deinem Glücke nur geweiht;
Darfst mich niedere Magd nicht kennen,
Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!
Nur die Würdigste von allen
Darf beglücken deine Wahl,
Und ich will die Hohe segnen,
Segnen viele tausendmal.
Will mich freuen dann und weinen,
Selig, selig bin ich dann;
Sollte mir das Herz auch brechen,
Brich, o Herz, was liegt daran?
Er, der Herrlichste von allen,
Wie so milde, wie so gut!
Holde Lippen, klares Auge,
Heller Sinn und fester Mut.
Wie so milde, wie so gut!

Woman's love and life

Since I first saw him,

Since I first saw him
I'm blind to everything else.
Wherever I look
I see only him;
As in a waking dream,
His image floats before me,
Out of the darkness
It rises up shining.
Everything else around me
Is dull and colourless,
I have no desire
To join in my sister's games,
I would rather weep
Quietly in my little room;
Since I first saw him
I'm blind to everything else.

He the noblest of them all

He, the noblest of them all
Oh so gentle, oh so good!
Tempting lips, bright eyes,
Clear mind and steadfast courage.
Just as in the dark blue sky
That star shines brightly and brilliantly,
That's like him in my own heaven,
Bright and glorious, sublime and distant.
As you follow your life's course,
Just to watch your shining self,
Just to watch it with humility,
Is blissful and heartbreaking!
You must not hear my silent prayers
All dedicated to your happiness;
You must not take notice of a lowly girl,
Shining, splendid star!
Only the most worthy of women
Should be made happy by being your choice.
And I will bless that lofty being,
Bless her a thousand times.
I'll rejoice and I will weep,
I will be blessed then;
Even if my heart breaks,
Break, my heart, what does it matter?
He, the noblest of them all
Oh so gentle, oh so good!
Tempting lips, bright eyes,
Clear mind and steadfast courage.
Oh so gentle, oh so good!

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben,

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben
Es hat ein Traum mich berückt;
Wie hätt er doch unter allen
Mich Arme erhöht und beglückt?

Mir war's, er habe gesprochen:
"Ich bin auf ewig dein,"
Mir war's - ich träume noch immer,
Es kann ja nimmer so sein.

O laß im Traume mich sterben,
Gewieget an seiner Brust,
Den seligsten Tod mich schlürfen
In Tränen unendlicher Lust.

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben,
Es hat ein Traum mich berückt;
Wie hätt er doch unter allen
Mich Arme erhöht und beglückt?

Du Ring an meinem Finger,

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringelein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

Ich hatt ihn ausgeträumet,
Der Kindheit friedlich schönen Traum,
Ich fand allein mich, verloren
Im öden, unendlichen Raum.

Du Ring an meinem Finger
Da hast du mich erst belehrt,
Hast meinem Blick erschlossen
Des Lebens unendlichen, tiefen Wert.

Ich will ihm dienen, ihm leben,
Ihm angehören ganz,
Hin selber mich geben und finden
Verklärt mich in seinem Glanz.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringelein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

I can't grasp or believe it

I can't grasp it or believe it
I've been bewitched by a dream;
Why, out of everyone,
Has he honoured and blessed unworthy me?

It seemed to me he told me:
'I am yours forever.'
It seemed to me that I was still dreaming,
It just couldn't ever be!

Oh, let me die while I'm dreaming,
Cradled on his breast,
Drink the most blissful death
With the tears of everlasting joy.

I can't grasp it or believe it
I've been bewitched by a dream;
Why, out of everyone,
Has he honoured and blessed unworthy me?

You, ring upon my finger,

You, ring upon my finger,
My little golden ring,
I press you reverently to my lips,
And reverently to my heart.

I had exhausted
My childhood's peaceful and beautiful dreams,
I found myself alone, lost
In a bleak and infinite space.

You, ring upon my finger,
That's where you first taught me,
Opened my eyes
To life's infinite and profound value.

I want to serve him to live for him,
To belong to him for ever,
To sacrifice myself to him and to find
Myself transfigured in his reflection.

You, ring upon my finger,
My little golden ring,
I press you reverently to my lips,
And reverently to my heart.

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
 Freundlich mich schmücken,
 Dient der Glücklichen heute mir,
 Windet geschäftig
 Mir um die Stirne
 Noch der blühenden Myrte Zier.

Als ich befriedigt,
 Freudigen Herzens,
 Sonst dem Geliebten im Arme lag,
 Immer noch rief er,
 Sehnsucht im Herzen,
 Ungeduldig den heutigen Tag.

