

PROGRAM NOTES

Vienna Boys Choir
2015 U.S. Tour

I. 500 Years of Spiritual Music

Veni creator spiritus (Come, creator spirit)
Gregorian Chant
Text ascribed to Hrabanus Maurus (780 - 856)

Veni creator spiritus is a hymn for Whitsunday, a feast commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit. The text is attributed to Hrabanus Maurus, a famous scholar and theologian. Hrabanus was abbot in Fulda from 822 - 842, and became bishop of Mainz in 847. He wrote an encyclopaedic dictionary in 22 volumes, *De Universo*; his scholarship and excellent administration made Fulda an outstanding academic center. He had considerable influence on Charlemagne. He wrote *Veni creator spiritus* around 809; the first mention of the tune, found in the monastery of Kempten in Bavaria, dates to the 10th century.

The hymn is written in iambic metres, in accordance with the rules of Latin poetry. It is used at Pentecost and to mark beginnings, such as confirmation, the ordination of priests or the election of a new Pope. There are versions in many languages: John Dryden (1631 – 1700) put it into English. The most famous translations into German are by Martin Luther (1483 – 1546), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 – 1832), who used it in his play *Faust*. Goethe understood the hymn as an invocation of the universal spirit.

The holy spirit is addressed as Paraclete, from the Greek *parakletos*, which means consoler, advisor, advocate, protector, literally “the one who guides you by the hand”. The “sevenfold gift” refers to the four cardinal virtues derived from Plato’s Protagoras (wisdom, temperance, fortitude and justice), plus three virtues added by St Ambrose, Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas: faith, hope, and love (cf. 1 Corinthians : 13). According to tradition, these were the names of the first three rungs of the ladder on which Jacob ascended to Heaven (Genesis : 28). “The fulfilment of the Father’s promise” in verse three refers to John 14:16, where Jesus says: „I will ask my father, and he shall give you another mainstay to be always with you.”

Text
Veni Creator Spiritus
mentes tuorum visita
imple superna gratia
quae tu creasti pectora.

Qui diceris Paraclitus

donum Dei Altissimi,
fons vivus, ignis, caritas,
et spiritalis unctio.

Tu septiformis munere,
digitus paternae dexteræ,
tu rite promissum Patris,
sermone ditans guttura.

Translation

Come, Creator Spirit,
visit the minds of those who are yours,
fill with the highest grace
the hearts of those whom you have created.

You are called Paraclete, comforter and protector,
you are God's greatest gift,
the power of life, fire, mercy,
and ointment for the soul.

You are the sevenfold gift,
the right finger of the Father,
the fulfilment of the Father's promise,
preaching tongue.

Jacobus Gallus (~1550 - 1591)

Haec Dies (This is the day)

A cappella motet for four part double choir

Gallus was born in Reifnitz, Carnolia (now Ribnica, Slovenia). His birth name was probably Petelin, which in Slovenian means 'rooster'. As he traveled all over the Habsburg Empire, he used either the German - Handl - or the Latin - Gallus - form of his name, sometimes adding the adjective Carniolus, in reference to his home country. Jacobus Gallus was educated at the Cistercian monastery at Stična. He arrived in Austria as a teenager, singing first in the Benedictine Abbey at Melk and later with the Chapel Imperial in Vienna.

Between 1579 and 1585, Gallus was Kapellmeister to the bishop of Olmütz (now Olomouc) in Moravia, before becoming the organist of the church sv. Jan na Zábřadlí in Prague. In Prague, Gallus oversaw the systematic publication and printing of his works. His output was huge: more than 500 sacred and secular works are attributed to Gallus. He died in 1591.

Gallus's music combines ideas and elements of the Franco-Flemish, German, and Italian Renaissance styles. Some of his chromatic transitions in particular hint at much later styles of music. Contemporaries admired his works for their beautifully woven counterpoint and compared him to Palestrina (1525 - 1594). This was high praise indeed, as Palestrina's music was considered 'pure' in the sense of the Platonic ideal of music.

Haec Dies is an Easter motet. The passage from Psalm 118:24 refers to the day on which Yahweh rebuilds the temple in Jerusalem and vanquishes his enemies, something that fits well with the theme of Christ's resurrection. The immediately preceding verses, chanted by the entire congregation, read as follows: "The stone which the builders rejected / has become the cornerstone (of the temple, i.e. the community). / This is Yahweh's doing, and we marvel at it." The cornerstone has been identified with David and the Messiah; in the New Testament, it is Jesus Christ.

