

TIMES & SEASONS



20TH JUNE 2026

7.30^{PM}

ALL SAINTS CLIFTON
BS8 3ED

DIGITAL PROGRAMME

In consideration of other members of the audience, please silence all mobile phones, beeping watches and similar electronic devices.

Please note that no recording or photography of any kind is permitted.

BRISTOL BACH CHOIR IS A REGISTERED CHARITY | NO: 253338

PROGRAMME

The Passing of the Year

Jonathan Dove

PIANO

Étude de Concert “Au Matin”

Marcel Tournier

HARP

Three Songs of Love

David Bednall

To a Skylark

Becky McGlade

The Birds’ Lullaby

Sarah Quartel

Wide Open Spaces

Sarah Quartel

PIANO

INTERVAL



A Fancy of Folksongs

Cecilia McDowall HARP

Nocturnes

Morton Lauridsen PIANO

Sleep

Eric Whitacre

With A Lily in your Hand

Eric Whitacre

FULL PROGRAMME CAN BE FOUND
HERE (SCAN OR CLICK THIS QR CODE)





TIMES & SEASONS 2026

The theme of the passing of time runs throughout tonight's programme, whether this be the literal passage of dawn to night, the passing of the months of the year from Spring to Winter, or the passing of human experience through the perennial theme of love requited and unrequited.

Much of this is set against the background of the natural world which is represented explicitly in pieces such as McGlade's *To a Skylark* and Quartel's *Wide Open Spaces* and *The Birds' Lullaby*.

Dove's *The Passing of the Year* sets texts of great beauty which combine all of these themes, beginning with the calling of the Earth to awake, through spring and summer wildlife, the passing of beauty and love, and finally the ringing out of the year.

The two works by Whitacre both centre around the themes of night, whether this be the night love of *With a Lilly in Your Hand* or the coming of *Sleep*.

Lauridsen's work focuses entirely on the night, and the passions and beauties which this can bring. Bednall's *Three Songs of Love* sets poems which explore the thrill of first love, true love, the promise to continue to love in old age, and finally the reconciliation of coming to terms with lovelost.

McDowall's *A Fancy of Folksongs* sets texts and melodies which are all connected in some way with this oldest of human themes, with plentiful nods to the natural world and times of day, with a wry sense of humour about the human experience.



BRISTOL BACH CHOIR

President: **Brian Kay**

Vice President: **Prof. John Butt**

Hon. Vice President: **The Lord Mayor of Bristol**

Music Director: **David Bednall**

Accompanist: **Nigel Nash**

Bristol Bach Choir is an auditioned mixed voice choir founded in 1967. We sing a wide range of repertoire from early Baroque music to compositions of the 21st century, and we regularly perform the works of JS Bach. We aim for dynamic and vibrant performances which have clarity and precision.

We sing in a variety of venues across Bristol and the surrounding area. We work with soloists and instrumental ensembles with national reputations, whilst also supporting talented younger performers at the start of a promising career.

A smaller group of singers is available to perform at weddings and other events.



DAVID BEDNALL

David Bednall is recognized as one of the leading choral composers of his generation. He studied for a PhD in Composition with John Pickard at the University of Bristol and is published by Choral Music Publishing, OUP, Boosey and Hawkes, Faber, and Novello.

He is Choral Director of Clifton Cathedral, Musical Director of Bristol Bach Choir, Bristol Chamber Choir and Chew Valley Choral Society, alongside an extensive freelance career.

He was Assistant Organist at Wells Cathedral, Sub Organist at Bristol Cathedral and has improvised on live radio, and performed extensively in the UK and abroad, including at Notre-Dame de Paris.

He was stunt-organist on Dr Who.

His compositions are widely performed, recorded, and broadcast on BBC Radio and Classic FM. His St Mark Passion, commissioned for the BBC Singers, was premiered in 2025 and will be broadcast on Palm Sunday 2026. More information can be found at www.davidbednall.com



NIGEL NASH

Nigel Nash (organist) read Music at Bristol University and is School Accompanist at Bristol Grammar School. He was Director of Music at Westbury-on-Trym Parish Church from 1986-1997. He has been a member of Bristol Bach Choir for 32 years, and since his appointment as the choir's accompanist in 1998, Nigel has played for the choir in numerous concerts in Bristol, Oxford and Gloucester and on tour in Paris, Oporto, Prague, Dresden, Iceland and Tallinn. In the autumn term of 2011 Nigel became the choir's acting Musical Director, conducting them in concerts at St Mary Redcliffe and St George's, Bristol.

A Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, Nigel is much sought after as an accompanist for choirs across the West Country and he has accompanied choral workshops with Brian Kay, Nigel Perrin & Bob Chilcott. He has accompanied Bristol Cathedral Choir and Bristol Choral Society on many occasions, and has given recitals in Bristol Cathedral, St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol University and Bath Abbey.

He has also been involved with several broadcasts on national radio and television including HTV's Morning Worship, Carols from Wells Cathedral, and BBC Radio 4's Daily Service, and Sunday Half-Hour on Radio 2.



REUBEN WEST

Reuben West is a harpist, pianist, singer, conductor and third-year Mathematics student at the University of Bristol.

As a harpist he has performed alongside local orchestra Avon Concordia and the University's Symphony Orchestras, Chamber Orchestra, Chamber Choir, Wind Orchestra and Symphonic Winds, as well as in numerous chamber music ensembles.

As a pianist he has accompanied soloists in recitals and recordings, served as a répétiteur for musicals and operas, and played in pit bands for several shows.

Reuben currently conducts the University's Chamber Choir and plays the harp in the Cecilia Ensemble, a Bristol-based group consisting of harp and upper voices.



CHORAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

The Bristol Bach Choir is excited to launch its Choral Scholarship Programme for young singers eager to develop their choral skills in a well-established and respected Bristol based choir.

We're a friendly, auditioned group committed to nurturing the next generation of choral talent. Scholars receive up to £1,000 per annum (pro rata), and all music is provided.

If you have any questions regarding the Choral Scholarship Programme, or if you would like to come to an open rehearsal, please contact our Membership Secretary: membership@bristolbach.org.uk.

We are very grateful for the kind legacy from the late John Huskins, which has helped finance our new Choral Scholarship Programme.



ALAN FARNILL FUND | APPEAL

The Bristol Bach Choir Foundation Trustees are appealing for £2,500 to restore the Alan Farnill Fund which was formed in 2014 to help support younger singers with their music and membership costs. The Fund was created by the Trustees in memory of Alan who had been a co-founder of the Choir and was an original trustee of the Foundation.

The Trustees are most grateful for donations already received totalling more than £1000. If you would like to support The Alan Farnill Fund, please make a donation (with Gift Aid if possible) to the Bristol Bach Choir Foundation whose trustees are Gareth Dodds, Rupert Handley, and Rod Thouless.

Email bbcfoundationtrustees@gmail.com

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1087322

TIMES & SEASONS



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The Birds' Lullaby	Sarah Quartel	
Wide Open Spaces	Sarah Quartel	Piano

INTERVAL

A Fancy of Folksongs	Cecilia McDowall	Harp & Choir
Nocturnes	Morton Lauridsen	Piano
Sleep	Eric Whitacre	
With A Lily in your Hand	Eric Whitacre	

NOTES

Jonathan Dove (b 1959)

The Passing of the Year

The English composer Jonathan Dove is best known for his operas, but he has also written instrumental music, church music, songs and, as here, choral music. *The Passing of the Year* is a cantata setting seven poems, which take us more or less through the year from spring to winter. The cantata is written for double chorus and piano. Musical techniques to listen out for include ostinato (use of repeated short phrases) and polyrhythm (different rhythms happening at the same time).

Movement 1 features both of these, impressively. The only words are *O Earth, O Earth, return!* written by William Blake.

Movement 2 takes us into spring with *The narrow bud opens her beauties to the sun* (also by Blake) in which the complex textures represent the burgeoning springtime. In the second half the composer adds the tune and words of *Summer is icumen in*.

Movement 3 is summer: *Answer July* – words by Emily Dickinson. A light and energetic scherzo, hard to sing – you will realise why when you hear it.