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
 Helft mir verscheuchen
 Eine törichte Bangigkeit,
 Daß ich mit klarem
 Aug ihn empfangen,
 Ihn, die Quelle der Freudigkeit.

Bist, mein Geliebter,
 Du mir erschienen,
 Giebst du mir, Sonne, deinen Schein?
 Laß mich in Andacht,
 Laß mich in Demut,
 Laß mich verneigen dem Herren mein.
 Streuet ihm, Schwestern,
 Streuet ihm Blumen,
 Bringet ihm knospende Rosen dar,
 Aber euch, Schwestern,
 Grüß ich mit Wehmut
 Freudig scheidend aus eurer Schar.

Süßer Freund, du blickest

Süßer Freund, du blickest
 Mich verwundert an,
 Kannst es nicht begreifen,
 Wie ich weinen kann;
 Laß der feuchten Perlen
 Ungewohnte Zier
 Freudig hell erzittern
 In dem Auge mir.

Wie so bang mein Busen,
 Wie so wonnevoll!
 Wüßt ich nur mit Worten,
 Wie ich's sagen soll;
 Komm und birg dein Antlitz
 Hier an meiner Brust,
 Will in's Ohr dir flüstern
 Alle meine Lust.

...

Help me, my sisters,

Help me, my sisters,
 By kind and help me dress,
 Do this happy girl a favour today;
 Hurry and wind
 Round my head
 My wreath of flowering myrtle.

When I peacefully
 With a heart full of joy
 Used to lie in the arms of my beloved,
 He constantly yearned,
 With longing in his heart,
 Impatiently for this day.

Help me my sisters,
 Help me to banish
 This foolishness anxiety,
 So that with shining
 Eyes I may greet him,
 He, the source of my happiness.

My darling, have you
 Come to me,
 Have you, my sun, given me your radiance?
 Let me devoutly,
 Let me humbly,
 Let me bow down before my lord!
 Scatter, my sisters,
 Scatter flowers before him,
 Bring him rosebuds here,
 But you, my sisters,
 I salute you sadly,
 Joyfully leaving your company.

Sweetest friend you gaze at me

Sweet friend, you look
 At me in astonishment,
 You can't believe
 How I can cry like this.
 Let these moist pearls,
 Such an unaccustomed adornment,
 Glitter happily
 In my eyes.

My heart is so anxious,
 So full of joy!
 If I could only express in words
 What I want to say;
 Come and hide your face
 Here on my breast,
 I want to whisper in your ear
 All my happiness.

...

Weißt du nun die Tränen,
Die ich weinen kann?
Sollst du nicht sie sehen,
Du geliebter Mann?
Bleib an meinem Herzen,
Fühle dessen Schlag,
Daß ich fest und fester
Nur dich drücken mag.
Hier an meinem Bette
Hat die Wiege Raum,
Wo sie still verberge
Meinen holden Traum
Kommen wird der Morgen,
Wo der Traum erwacht,
Und daraus dein Bildnis
Mir entgegen lacht.

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!

Das Glück ist die Liebe, die Lieb ist das Glück,
Ich hab's gesagt und nehm's nicht zurück.

Hab übergücklich mich geschätzt
Bin übergücklich aber jetzt.

Nur die da säugt, nur die da liebt
Das Kind, dem sie die Nahrung giebt;

Nur eine Mutter weiß allein
Was lieben heißt und glücklich sein.

O, wie bedaur' ich doch den Mann,
Der Mutterglück nicht fühlen kann!

Du lieber, lieber Engel, du
Du schauest mich an und lächelst dazu!

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!

Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan,

Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan,
Der aber traf.

Du schläfst, du harter, unbarmherz'ger Mann,
Den Todesschlaf.

Es blicket die Verlaßne vor sich hin,
Die Welt is leer.

Geliebet hab ich und gelebt, ich bin
Nicht lebend mehr.

Ich zieh mich in mein Innres still zurück,
Der Schleier fällt,
Da hab ich dich und mein verlornes Glück,
Du meine Welt!

So now you know the tears
That I can shed?
Why shouldn't you see them,
My beloved husband?
Lie here on my breast,
And feel my heart beating,
So that I can press you tight and
Tighter still to me.
Here at my bedside
Is space for a cradle,
Which quietly keeps the secret
Of my dearest dream.
There will come a morning
When that dream awakes,
And from the cradle your image
Will be laughing up at me.

At my heart, at my breast

At my heart, at my breast
You are my joy, my happiness!