In antiquity, the psalm would have been sung at the feast of Shelters, during a procession through the temple culminating by the altar. Very likely, the king, who participated in the ritual, would have stood in for David – to showcase his dynastic roots. In modern Jewish practice, the psalm ends the Hallel sequence (Psalms 113 to 118), recited at the feasts of Pessach, Shawuot and Sukkot.

The motet was originally written for high voices, and was likely intended for the boys of the Viennese Imperial Chapel. There is a small solo choir

Text

Haec dies quam fecit Dominus:
Exultemus et laetemur in ea. Alleluia.

Translation

This is the day which the Lord has made,
On which we should rejoice and be glad. Hallelujah.

Giovanni Croce (1557 – 1609)
O sacrum convivium (Oh, sacred feast)
Motet for four part choir a cappella

Giovanni Croce, one of the main exponents of the Venetian school, was born in Chioggia near Venice. Around 1565, he was accepted as a chorister at San Marco in Venice; he entered the priesthood in 1585. In 1593, he became vice-director of music at San Marco. Following the death of the director of music ten years later, Croce was appointed his successor at San Marco, following the usual competition for the post held by the city of Venice.

Croce wrote a great deal of secular music; his madrigals in particular were hugely popular. He set farcical scenes for the carnival to music; these Mascarate piacevoli were to be sung wearing costumes and masks. Croce's musical style is simple and clear, effectively

conveying his deep faith. In his lifetime, Croce was highly regarded; Thomas Morley and John Dowland came to visit him in Italy, and his music was published and performed in different countries.

The text is ascribed to Saint Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225 – 1274). It is an antiphon for the feast of Corpus Christi, introduced by Pope Urban IV in 1264.

Text

O sacrum convivium
in quo Christus sumitur:
recolitur memoria passionis eius:
mens impletur gratia:
et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur,
Alleluia.

Translation

Oh, sacred feast
in which Christ is consumed:
his passion is recalled,
our mind filled with grace,
and a pledge is given of the glory to come.
Alleluia.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)

Dir, Seele des Weltalls (To you, soul of the Universe), K. 429 (468a)

Text: Lorenz Leopold Haschka (1749 - 1827)

Dir Seele is the fragment of a cantata; it consists of an opening chorus and an aria. The chorus presents the theme, in this case a hymn to the sun who is revered as “soul of the universe” and as life-giving force. The aria is an elaboration on the theme, celebrating spring. The nature of the text and the fact that the work is for male voices suggest that the piece was written for a Masonic occasion; both Mozart and Haschka were freemasons.

Haschka, originally a Jesuit, was a University librarian and teacher at the Theresian Academy; he also wrote the text to the imperial anthem “Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser” (God save Emperor Franz).

Text

Dir, Seele des Weltalls, o Sonne,
sei heut' das erste der festlichen Lieder geweiht!
O Mächtige! ohne dich lebten wir nicht;
von dir nur kommt Fruchtbarkeit, Wärme und Licht!
O Sonne! o Mächtige! O Seele des Weltalls . . .

Translation

To you, soul of the universe, oh, sun,
We dedicate the first of the festive songs!
Oh, Mighty One! Without you we would not live,
From you alone we receive fertility, warmth and light!
Oh, sun! Oh, Mighty One! Oh, soul of the universe . . .

Michael Haydn (1737 - 1806)

Anima nostra (Our soul),
from the offertory for the Feast of the Holy Innocents MH 452

The younger brother of Franz Joseph Haydn, Johann Michael Haydn was born in Rohrau in 1737. Like his brother, he left home as an eight-year-old to become a chorister at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna – since the court tried to save money, the cathedral choristers were in effect also the court choristers at that time.

From 1762, Haydn worked in Salzburg. In 1781 he succeeded W.A. Mozart as cathedral and court organist in the employ of the archbishop of Salzburg. He held this post until his death. Michael Haydn is particularly well-known for his many sacred compositions. In 1782, he was asked to edit the Austrian hymnal to make it more accessible to the people. Basically this meant translating Latin texts into German and simplifying and transposing melodies to encourage the congregation to join in the singing.