Movement 4: *Hot sun, cool fire*, words by George Peele – Elizabethan poet and possible collaborator with Shakespeare. One of two poems in this evening's programme whose meaning is disguised by the lack of the original title (the other is *With a Lily in Your Hand*). Peele called this poem *Bathsheba's Song*: it depicts Bathsheba bathing naked in a spring, hoping that no one will see her and be enflamed by her beauty. For the rest of the story, see the Book of Samuel. High summer.

Movement 5: Autumnal in feel, even if it doesn't actually say so. Words *Ah Sun-flower!* by Blake. Listen for the shape: although the piece is quite calm, the texture gets more complicated to the point at which it simplifies towards the ending.

Movement 6: *Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!*, words by the Elizabethan writer Thomas Nashe. Heavily autumnal meditation on mortality. One choir sings a repeated *Lord have mercy on us!* while the other muses on the inevitability of death. The choirs swap over; then swap back. Sombre.

Movement 7: *Ring out, wild bells* by Tennyson. Until near the end this is an exuberant and characterful piece, with lots of energy, imitations of bells, and the above-mentioned polyrhythms. The final phrase – *Ring in the thousand years of peace* – is appropriately calmer. We have been through the year, and are looking forward to the next.

Marcel Tournier (1879-1951)

Étude de Concert "Au Matin"

One of several influential Parisian harpists of his time, Marcel Lucien Tournier was born in 1879 to an instrument-maker, one of eight children. At 16 he began studies at the Conservatoire de Paris with the great harpist, composer and pedagogue Alphonse Hasselmans, whom he would succeed as professor of harp in 1912 until 1948. Over this period he would compose many works for solo harp, chamber music featuring the harp, as well as works for the piano and orchestral compositions. Much of his work for the harp greatly developed both the technical and harmonic possibilities of the instrument — *Au Matin*, a concert study composed by Tournier in 1913, is one such work, with virtuosic flourishes and rich chromatic language showcasing the developments in harp-making technology over the preceding century.

David Bednall

Three Songs of Love

Three Songs of Love were commissioned by David Ogden and Exultate Singers in 2015. The selections of texts was the most critical part of the process, and one of the challenges was to avoid anything excessively sentimental, and whilst keeping to this maxim, finding anything positive! The three texts here represent various moods of love, from the thrill of its first appearance and the mini-death which this involves, through the devotion felt towards the beloved even if they are unaware of it, to the distant memories evoked by a return to an old haunt.

John Clare's 'First Love' is a well-observed emotional journey following the first fall, and the slight sting in the tale is an interesting and arresting counterpoint to the opening. W.B. Yeats's texts are some of the most exquisite in the language, and both suggest a great vulnerability which comes from love: in the first it is the object of desire who will gradually lose their appeal to the world but not for the devoted admirer; in the second it is the devotee who is vulnerable as they lay open their dreams and soul for the loved one in sumptuous imagery. John McCrae's poem is a wonderful mix of images, and there is something faintly uneasy about it – is she dead or merely someone from the past? The final lines breathe a great warmth of nostalgia into the atmosphere, and seemed to form the perfect end to this set. McCrae is most famous for his lines 'In Flanders fields the poppies blow' and at a time when WWI is very much in people's minds a poem from this casualty of that conflict seemed to be even more appropriate.

The texts spoke to me immediately, and I attempted to set them in a manner which communicated this emotional directness to singers and audience. The words seemed of such importance that I set them largely syllabically, with only occasional repetition and imitation.

Becky McGlade (b1974)

To a Skylark

The composer has written: 'Where I live [in Cornwall] there's a common which meets the sea, and when walking there he only birds I seem to hear are skylarks... It seems profound and wonderful to me that they hover high in the sky, far above the troubles below, constantly emitting beautiful song. Would that we could constantly sing or praise through the ups and downs of life!'

Four of Shelley's 21 verses have been set to music, for unaccompanied choir. The style is quite adventurous in places, with rhythms that follow the speech-patterns of the poem. Note the quiet ending, as the poet concentrates on his own feelings, and ends up listening to the skylark.

Sarah Quartel (b1982)

The Birds' Lullaby

Sarah Quartel is a Canadian composer best known for popular choral pieces such as these.

