



The Wagner Society

Presents

Swords & Winterstorms

A concert of Arias & Lieder

By Wagner, Strauss & Mahler

Sung by

*David Corcoran &
Amanda Windred,
& accompanied by
Bradley Gilchrist*

Sunday 25th August, 2pm

In the Mosman Art Gallery,

cnr. Art Gallery Way & Myagah Rd

\$40 Members

\$45 Non-members

<http://www.wagner.org.au>

Painting by E. Gordon-Werner

Swords & Winterstorms

David Corcoran, Tenor (Appears with permission from **Opera Australia**)
Amanda Windred, Soprano
Bradley Gilchrist, Accompanist

Gustav Mahler: (1860-1911) Rückert Lieder - David Corcoran

Liebst du um Schönheit (If you love for beauty)
Ich atmet' einen linden Duft (I breathed a gentle fragrance)
Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder! (Do not look into my songs!)
Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen (I am lost to the world)
Um Mitternacht (At midnight)

Gustav Mahler: Des Knaben Wunderhorn (The Youth's Magic Horn) - David Corcoran
Urlicht (Primal Light)

Richard Strauss: (1864-1949) Opus 27, Number 4 - Amanda Windred

Morgen (Tomorrow)

Richard Wagner: (1813-1883) Die Walküre – David Corcoran

Act 1 - Aria
Ein Schwert verheiß mir der Vater (My father promised me a sword)

Interval

Gustav Mahler: Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen (Songs of a Wayfarer) – David Corcoran

Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht (When my Darling is Married)
Ging heut Morgen übers Feld (I Walked across the Fields this Morning)
Ich hab' ein glühend Messer (I Have a Red Hot Knife)
Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz (The Two Blue Eyes of My Darling)

Richard Wagner: Wesendonck-Lieder – Amanda Windred

Der Engel (The Angel)
Stehe Still (Be Quiet)
Im Treibhaus (In the Hot House)
Schmerzen (Anguish)
Träume (Dreams)

Richard Wagner: Die Walküre – David Corcoran
Act 1 - Aria – *Winterstürme wichen dem Wonnemond (Winterstorms)*

Swords and Winterstorms

Given the example set by the remarkable song cycles of Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann, it is little wonder that later German composers were drawn to the *Lied* as a medium for expressing their deepest and most personal emotions. Even Wagner, who had a much more ambitious artistic agenda than to be a mere composer of songs, was apparently inspired by a passionate love affair to compose a cycle that remains one of his most popular non-dramatic works. For Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler the tradition of the German *Lied* remained central to their artistic output, and reached new heights of expressive intensity in their settings of songs with orchestral accompaniment.

Although Gustav Mahler's settings of the five poems by Friedrich Rückert which have become known by the title of *Rückert-Lieder* were composed within a fairly short period (1901-2) and share some thematic connections, they do not constitute a song cycle in the strict sense, lacking as they do the narrativity of, for instance, Schubert's *Die Winterreise* or Schumann's *Dichterliebe*. Indeed, the selection and ordering of the five songs, which were originally published as part of a set of seven (and are by no means Mahler's only settings of poems by Rückert) have been established more by performance tradition than by the intentions of the composer himself. The five songs explore the profundity of love, life and death, themes with which Mahler was preoccupied throughout his life.

These themes are also apparent in Mahler's settings of numerous poems from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* ("The Youth's Magic Horn"), a collection of German folk poems with which Mahler was fascinated, declaring it his favourite book. A collection of twelve of these settings was published in 1899 under the title *Humoreske* ("Humoresques"); it is from this collection that *Urlicht* is taken. While initially published with piano accompaniment only, all the songs were conceived with orchestral accompaniment from the beginning and later appeared in that form. As was the case with several of the songs in this set, *Urlicht* was later reworked, and took on important new life as the basis for the fourth movement of Mahler's Second Symphony.