Anima nostra was written for the Feast of the Innocents on 28 December, which commemorates the mass infanticide in Bethlehem described in Matthew 2:16. The Magi had prophesied King Herod the Great that he would lose his throne to a newborn King of the Jews in Bethlehem, and Herod had all male children in the village killed to prevent this. This would tie in with Herod's deteriorating mental and physical health and his increasing paranoia fed by his family's intrigues, but there is no evidence that the massacre actually took place, and most modern scholars take it to be a fiction.

The text praises God as Saviour of Israel (i.e. mankind); it is from Psalm 124 (123):7, attributed to King David.

Text

Anima nostra sicut passer erepta est de laqueo venantium.
Laqueus contritus est et nos liberati sumus.

Translation

Our soul is sprung like a bird from the fowler's net.
The net is ripped and we are set free.

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 - 1901)

Laudi alla vergine Maria (In praise of the Virgin Mary), from: Quattro pezzi sacri

Text: Dante Alighieri (1265 – 1321)

Verdi, who is most famous for his many operas, was a professed agnostic; he did not have much time for traditional religion. His own rare sacred works express a deep and very personal belief.

The “Laudi alle vergine Maria” was written c. 1897/1898 for high voices a cappella. The text, the final song from Dante’s *Divina Commedia*, is a prayer of St. Bernard – Bernard prays to Mary on Dante’s behalf. Looking up, Dante catches a glimpse of divinity and a reflection of mankind, but is blinded by the brightness and finally returns to the old cycle of human life and human longing. Verdi only selected the beginning of the XXXIII canto for his piece, making it a praise of Mary.

“Laudi” was published together with three other sacred works by Verdi, a setting of the Ave Maria for choir a cappella, a large-scale Stabat mater, and a Te Deum for double choir and orchestra. The introspective “Laudi” finds itself sandwiched between the two loud pieces.

Text

Vergine madre, figlia del tuo Figlio

Umile ed alta più che creatura

Termine fisso d’eterno consiglio.

Tu sei colei che l’umana natura

Nobilitasti sì, che il suo fattore

Non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura.

Nel ventre tuo si raccese l’amore

Per lo cui caldo nell’eterna pace

Così è germinato questo fiore.

Qui sei a noi meridiana face

Di caritate e giusto, intra i mortali

Sei di speranza fontana vivace.

Donna, sei tanto grande e tanto vali

Che qual vuol grazia ed a te non ricorre

Sua disianza vuol volar senz’ali.

La tua benignità non pur soccorre

A chi domanda, ma molte fiate

Liberamente domandar precorre.

In te misericordia, in te pietate,

In te magnificenza, in te s’aduna

Quantunque in creatura è di bontate.

Ave.

Translation

Virgin mother, daughter of your son,
humbler and nobler than any creature,
you are the predetermined goal of the eternal counsel,

Through you human nature
Was so ennobled that its creator
Didn't think it beneath him to become a creation himself.

In your womb the love began,
And through its warmth, in this eternal peace,
This flower could blossom.

Here you are our midday light
Of charity, and below, among mortals
You are the living source of hope.

Lady, you are so great and so mighty,
Whoever wants grace and does not seek you out,
Longs to fly without wings.

Your goodness helps not only
The person who asks, many times
Has it been given gladly before the plea.

In you there is mercy, in you there is pity,
In you there is splendour, in you all goodness is found
that ever was in any creature.
Ave.

Hugo Distler (1908 - 1942)

Verleih uns Frieden (Grant us peace, 1931)

Text: Martin Luther (1483 - 1546)

Hugo Distler is considered one of the most important composers of choral music in 20th century Germany. "Verleih uns Frieden" is a reworking of a hymn by Martin Luther, written around 1528 or 1529, based on the medieval antiphon, Da pacem, Domine. Luther penned his version at a time of great unrest. The German Peasants' War had just finished, the Turks were laying siege to Vienna, religious fights kept erupting, and the English sweating sickness claimed thousands of victims throughout Europe. Nothing seemed certain; and

people were in need of consolation. As with most of his works, Luther's intention was to "give the people a voice", a prayer in their own language.

The original Latin text dates to the 6th or 7th century; it is based on Biblical verses 2 Kings 20:19, 2 Chronicles 20:12, and Psalm 72:6-7. Its universal message has gone on to inspire many composers, among them Schütz, Scheidt, Mendelssohn, and – of course – Distler.