Bliss is love, and love is bliss,
I've said it, and I won't take it back.

I used to think I was so very happy,
But now I really am so very happy.

For only one whose child sucks at her breast,
Who loves the child she is feeding;

Only a mother can know
What to love and to be happy means.

Oh, how I pity men,
For they can never know the joy of mother-love!

You darling, darling angel child,
You look up at me and smile!

At my heart, at my breast
You are my joy, my happiness!

Now, you have for the first time caused me pain.

Now you have caused me pain for the first time,
It really hit the mark.

You sleep, you hard-hearted, pitiless man,
The sleep of death.

The forsaken woman gazes before her,
The world is empty.

I've loved and I have lived, but now
I am no longer alive.

I withdraw quietly into myself,
A veil falls,

There I still have you and my lost happiness,
You, my world.

Programme Notes

Patricia Nolz and Joseph Middleton begin their recital with five songs by Hugo Wolf. Wolf took a fortnight to compose **Auf einer Wanderung** – a rarity with a composer who would often compose two songs a day – and as in ‘Im Frühling’, he abandons the strophic form and lets the voice declaim the poem with a new-found freedom. The 6/8 rhythm of the piano’s opening bar dominates the entire song in a series of miraculous transformations, while the vocal line weaves its way in and out of this texture, highlighting some phrases, musing on others. Wolf would often recite a poem before performing a song, or insist that the singer recite it. Richard Batka (1868-1922), musicologist, critic and great champion of Wolf’s music, describes a Liederabend at which he was present:

Zunächst las er die Gedichte im schönsten steirischen Dialekt, aber so von innen heraus empfunden, daß nur einem ganz törichtem Menschen die Sache hätte komisch erscheinen können. Nach dem Mörikeschen „In ein freundliches Städtchen tret’ ich ein“ wandte er sich zu uns: „Ist das Gedicht nicht zum Heulen schön?“ Und nun fing er an zu singen.

To begin with he recited the poems with the most beautiful Styrian accent, but in such an intense, internalized way that only an utter fool could have found it funny. Having recited Mörike’s ‘In ein freundliches Städtchen tret’ ich ein’, he turned to us and said: ‘Isn’t the poem screamingly beautiful?’ And then he began to sing.

Um Mitternacht recalls Schubert’s ‘Nacht und Träume’ in the way the voice floats over a low-lying accompaniment, most of which lies beneath middle C. Mörike’s poem, like ‘Verborgenheit’ and ‘Gebet’, speaks of balance, of equipoise – here the moment of ecstatic equipoise between night and memories of the past day. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf told Graham Johnson that her biggest regret as a soprano was that she was unable to sing this low-lying song beloved of mezzo-sopranos. **Begegnung** describes the meeting of two young lovers after a night of passion, and Wolf rises to the occasion with a syncopated accompaniment that seems to sigh and gasp in every bar. Despite all the sexual innuendo – ‘Was doch heut nacht ein Sturm gewesen’ refers obliquely to their lovemaking; ‘Besen’ in the nineteenth century also meant ‘prick’, ‘cock’ (‘Unter den Besen getraut sein’ = ‘to live in sin’); ‘fegen’ meant ‘to screw’, ‘Gasse’ meant vagina (Mörike would have known Goethe’s lubricious Venetian Epigram ‘In dem engsten der Gäßchen’) – there is, as in ‘Nimmersatte Liebe’, an exquisite delicacy about Mörike’s poem.

Das verlassene Mägdlein comes from Mörike’s novel, *Maler Nolten*, where it is sung by a woman’s voice which resembles that of Agnes, to whom Nolten has been unfaithful. Hearing the song, he is moved to tears. Wolf’s extraordinary setting intensifies the torment of the poem:

the bleak opening melody limps along in A minor, and the succession of cold sevenths and cheerless chords of augmented fifths combine to make this one of the saddest of all his songs. The ‘beloved’ referred to in line 2 of **Heimweh** is Luise Rau, the clergyman’s daughter, to whom Mörike had become engaged in 1829 and who ended their relationship, much to the mortification of the poet, after a four years engagement. She inspired some of Mörike’s finest love poems, some of which – ‘An die Geliebte’ and ‘Lebe wohl’, for example – were enclosed in letters to her, in the same way that Goethe had sent Charlotte von Stein such gems as ‘Der du von dem Himmel bist’ and ‘An den Mond’. ‘Heimweh’ is, perhaps, the most Schubertian of all Wolf’s songs, and with its heartfelt melody expresses an intense nostalgia.