Des Knaben Wunderhorn also makes an appearance in Mahler's first song cycle, *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* ("Songs of a Wayfarer"), though here a poem from the book forms the basis for an original text written by Mahler himself. The four songs of the work were conceived as a set and form one of his most tightly-knit cycles. Composed during the 1880s, the work bears some thematic resemblance to Schubert's *Winterreise* in its depiction of the poet wandering through a landscape, expressing his intense despair at a failed or unrequited love affair. Originally composed with piano, this cycle was also later orchestrated and is most commonly heard in that form.

Richard Strauss was a prolific composer of *Lieder*, though he wrote few real song cycles; rather, many of his songs were published as sets or collections simply for convenience. As with Mahler, most were published initially with piano accompaniment, but fulfilled their true conception in later orchestral versions. *Morgen* originally appeared as one of the *Four Songs for Voice and Piano* of 1894, and was orchestrated in 1897. It remains one of Strauss's best-loved songs, and in its orchestral form features a famously beautiful violin solo at the beginning and end.

The *Wesendonck Lieder* were composed while Wagner and his first wife Minna were living with a patron of the composer, Otto Wesendonck, in Zurich. Wagner was on the run after his involvement with the May Uprising in Dresden in 1849, and turned to Wesendonck for asylum. The five songs are settings of poems by Wesendonck's wife, Mathilde, with whom it is suspected Wagner had a passionate affair. Certainly the arrangement of one of the set, *Träume*, to be performed with chamber orchestra accompaniment outside Mathilde's window on her birthday, seems an extravagantly romantic gesture. (Wagner later repeated this trick with the *Siegfried Idyll*, composed for his second wife Cosima). Though not performed as a whole until 1862, the *Wesendonck Lieder* were composed during the 1850s, at the same time that Wagner was working on *Tristan and Isolde*, and contain certain musical ideas which are developed further in the opera. It is also believed that the subject matter of *Tristan* reflects Wagner's infatuation with Mathilde Wesendonck.

Each half of this program culminates in a complete departure from the song-cycle to a cycle of another kind, with two excerpts from the first act of Wagner's *Die Walküre*, the second music drama in his great *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. In *Ein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater*, Siegmund discovers he is the hero destined to wield the magic sword, planted by Wotan in the trunk of the ash tree in Hunding's house where Sieglinde is held captive. In the *Winterstürme* passage, surely one of the most lyrically beautiful in the entire Ring cycle, Siegmund expresses the growing discovery of his love for Sieglinde, and sings of the storms of winter being banished by the coming of spring.

Philip Murray, August 2013

<p>Five Ruckert Songs</p> <p>If you love for beauty</p> <p>If you love for beauty, Oh, do not love me! Love the sun, She has golden hair! If you love for youth, Oh, do not love me! Love the spring; It is young every year</p>	<p>If you love for treasure, Oh, do not love me! Love the mermaid; She has many clear pearls!</p> <p>If you love for love, Oh yes, do love me! Love me ever, I'll love you ever more!</p>
<p>I breathed a gentle fragrance!</p> <p>I breathed a gentle fragrance! In the room stood a sprig of linden, a gift from a dear hand. How lovely was the fragrance of linden!</p>	<p>How lovely is the fragrance of linden! That twig of linden you broke off so gently! Softly I breathe in the fragrance of linden, the gentle fragrance of love.</p>
<p>Look not into my songs!</p> <p>Look not into my songs! My eyes I lower, as if I've been caught in an evil deed. I can't even trust myself to watch them grow. Your curiosity is a betrayal!</p>	<p>Bees, when they build their cells, also do not let anyone observe them; even themselves. When the rich honeycombs are brought out to the light of day, then you shall taste them before everyone else!</p>
<p>I am lost to the world</p> <p>I am lost to the world with which I used to waste so much time, It has heard nothing from me for so long that it may very well believe that I am dead!</p> <p>It is of no consequence to me Whether it thinks me dead; I cannot deny it, for I really am dead to the world.</p>	<p>I am dead to the world's tumult, And I rest in a quiet realm! I live alone in my heaven, In my love and in my song!</p>
<p>At midnight</p> <p>At midnight I awoke and gazed up to heaven; No star in the entire mass did smile down at me at midnight.</p>	<p>At midnight I projected my thoughts out past the dark barriers. No thought of light brought me comfort at midnight.</p>