Text

Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich,
Herr Gott, zu unsren Zeiten.
Es ist doch ja kein andrer nicht,
der für uns könnte streiten,
denn du, unser Gott, alleine.

Translation

Grant us peace,
Lord God, in our time.
For there is no one else
who could fight for us,
but you alone, our God.

Nurit Hirsh (*1942)

Oseh Shalom bi-mromav (He who makes peace in high places)

Text: Qaddish prayer

The text is taken from the Qaddish prayer; it is the final supplication for peace, possibly inspired by the Bible (Job 25:2). Nurit Hirsh wrote her setting of the words for the first Hassidic Song Festival in 1969. It has since become one of the most popular Jewish songs.

Text

'Oseh shalom bi-mromav
hu ya'aseh shalom 'aleynu
v'al kol yisra'el
v'imru amen

He who makes peace in his high places
may he grant peace upon us
and upon all of Israel
and say, Amen.

Gerald Wirth (*1965)

Leave This Chanting and Singing (2011)

Text: Rabindranath Tagore (1861 - 1941)

Gerald Wirth, the artistic director of the Vienna Boys Choir, writes much choral and vocal music. He has written three children's operas, as well as several settings of the mass ordinary, a number of motets and other works for use in a church context. Wirth, who firmly believes that making music brings out the best in people, also believes that everybody can and should sing. He likes to use mythological, philosophical or spiritual texts as a starting point; he often combines texts from different cultures, and he writes in a number of different languages. He translates the words into music that conveys the underlying emotion. His works have been performed by many choirs around the world.

Leave This Chanting is one of the songs in Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali anthology. The original Gitanjali, published in 1910, comprises 157 poems in Bengali. Two years later, Tagore compiled 103 songs for the English Gitanjali, or Song Offerings; in 1913, he received the Nobel Prize for Literature.

The Gitanjali poems are in fact spiritual offerings; in Leave This Chanting, the poet makes it clear that God is not necessarily in the temple nor the prerogative of a priest. Instead, God is everywhere, God is to be found with the humblest person, in work, in life, and in humility.

Text

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads!
Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut?
Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground
and where the pathmaker is breaking stones.
He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust.
Put of thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!

Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found?
Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation;
he is bound with us all for ever.

Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense!
What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained?
Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.

Three Gospel Songs

Amazing Grace
Early American tune
Text: John Newton (1725 - 1807)

John Newton's biography does not immediately suggest a writer of religious texts. He undertook his first sea voyage at age eleven, at eighteen, he was pressed into service on a British man-of-war. He deserted, was caught, flogged and demoted; he finally wound up aboard a slave ship. Life was not pleasant, and Newton started to read and teach himself Latin. In 1748, Newton's ship was caught in a violent storm, the outward reason for his conversion. In 1755, Newton left the sea and took up religion. He met Methodists and Calvinists. He learnt Greek and Hebrew and finally managed to become a minister. He accepted the curacy of Olney, Buckinghamshire. Newton must have been a captivating preacher; his church had to be enlarged to accommodate the crowds.

Amazing Grace was written between 1769 and 1770, probably for a service. Newton published it in 1779, under the title Faith's Review and Expectation, making reference to First Chronicles 17:16f. The song's first verse also recalls John 9:25. A second edition followed in 1807.

The music is Early American; it has been speculated that the melody was first sung by slaves.

Text

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found
was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fear relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise,
then when we first begun.

Oh, What a Beautiful City (Twelve Gates to the City)
Traditional African-American spiritual
Arr. Rollo Dilworth

Like few other spirituals, Oh, What a Beautiful City captures the idea of liberty; its text refers to the description given in the book of Revelation 21:11f. The beautiful city – New Jerusalem – emerges after the final battle between God and Evil, with a perfect, i.e. square city plan. There are twelve gates on each side, each crafted out of a single pearl (“pearly gates”), each with an Angel, and each corresponding to one of the twelve tribes of Israel – and thus, mankind. New Jerusalem stands for paradise, the ultimate freedom.

Text

Oh! What a beautiful city, twelve gates to the city, hallelu.

Three gates in the East,
three gates in the West,
three gates in the North,
three gates in the South.
Makin' it twelve gates to the city, hallelu.

My Lord built that city,
said it was just four square.
Wanted all of you sinners
to meet Him in the air.
'Cause He built twelve gates to the city, hallelu.