It was Brahms who introduced Alexander Zemlinsky to the famous publishing house of Simrock, thus enabling him to publish his Trio Op. 3. In 1900 Mahler performed Zemlinsky’s second opera, *Es war einmal*, at the Vienna Opera, and it was as a composer of operas that Schoenberg thought of him most highly. He wrote, however, some 100 songs, of which the *Maeterlinck Lieder* are arguably the finest. They were greatly admired by Alban Berg and Theodor Adorno, who relished Zemlinsky’s ‘concise melismas, in which lyrical sweetness is condensed as in a honeycomb’. The poems by Maurice Maeterlinck, translated into German by Friedrich von Oppeln-Bronikowski, deal with death and spiritual abysses, and are set by Zemlinsky to music that fluctuates between lush expressiveness (full chords that are sometimes formed by superimposing several tonalities) and great simplicity. Hans Weber, in an essay on the cycle, has described the individual sections in these terms: 1. The ‘inner realm’, 2. Awareness of life, 3. Intensification, 4. Certainty of death, 5. Leave-taking, 6. Experience of death.

‘Ach Clara, was das für eine Seligkeit ist, für Gesang zu schreiben!’ (‘Ah, Clara, the bliss of writing songs!’) So wrote Robert Schumann to Clara Wieck on 22 February 1840, a year in which he composed no fewer than 138 songs, most of them masterpieces. Schumann was in love and brimming with musical ideas. In May he completed the Eichendorff *Liederkreis* and the Heine *Dichterliebe*. Now, in July, having searched for a flat and paid the first instalment, he turned his attention to his most domestic cycle, *Frauenliebe und -leben (A woman’s love and life)*. It is his only true cycle, the only song collection to begin and end with the same melody, and its cyclical form expresses well the symbolic eternity of their love, that is the subject of the work’s most famous song, ‘Du Ring an meinem Finger’.

Chamisso’s poems enjoyed astonishing popularity during his own lifetime and no less a figure than Thomas Mann wrote an essay on the poet in 1911, and recalled how

his mother used to sing *Frauenliebe und -leben* in the evenings. The *Frauenliebe* poems were started in 1829 and completed in January 1830. A decade earlier, almost 40, Chamisso had married a girl of 18 who was his social inferior, Antonie Piaste (1800-1837), the foster-daughter of Julius Eduard Hitzig. He was clearly smitten, as this description of his fiancée makes clear:

Sie ist jung, blühend und stark, schön und fromm,
rein und bewußtlos, klar, wolkenlos und heiter, ruhig,
verständlich und froh, und so liebevoll!

She is young, radiant and strong, beautiful and devout,
pure and natural, lucid, serene and cheerful, calm,
intelligent and happy, and so affectionate!

In this wonderful work, to which he gave pride of place in his Collected Works, Chamisso describes her feelings for him and relives their courtship. We learn more about her character as the cycle progresses. The opening **Seit ich ihn gesehen** describes her obsessive love for the man she has just met. Schumann's marking is *largetto* – faster, therefore, than *largo*, and urgent enough to convey the strength of her feelings and the blindness of her love. **Er, der Herrlichste von allen** is not the exultant love song that we hear all too often in recitals. The marking is *innig, lebhaft* (fervently/tenderly and lively) and the pianist is instructed to play *piano*. There is not yet any indication that her love is requited or even that the man has noticed her. 'Kämmerlein' ('little room') from the previous song and 'niedre Magd' ('lowly maid') from 'Er, der Herrlichste von allen', suggest that she might be a servant in the house of the man she loves. The song ends with a reprise of the opening melody and words, but composed at a lower pitch to depict the hopelessness of her love. By the opening bar of the next song, **Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben**, all this has changed. Marked *Mit Leidenschaft*, this passionate song relives the moment when the man declared his love for her. Her response is a mixture of ecstasy, tenderness and erotic desire ('O let me die . . . Let me savour blissful death.'). **Du Ring an meinem Finger** celebrates their engagement and contrasts her present rapture with the desolation of the life she led as a single woman. The passage starting 'Ich will ihm dienen, ihm leben,/Ihm angehören ganz' ('I shall serve him, live for him,/Belong to him wholly') has been unfairly criticized by some feminists who fail to realize that any woman or any man in the first intoxicating days of love can indulge in such hyperbole. Schumann's marking here, incidentally, is *nach und nach rascher*: the gradually quickening tempo and the harmonic progressions help to convey her rising passion. In **Helft mir, ihr Schwestern** she asks her bridesmaids to dress her on the wedding morning, she muses on her relationship with her fiancé, remembers lying in his arms, remembers his sexual impatience