<p>At midnight I paid close attention to the beating of my heart; One single pulse of agony flared up at midnight.</p>	<p>At midnight I fought the battle, o Mankind, of your suffering; I could not decide it with my strength at midnight.</p> <p>At midnight I surrendered my strength into your hands! Lord! over death and life You keep watch at midnight!</p>
<p>Primal light</p> <p>O little red rose, Man lies in greatest need, Man lies in greatest pain. Ever would I prefer to be in heaven. Once I came upon a wide road, There stood an Angel who wanted to turn me away.</p>	<p>But no, I will not be turned away! I came from God, and will return to God, The loving God who will give me a little light, To lighten my way up to eternal, blessed life!</p>
<p>Tomorrow!</p> <p>And tomorrow the sun will shine again, and on the path I will take, it will unite us again, we happy ones, upon this sun-breathing earth...</p>	<p>And to the shore, the wide shore with blue waves, we will descend quietly and slowly; we will look mutely into each other's eyes and the silence of happiness will settle upon us.</p>
<p>My father promised me a sword</p> <p>The Valkyrie Act 1</p> <p>My father promised me a sword: I would find it in deepest distress. Unarmed I stumbled into an enemy's house; as security for his vengeance I stay here. I saw a woman lovely and dignified; enchancing fear eats up my heart. She draws me to her in longing, she hurts me with sweet magic, yet she is held captive by the man who mocks my defencelessness.</p>	<p>Volsa, Volsa, where is your sword? The stout sword that I shall wield in adversity: will it burst from my breast where my raging heart hides it?</p> <p>What is that brightly gleaming in the flickering light? What is the light bursting from the ash tree's trunk? My eyes are blinded by the flashing light. The flare laughs down gaily. How brightly the beams scorch my heart.</p>

<p>Is it the gaze of that radiant woman that she left there clinging behind her when she went out of the room?</p> <p>Night and darkness closed my eyes; then the blaze of her look fell on me: I knew warmth and daylight. Like a blessing on me shone the sunlight; my head was ringed by its wonderful radiance till it sank behind the hills.</p>	<p>Once more as it departed at evening its light fell on me. Even the old ash tree's trunk shone in a golden glow. Then the blossom faded, the light went out. Night and darkness close my eyes: Deep in the recesses of my heart an invisible fire burns on.</p>
<p>Songs of the Wayfarer</p> <p>1. When my darling has her wedding-day</p> <p>When my darling has her wedding-day, her joyous wedding-day, I will have my day of mourning! I will go to my little room, my dark little room, and weep, weep for my darling, for my dear darling!</p>	<p>Blue flower! Do not wither! Sweet little bird - you sing on the green heath! Alas, how can the world be so fair? Chirp! Chirp! Do not sing; do not bloom! Spring is over. All singing must now be done. At night when I go to sleep, I think of my sorrow, of my sorrow!</p>
<p>2. I walked across the fields this morning</p> <p>I walked across the fields this morning; dew still hung on every blade of grass. The merry finch spoke to me: "Hey! Isn't it? Good morning! Isn't it? You! Isn't it becoming a fine world? Chirp! Chirp! Fair and sharp! How the world delights me!"</p> <p>Also, the bluebells in the field merrily with good spirits told out to me with bells (ding, ding) their morning greeting: "Isn't it becoming a fine world? Ding, ding! Fair thing! How the world delights me!"</p>	<p>And then, in the sunshine, the world suddenly began to glitter; everything gained sound and colour in the sunshine! Flower and bird, great and small! "Good day, is it not a fine world? Hey, isn't it? A fair world?"</p> <p>Now will my happiness also begin? No, no - the happiness I mean can never bloom!</p>

3. I have a red-hot knife

I have a red-hot knife,
a knife in my breast.
O woe! It cuts so deeply
into every joy and delight.
Alas, what an evil guest it is!
Never does it rest or relax,
not by day or by night, when I would sleep.
O woe!