Writing programme notes, you never know what you're going to come across. It's one of the joys. This piece, with Canadian composer and lyricist, has a tenuous local connection, via a lady called Emily Susanna Howells, who was born in Bristol in 1824. She emigrated to Canada, where she married a Mohawk called Chief George Henry Martin Onwanonsyshon Johnson; their youngest child Emily Pauline Johnson (1861-1913) wrote the words for this piece. And a charming poem it is, addressed by the birds to the cedar trees in which they are roosting. It's just crying out for a musical setting such as this. Unaccompanied sopranos and altos.

Sarah Quartel

Wide Open Spaces

Back to the full choir for this one. The words of *Wide Open Spaces*, about a journey to self-fulfilment, were written by Sarah herself. The harmonic style is not challenging, and the melodies simple, but the whole piece is enlivened by an imaginative piano part, adroit changes of phraselength, and an endearing freshness. Listen to the ending: do you think it suggests that the journey is not yet over?

INTERVAL

Cecilia McDowall (b1951)

A Fancy of Folksongs

Bristol Bach Choir have performed several of Cecilia McDowall's pieces, including *Shipping Forecast*, *Cecilia Busy Like a Bee*, and the Christmas set *Christus Natus Est*. Each has been imaginative and well written, and intriguing both for performers and listeners. *A Fancy of Folksongs* is an arrangement of four folksongs (using the traditional tunes) for choir and harp; the songs centre on themes of love and courtship. Folksong settings using the trad tunes are frequently dull, if worthy, but these are lovely, thanks to a light touch and the deft use of countermelodies.

In the first song, *Green Bushes*, a man meets a girl waiting for her lover; they go off together; the lover, arriving too late, is, as you might imagine, disappointed. Notice how McDowall cleverly extends the last line of each verse. The tune is modal – in the mixolydian mode, since you ask.

In the second song, *The Rambling Sailor*, a sailor leaves his ship for a life courting 'young girls and handsome', for which he claims to have royal permission. Harp with tenors and basses only.

Song three, *The Crystal Spring*, is a more standard profession of undying love. He's a young captain, and she's called Phyllis. Harp with sopranos and altos only.

Finally there is the boisterous *O No, John!* in which the suitor learns to phrase his questions suitably when the object of his affections always answers 'No'.

Morten Lauridsen (b 1943)

Nocturnes

Lauridsen was born in Colfax, Washington State. He studied at the University of Southern California, where he was for many years professor and Chair of the Department of Composition. His works are primarily vocal, and include *O Magnum Mysterium* (1994), performed several times by the Bristol Bach Choir over recent years.

Nocturnes, one of his best-known (and best) pieces, was written in 2005. It is scored for choir with piano, and consists of settings of three poems, followed by a short epilogue. All the poems reference night, with themes of love, summer and mysticism.

First movement: *Sa nuit d'été* (Its summer night). Lauridsen responds to Rilke's intense love poem with intense but stately music that grows to a climax before settling back to a quiet ending. Listen for the imaginative piano introduction, which comes back with an extra layer of choir at the end. Magical.

Second movement: *Soneto de la noche* (Sonnet of the night) is one of the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda's best-known poems, in which the poet wishes that when he dies, he will do so in the knowledge that what he loves will carry on living. Lauridsen sets the first two verses to variations of the same music; the second half of the poem is much faster, and ends with the repeated phrase *quando yo muero* - when I die. The music then repeats the words of the start, but with more intensity, ending on the words *te espero* – I wait for you. Unaccompanied voices.

The third movement sets James Agee's poem *Sure on this Shining Night*, perhaps best known from Samuel Barber's lovely song. The structure here is curiously like that of the previous movement – first verse – same again with countermelody – middle section, here to the words *The late year lies down the north* – another version of the beginning with even more intensity. See if you can follow this.

The short Epilogue – *Voici le soir* – follows without a break. The words are again from a French poem by Rilke, and the music quotes from the first movement. A serene ending.

Eric Whitacre (b1970)

Sleep

Whitacre comes from Nevada. He studied in Las Vegas and New York, and now lives in Los Angeles. He is best known as a composer of choral, wind band and electronic music, and as an inspiring conductor of his own music and that of others.