– 'Immer noch rief er,/Sehnsucht im Herzen/Ungeduldig den heutigen Tag' ('Still he called,/With longing heart,/Impatiently for this day') – and hopes that she will receive him without shyness or trepidation on the wedding night. **Süßer Freund** is the most tender song of the cycle, and the most moving. The scene is the bridal bed, and before the start of this wonderful music the man, noticing her tears, asks her without much understanding of the opposite sex, what is amiss. At the end of the second verse she says she will whisper into his ear the cause of her tears. What then follows is one of the miracles of the Lieder repertoire. The piano interlude, no longer than three and a half bars, traces the man's reaction to his wife's statement that she is pregnant: initial disbelief gives way to gradual realization and, finally, ecstatic acceptance – a progression that is signposted by Schumann in a succession of *crescendi* and *decrescendi*, and a rhythmic variety that culminates in one single, held and rapturous semibreve chord that the pianist is expected to play *crescendo* and *decrescendo*!

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust sees her holding her child to her breast, dandling him on her knee and lifting him above her head. The final song, **Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan**, introduces a new note: the initial *sforzando* and *marcato* chord is in D minor, which immediately dispels the joyous D major of the previous song. The reason is the death of her husband and her feeling of bereavement. Hysteria yields to anger and then, at 'Geliebet hab' ich und gelebt', to numbed grief and love. The accompaniment grows rhythmically smoother, the dynamic softer, the tempo (at 'Da hab' ich dich und mein verlorne Glück') slower – until the pianist recapitulates in the postlude the music of 'Seit ich ihn gesehen'. There is nothing in the notation to suggest that this postlude should be played differently to the prelude – but what seemed energized and vibrant in the opening song should now be played with greater sadness, poignancy and tenderness, as the bereaved woman turns to the future and feeds off fond memories.

Richard Stokes © 2026.

Richard's new book, *A Carl Loewe Song Companion*, will be published by Bittern Press in the autumn of 2026 and launched at Wigmore Hall on 10 October. Joseph Middleton will accompany Günther Groißböck, Julian Banse, Lizzie Estrada and Aksel Rykkvin in this lunchtime recital.

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Biographies

Patricia Nolz

Mezzo-soprano

The young Austrian mezzo-soprano Patricia Nolz graduated from the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna with a Master's degree in Lied and Oratorio under Florian Boesch and Claudia Visca. She is a laureate of numerous competitions and was an Anny Felbermayer Scholarship holder in 2019.

In autumn 2020, she enjoyed great success with her début as Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*) in a new production at the Theater an der Wien, conducted by Stefan Gottfried and directed by Alfred Dorfer. After two years in the opera studio of the Vienna State Opera — where she celebrated her first successes as Cherubino and as Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) in a new production under Philippe Jordan — she joined the ensemble of the Vienna State Opera in the 2022–23 season. Patricia Nolz received the Austrian Music Theatre Award for her interpretation of Zerlina in Barrie Kosky's production of *Don Giovanni*.

She enjoyed particular success at the Vienna State Opera as Cherubino in the new production of *Le nozze di Figaro* conducted by Philippe Jordan and staged by Barrie Kosky; as La Musica and La Speranza in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*; as Annio (*La clemenza di Tito*); as Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*); as Siébel (*Faust*); as Orlovsky in the traditional New Year's *Fledermaus*; as Stéphano (*Roméo et Juliette*); and as Silla (*Palestrina*) under Christian Thielemann. Patricia Nolz made her début at the Komische Oper Berlin in spring 2024 as Cherubino. The same production also marked her début at the Edinburgh Festival that summer. In January 2025 she made her successful début at the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen as Rosina.

In the 2025–26 season, Patricia Nolz returns to the Vienna State Opera as Cherubino, a role she also takes to Japan as part of the company's guest appearance. Further highlights include her début as Hansel in a new production of *Hänsel und Gretel* at the Opéra National du Rhin in Strasbourg, and her début as Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) under Christian Thielemann at the Berlin State Opera.