When I gaze up into the sky
I see two blue eyes there.
O woe! When I walk in the yellow field,
I see from afar her blond hair
waving in the wind.
O woe!

When I start from a dream
and hear the tinkle of her silvery laugh,
O woe!
Would that I lay on my black bier -
Would that I could never again open
my eyes!

4. The two blue eyes of my darling

The two blue eyes of my darling -
they have sent me into the wide world.
I had to take my leave of this well-beloved
place!
O blue eyes, why did you gaze on me?
Now I will have eternal sorrow and grief.

I went out into the quiet night
well across the dark heath.
To me no one bade farewell.
Farewell! My companions are love and
sorrow!

On the road there stands a linden tree,
and there for the first time I found rest
in sleep!
Under the linden tree
that snowed its blossoms onto me -
I did not know how life went on,
and all was well again!
All! All, love and sorrow
and world and dream!

Wesendonck Songs

The angel

In childhood's early days,
I often heard them speak of angels
Who would exchange Heaven's sublime
bliss
For the Earth's sun

So that, when an anxious heart in dread
Is full of longing, hidden from the world;
So that, when it wishes silently to bleed
And melt away in a trickle of tears;

So that, when its prayer ardently
Pleads only for release,
Then the angel floats down
And gently lifts it to Heaven.

Yes, an angel has come down to me,
And on glittering wings
It leads, far away from every pain,
My soul now heavenward!

<p>Be quiet!</p> <p>Roaring and rushing wheel of time, You are the measurer of Eternity; Shining spheres in the wide universe, You who surround the world globe, Eternal creation, halt! Enough development, let me be!</p> <p>Cease, generative powers, The primal thoughts which you are ever creating! Slow your breathing, still your urge Silently, only for a second long! Swelling pulses, fetter your beating, End, o eternal day of willing! That in blessed, sweet forgetfulness, I may measure all my bliss!</p>	<p>When one eye another drinks in bliss, And one soul into another sinks, One nature in another finds itself again, And when each hope's fulfillment is finished, When the lips are mute in astounded silence, And no wish more does the heart invent, Then man recognizes the sign of Eternity</p>
<p>In the hothouse</p> <p>High-vaulted crowns of leaves, Canopies of emerald, You children of distant zones, Tell me, why do you lament?</p> <p>Silently you bend your branches, Draw signs in the air, And the mute witness to your anguish - A sweet fragrance - rises.</p> <p>In desirous longing, wide You open your arms, And embrace through insane predilection The desolate, empty, horrible void.</p>	<p>I know well, poor plants, A fate that we share, Though we bathe in light and radiance, Our homeland is not here!</p> <p>And how gladly the sun departs From the empty gleam of the day, He veils himself, he who suffers truly, In the darkness of silence.</p> <p>It becomes quiet, a whispered stirring Fills uneasily the dark room: Heavy drops I see hovering On the green edge of the leaves.</p>
<p>Anguish</p> <p>Sun, each evening you weep Your pretty eyes red, When, bathing in the mirror of the sea You are seized by early death.</p>	<p>Yet you rise in all your splendour, Glory of the gloomy world, Newly awakening in the morning Like a proud, victorious hero!</p>