Whitacre's style is generally recognisable by his signature "Whitacre chords", chords with sevenths and/or ninths, and sometimes with suspended seconds and/or fourths. A good example in *Sleep* is the chord on *moon* at the end of the first phrase – it's used again as the final chord of the piece. If this is too technical for you, just enjoy the sound of his music, with chords that are unusual but not normally too dissonant or harsh. Whitacre's music is often compared to that of Morten Lauridsen: the harmonies they use are often similar, but Whitacre uses more avant-garde techniques, and a greater variety of texture.

Sleep has an interesting history. In 2000 Whitacre set to music Robert Frost's famous poem 'Stopping by Woods', only to discover that he had not secured permission to use the poem. Rather than waste the music, he commissioned Charles Anthony Silvestri to write new words, and *Sleep* is the result. The most striking part of the setting is the final word, '*sleep*' which repeats and fades to nothing. Note that the original also ended on the same word.

Eric Whitacre

With a Lily in Your hand

With a Lily in Your Hand is the second of Whitacre's *Three Flower Songs*, and was written in 2001. The words are a translation of an oblique love poem by the great Spanish poet Federico García Lorca (1898-1936) by the American poet Jerome Rothenberg (1931-2024). Rothenberg's version manages to be as vivid as the original while retaining its meaning and structure. One difference: Lorca's original title is *Curva* (curve or curved line). *With a Lily in Your Hand* (the first line of the poem) is no doubt a better title for the song, but may miss a layer of meaning.

The piece is a virtuoso composition, in which an extraordinary choral version of Flamenco weaves in and out of richly-chorded slower music and more wistful melodic fragments. Interestingly, Whitacre's performance suggestions divide the music into 'water' – a fluid texture in the middle of the piece at the words *Tamer of dark butterflies* – and 'fire' - the rest of the music. Neither water nor fire are referred to in the poem.

WORDS

Dove *The Passing of the Year*

1 Invocation

William Blake

O Earth, O Earth, return!

2 The narrow bud opens her beauties to the sun

William Blake

The narrow bud opens her beauties to
The sun, and love runs in her thrilling veins;
Blossoms hang round the brows of morning, and
Flourish down the bright cheek of medest eve,
Till clust'ring Summer breaks forth into singing,
And feather'd clouds strew flowers round her head.

The spirits of the air live on the smells
Of fruit; and joy, with pinion light, roves round
The gardens, or sits singing in the trees.

Summer is icumen in
Lhude sing cuccu

3 Answer July

Emily Dickinson

Answer July –
Where is the bee – Where is the blush –
Where is the hay?

Ah, said July –
Where is the seed –
Where is the bud –
Whee is the May –
Answer Thee – Me –

Nay – said the May –
Show me the Snow –
Show me the Bells –
Show me the Jay!

Quibbled the Jay –
Where be the maize –
Where be the Haze –
Where be the Bur?
Here – said the Year –

4 Hot sun, cool fire

George Peel

Hot sun, cool fire, temper'd with sweet air,
Black shade, fair nurse, shadow my white hair:
Shine, sun; burn, fire; breathe, air and ease me;
Black shade, fair nurse, shroud me and please me:

Shadow, my sweet nurse, keep me from burning,
Make not my glad cause, cause of mourning.

Let not my beauty's fire
Enflame unsteady desire,
Nor pierce any bright eye
That wand'ring lightly.

5 Ah Sun-flower!

William Blake

Ah, Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun,
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done:

Where the youth pined away with desire,
And the pale virgin shrouded in snow
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my Sun-flower wishes to go.

6 Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!

Thomas Nashe

Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!
This world uncertain is:
Fond are life's lustful joys,
Death proves them all but toys.
None from his darts can fly:
I am sick, I must die –
Lord, have mercy on us!

Rich men, trust not in wealth,
Gold cannot buy you health;
Physic himself must fade;
All things to end are made;
The plague full swift goes by:
I am sick, I must die -
Lord, have mercy on us!

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour:
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair
Dust hath closed Helen's eye:
I am sick, I must die -
Lord, have mercy on us!

7 Ring out, wild bells

O earth, O earth, return!

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:

The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress of all mankind.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the time;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

McGlade To a Skylark

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then, as I am listening now!

Quartel The Birds' Lullaby

E. Pauline Johnson

Sing to us, cedars; the twilight is creeping
With shadowy garments, the wilderness through;
All day we have carolled, and now would be sleeping,
So echo the anthems we warbled to you;
While we swing, swing,
And your branches sing,
And we drowse to your dreamy whispering.