Patricia Nolz has appeared in numerous concerts and is an accomplished Lieder singer. Highlights of her young career include performances of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra under Karina Canellakis and with the Gewandhaus Orchestra under Andris Nelsons. She has also performed Purcell's *Fairy Queen*, Bach's *St John*



© Klara Laschütz

Passion and Schubert's Mass in Aflat major with Concentus Musicus under Stefan Gottfried at the Vienna Musikverein. She has given solo, duo and ensemble recitals in the Stephaniensaal in Graz, at the SchleswigHolstein Festival, the Heidelberger Frühling, and in Blaubach, Feuchtwangen, Moritzburg, Basel, Como and Bolzano. In summer 2023, she made her début at the Grafenegg Festival in Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, returning in summer 2024 with arias by Mozart and Haydn together with Concentus Musicus under Stefan Gottfried. She made her Salzburg Festival début in summer 2024 in a Mozart matinée under Ivor Bolton, returning in summer 2025 with Mozart's Mass in C minor under Gianluca Capuano.

In the 2023–24 season she was featured as a "Great Talent" at the Wiener Konzerthaus, with a series of orchestral concerts and recitals. Concert highlights of the current and upcoming seasons include recitals at the Wiener Konzerthaus, London's Wigmore Hall, the Hindsgavl Festival and the Schubertiade in Schwarzenberg; performances at the Vienna Musikverein; Handel's *Messiah* with the Arnold Schoenberg Choir under Erwin Ortner; Mozart's Mass in C minor with Concentus Musicus under Stefan Gottfried at the Vienna Musikverein; Bach's Christmas Oratorio under Patrick Hahn in Munich; and concerts with the Basel Chamber Orchestra and Giovanni Antonini as part of the Carinthian Summer Festival, as well as with Concentus Musicus under Stefan Gottfried at the Grafenegg Festival.

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; the Royal Opera House, the Barbican and Southbank Centre; Alice Tully Hall and the Park Avenue Armory in New York; the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam; Vienna Konzerthaus and Musikverein; Hamburg Elbphilharmonie; Berlin Pierre Boulez Saal 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, the Schubertiade in Hohenems and Schwarzenberg, Seoul, Toronto and Vancouver.

He has enjoyed fruitful partnerships with Sir Thomas Allen, Louise Alder, Mary Bevan, Ian Bostridge, Allan Clayton, Dame Sarah Connolly, Marianne Crebassa, Véronique Gens, Iestyn Davies, Fatma Said, Huw Montague Rendall, Christiane Karg, Sir Simon Keenlyside, Elsa Dreisig, Angelika Kirchschrager, 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 the 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, with 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, Katharina Konradi, Carolyn Sampson and Hugh Cutting at venues including Wigmore Hall, the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía, Valencia, the Grand Théâtre de Genève, the Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam, and the Prinzregententheater, Munich. With Vera-Lotte Boecker he will also perform Schumann’s *Frauenliebe und -leben* in staged performances at the Staatsoper Hamburg. His recording projects include an ongoing five-album set of Mahler Lieder for Signum Records.

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A big thank you to the following people for their invaluable help

Apple and Biscuit Recordings Limited:

Alex Barnes and Kit Mackenzie

Festival Event Streaming

Ruth Hansford

Surtitles

Helen Stephens

Translations

Dr Katy Hamilton, Dr George Kennaway,

Mark Rogers, Keval Shah, Richard Stokes,

Nardus Williams and Roderick Williams

Programme Notes

Dr Katy Hamilton, Martin Iddon,

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Provision of pianos at

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Tony Green and colleagues

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Maisie Wood, George Clarke, and

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Leeds Conservatoire

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The Attic

Sara Merritt and colleagues

Brodrick Hall, Leeds City Museum

Sam Gundelfinger and colleagues

Left Bank Leeds

Staff at the Royal Armouries

The team at

Leeds International Piano Competition

Ian Calow

Programme Design

Dr Stewart Campbell

University of York

TC Murray Harcourt Limited

Our Independent Examiners

Our invaluable team of Festival volunteers

Please note that, in alignment with our commitment to sustainability, this programme and set of texts and translations will only be available digitally online via Leeds Song website.

We kindly ask that you either download the programme to your mobile device in advance or print your own copy to bring with you, as printed copies will not be provided.

QR codes will be available around the venue should you wish to access the programme upon arrival. You are welcome to use your mobile device to view song texts during the recital, but please ensure that your device is switched to silent mode and that your screen brightness is turned down so as not to disturb the performers or fellow audience members.

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The generous donations from the Friends contribute towards our Education programmes, Young Artist training, and mounting an annual world-class festival of song.

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"... under the dynamic direction of the pianist Joseph Middleton since 2014, the Leeds Song festival has brought musical riches to Yorkshire through star performers, engaging new commissions and bold educational projects."

The Times

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Guest of Honour
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