<p>Ah, why should I then lament, Why, my heart, are you so heavy, If the sun itself must despair, If the sun must set?</p>	<p>And if Death gives rise only to Life, And pain gives way only to bliss, O how thankful I am, that Nature gives me such anguish!</p>
<p>Dreams</p> <p>Tell me, what kind of wondrous dreams are embracing my senses, that have not, like sea-foam, vanished into desolate Nothingness?</p> <p>Dreams, that with each passing hour, each passing day, bloom fairer, and with their heavenly tidings roam blissfully through my heart!</p> <p>Dreams which, like holy rays of light sink into the soul, there to paint an eternal image: forgiving all, thinking of only One.</p>	<p>Dreams which, when the Spring sun kisses the blossoms from the snow, so that into unsuspected bliss they greet the new day,</p> <p>so that they grow, so that they bloom, and dreaming, bestow their fragrance, these dreams gently glow and fade on your breast, and then sink into the grave.</p>
<p>Winterstorms The Valkyrie Act 1</p> <p>Wintry storms have vanished before May time; in a gentle light springtime shines out. On balmy breezes light and lovely it weaves miracles as it wafts. Through woods and meadows its breath blows, wide open its eyes are smiling. Lovely birdsong sweetly proclaims it. Blissful scents exhale its presence. Marvellous flowers sprout from its hot blood, buds and shoots grow from its strength</p>	<p>With an armoury of delicate charm it conquers the world. Winter and storms vanish before their stout defence. At these bold blows, of course, the stout doors yielded too, for stubborn and hard they kept us from the spring. To its sister here it flew. Love decoyed the spring. In our hearts it was hidden deep; now it smiles joyfully at the light. The sister as bride is freed by her brother. In ruins lies all that kept them apart. Joyfully the young couple greet one another. Love and Spring are united.</p>

David Corcoran

David began singing in 2002 moving to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, with coachings at Covent Garden and ENO.

He won the McDonald's Aria Competition and the Opera Foundation Australia (OFA) Italian Award, giving him performances in *The Elixir of Love* in Europe.

David's Opera Australia performances include roles in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Peter Grimes*, *La fanciulla del West*, *Rigoletto*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La bohème*, *Of Mice and Men*, *For the Love of a Nightingale*, *Turandot*, *Die tote Stadt*, *Salome*, and Brett Dean's world premiere of *Bliss*.

David has been supported in German lessons by the **Wagner Society of NSW**. He is understudying Siegmund in the Melbourne Ring and will perform that role in Act 1 of *Die Walküre* with Harbour City Opera, which has also been assisted by **The Wagner Society**.

<http://www.davidcorcoran.com.au>

Amanda Windred

Tamworth-born Amanda studied at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, moving to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, performing in *L'enfant et les Sortilèges*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *L'Orfeo*, *Les Mammelles de Tirésias*, *Il Campanello di Notte*, *Il Signor Bruschino*, *Albert Herring*, *Tamerlano*, *Les Malheurs d'Orphée* and *Trouble in Tahiti*.

She has also performed in *La rencontre imprévue*, and the world premiere of Anne Boyd's *Daisy Bates at Ooldea*. She also workshopped George Palmer's *Cloudstreet, the Opera*. In 2012, supported in part by the Wagner Society of NSW, Amanda attended the Lisa Gasteen National Opera Summer School, working with Lisa, Siegfried Jerusalem, and Giovanni Reggioli. Later this year, Amanda will perform in *Le nozze di Figaro*.

<http://www.amandawindred.com>

Bradley Gilchrist

Bradley Gilchrist is a graduate of the Western Australian and Sydney Conservatoria and the Escuela Superior de Musica, Madrid. He is much in demand as a freelance accompanist and répétiteur in Sydney, specialising in vocal repertoire. Bradley worked for several years as a répétiteur at the Han National Ballet of Korea and as accompanist and coach at the Accademia Europea di Firenze. As opera répétiteur, he has worked for several Australian opera companies and studied at the Lisa Gasteen Opera Summer School. He is undertaking advanced conducting studies with Simon Kenway.



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Wagner Society in NSW

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