Sing to us, cedars; the night-wind is sighing,
Is wooing, is pleading, to hear you reply;
And here in your arms we are restfully lying,
And longing to dream to your soft lullaby;
While we swing, swing,
And your branches sing.
And we drowse to your dreamy whispering.

Sing to us, cedars; your voice is so lowly,
Your breathing so fragrant, your branches so strong;
Our little nest-cradles are swaying so slowly,
While zephyrs are breathing their slumberous song.
And we swing, swing,
While your branches sing,
And we drowse to your dreamy whispering.

Quartel *Wide Open Spaces*

There's part of my story, there's part of my song,
There's part of my journey that's yet to be found.
With life all around us, and so much to see,
Adventure is calling, It's calling to me.
Out in the wide open spaces around me.

With big sky above me, I'm on my way,
Scanning the horizon of a brand new day.
Feet to the earth now, there's no turning back.
Into the world now, look at me go!
Out into the wide open spaces around me.
But as I journey out I look within and see
The wide open spaces inside of me yet to be filled,
Filled with what I have seen and what I will be.

Oh! I'm filling the wide open spaces inside of me
With something I love, something I would like to be!

McDowall *A Fancy of Folksongs*

1 Green Bushes

As I was a-walking one morning in spring,
For to hear the birds whistle and the nightingales sing,
I saw a young damsel, so sweetly sang she:
Down by the Green Bushes he thinks to meet me.

I steppèd up to her and thus I did say:
Why wait you, my fair one, so long by the way?
My true love, my true love, so sweetly sang she,
Down by the Green Bushes he thinks to meet me.

I'll buy you fine beavers and a fine silken gownd,
I will buy you fine petticoats with the flounce to the ground
If you will prove loyal and constant to me
And forsake your own true love, I'll be married to thee.

I want none of your petticoats and your fine silken shows:
I was never so poor as to marry for clothes;
But if you will prove loyal and constant to me
I'll forsake my own true love and marry thee.

Come let us be going, kind sir, if you please;
Come let us be going from behind the green trees.
For my true love is coming down yonder, I see,
Down by the Green Bushes he thinks to meet me.

And when he came there and found she was gone,
He stood like some lambkin, for ever undone,
She has gone with some other and forsaken me,
So adieu to Green Bushes forever, cried he.

2 The Rambling Sailor

I am a sailor stout and bold,
Long time I've plough'd the ocean;
I've fought for king and country too,
Won honour and promotion.

I said: My brother sailor
I bid you adieu,
No more to sea will I go with you;
I'll travel country through and through
And I'll be a rambling sailor.

If you should want to know my name,
My name it is young Johnson:
I've got permission from the king
To court young girls and handsome.
I said my dear what will you do?
Here's ale and wine and brandy too;
Besides a pair of new silk shoes,
To travel with the rambling sailor.

The king's permission granted me
To range the country over,
From Bristol Town to Liverpool,
From Plymouth sound to Dover.

I said: In whatever town I went,
To court young maidens I was bent;
And marry none was my intent,
But live like a rambling sailor.

3 The Crystal Spring

Down by some Crystal spring where the nightingales sing,
Most pleasant it is, in season, to hear the groves ring.
Down by the riverside, a young captain I espied
Entreating of his true love to be his bride.

Dear Phyllis, says he, can you fancy me?
All in your soft bowers a crown it shall be:
You shall take no pain, I will you maintain,
My ship's a-loaded, just come in from Spain.

But if e'er I prove false to my soft little dove,
May the ocean turn desert, elements move
For where'er I shall be, I'll be constant to thee.
Like a rover I'll swim through the sea.

4 O No, John!

On yonder hill there stands a creature;
Who she is I do not know.
I'll go court her for her beauty;
She must answer Yes or No.

O no, John!, no, John! no, John! no!

O Madam in your face is beauty,
On your lips red roses grow.
Will you take me for your lover?
Madam, answer Yes or No.

O no, John! no, John! no, John! no!

O Madam I will give you jewels;
I will make you rich and free;
I will give you silken dresses,
Madam, will you marry me?

O no, John! no, John! no, John! no!

O Madam, since you are so cruel,
And that you do scorn me so,
If I may not be your lover,
Madam, will you let me go?

O no, John! no, John! no, John! no!

Then I will stay with you for ever,
If you will not be unkind.
Madam I have vowed to love you;
Would you have me change my mind?

O no, John! no, John! no, John! no!

O hark! I hear the church bells ringing:
Will you come and be my wife?
Or, dear Madam, have you settled
To live single all your life?

O no, John! no, John! no, John! no!

Lauridsen *Nocturnes*

1 Sa nuit d'été (Its summer night)

Rainer Maria Rilke

Si je pourrais avec mes mains brûlantes
fondre ton corps autour ton coeur d'amante,
ah que la nuit deviendrait transparente
le prenant pour un astre attardé
qui toujours dès le premier temps des mondes
était perdu et qui commence sa ronde
et tâtonnant de la lumière blonde
sa première nuit, sa nuit, sa nuit d'été.

*If with my burning hands, I could melt
the body surrounding your lover's heart,
ah! how the night would become translucent,
taking it for a late star,
which, from the first moments of the world,
was forever lost, and which begins its course
with its blonde light, trying to reach out towards
its first night, its night, its summer night.*

(Tr. Byron Adams)

2 Soneto de la noche (Sonnet of the night)

Pablo Neruda

Quando yo muero quiero tus manos en mis ojos;
quiero la luz y el trigo de tus manos amadas
pasar una vez más sobre mí su frescura:
sentir la suavidad que cambió mi destino.

Quiero que vivas mientras yo, dormido, te espero,
quiero que tus oídos sigan oyendo el viento,
que huelas el aroma del mar que amamos juntos
y que sigas pisando la arena que pisamos.

Quiero que lo que amo siga vivo
y a ti te amé y canté sobre todas las cosas,
pore so sigue tú floreciendo, florida,

para que alcances todo lo que mi amor to ordena,
para que se pasee mi sombra por tu pelo,
para que así conozcan la razón de mi canto.

*When I die, I want your hands upon my eyes:
I want the light and the wheat of your beloved hands
to pass their freshness over to me one more time:
I want to feel the gentleness that changed my destiny.*

*I want you to live while I wait for you, asleep,
I want your ears to still ear the wind,
I want you to smell the scent of the sea we both loved,
and to continue walking on the sand we walked on.*

*I want all that I loved to keep on living,
and you whom I loved and sang above all things
to keep flowering into full bloom,*

*so that you can touch all that my love provides you,
so that my shadow may pass over your hair,
so that all may know the reason for my song.*

(Tr. Nicholas Lauridsen)

3 Sure on this shining night

James Agee

Sure on this shining night
Of starmade shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.

The late year lies down the north,
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder
Wandering far alone
Of shadows on the stars.

4 Epilogue – Voici le soir (Night has come)

Rainer Maria Rilke

Voici le soir;
pendant tout un jour encore je vous ai beaucoup aimées,
collines émues.
C'est beau de voir,
Mais: de sentir à la doublure des paupières fermées
La douceur d'avoir vu...

*Night has come;
for one whole day again I've loved you so much,
stirring hills.
It's beautiful to see,
But: to feel in the lining of closed eyelids
the sweetness of having seen...*

(Tr. Morten Lauridsen)

Whitacre Sleep

The evening hangs beneath the moon,

Charles Anthony Silvestri

A silver thread on darkened dune.
With closing eyes and resting head
I know that sleep is coming soon.

Upon my pillow, safe in bed,
A thousand pictures fill my head,
I cannot sleep, my mind's a flight;
And yet my limbs seem made of lead.

If there are noises in the night,
A frightening shadow, flickering light;
Then I surrender unto sleep,
Where clouds of dream give second sight.

What dreams may come, both dark and deep,
Of flying wings and soaring leap
As I surrender unto sleep.

Whitacre *With a Lily*

Lorca

O! my night love!
With a lily in your hand I leave you, o my night love!
Little widow of my single star I find you,
Tamer of dark butterflies!
I keep along my way.
After a thousand years have gone you'll see me, o my night love!
By the blue footpath, tamer of dark stars,
I'll make my way,
Until the universe can fit inside my heart. (Tr. Jerome Rothenberg)