I just want to go to that city. I want to go.
Oh, don't you want to go to that beautiful city?

Twelve gates to the city, hallelu.

Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen (1670 – 1739) /
Edward Francis Rimbault (1816 – 1876) / Edwin Hawkins (*1943)
Oh, Happy Day (1704; 1967). Gospel song
Text: Edward Francis Rimbault

Oh, Happy Day has a convoluted history; it went through many transformations. It is a twentieth-century arrangement of a nineteenth-century version of a Baroque hymn.

Philip Doddridge, an English clergyman, wrote a text for an older melody by Freylinghausen, based on Acts 8:35: Oh, happy day that fixed my choice. In the mid-nineteenth century, Edward Rimbault, who edited much English music, took the hymn, changed its tune and added the refrain. In its new guise, it was used in church services in the UK and in the USA. Finally, in 1967, Edwin Hawkins adapted it for his own Youth Choir; he altered the rhythm from 3/4 to 4/4 time. His version only uses Rimbault's refrain; all of the original verses were dropped.

Hawkins's „Oh, Happy Day“ quickly became a classic. It has been sung and recorded by hundreds of different artists. Hawkins's own performance earned him a Grammy Award for Best Soul Gospel Performance in 1970.

Text

Oh, Happy Day, when Jesus washed my sins away.

*** INTERMISSION ***

II. From Vienna to Hollywood: a musical journey through the world

Johann Strauss son (1825 - 1899)

Bitte schön (If you please), French polka opus 372 (1875)

Arr. Helmuth Froschauer

Bitte schön was written in 1875 in the wake of the first performance of Strauss's operetta Cagliostro in Wien (Cagliostro in Vienna) which featured a chorus of old women begging the infamous occultist to give them a youth potion. The text sung by the Vienna Boys' Choir describes a fiaker ride through Vienna, pointing out the city's sights.

The polka was probably first performed in the summer of 1875, conducted by Johann's brother Eduard.

Text

Bitte schön, meine Damen und Herrn,
vorstelln möcht' ich mich Ihnen gern,
als Fremdenführer wohlbekannt
führ' ich Sie jetzt durch Wien galant.

Sitzen'S erst in mein Fiaker drin,
fahr ich herum Sie durch mein Wien,
denn es gibt hier so viel zu sehn,
drum einsteign, bitte schön.

Doch bevor meine Ross übern Graben,
Hofburg und Heldenplatz weiter traben,
bitte schön, schau'n Sie nach obn
hier rechts der Stephansdom.

Und in dem halberten Turm da oben drin
Hängt für uns die so berühmte Pummerin
Und vom hohen Turme aus sehn Sie vor sich ganz Wien.

Doch jetzt bitte schön fahrn ma weiter
Auf den Heldenplatz zum Reiter,
bitte schön hier der Prinz Eugen,
dem seine Schlacht hätt's müssen sehn,
wie er, kaum einem anderen gleich
gekämpft hat für sein Österreich!

Herrschaften, bitte weiter geht's,
dass ihr das Burgtheater seht's
und dorten auch das Rathaus steht
samt Universität.

Was sagten Sie soeb'n,
Sie haben sich verschätzt?
Ihr Zug fährt in a Viertelstund?
Ach Gott, jetzt wird i g'hetzt.

Dabei gab's noch so viel zum sehn
Doch jetzt die Zeit verrinnt,
so fahr ich Sie halt auf die Bahn,
mei Gschpann, des is ja geschwind.

Bitte schön, halten Sie sich fest an,
Sie werden schau'n wie schnell i fahr'n kann,
vorwärts ihr müden Rösser, trab, trab,
sonst wird den Herrschaften die Zeit knapp.

Als ob ma des net vorher sagn kann
Schaun Sie sich Wien halt dann vom Zug an,
so, wir sind pünktlich, wie Sie sehn,
bitte schön.

Trag die Koffer, gebn'S her,
bitte schön, es war für mich a Ehr,
danke, danke schön,
auf Wiederseh'n. Bitte schön!

Translation
If you please, ladies and gentlemen,
I'd like to introduce myself,
I am a well-known guide
And will take you through Vienna.

Take a seat in my fiaker cab
I'll drive you around the city,
There is a lot to see,
So climb aboard, if you please.

Before my horses go on
Over Graben, Hofburg and Heldenplatz,
If you please, look up!
There is St. Stephen's Cathedral.

And in that half-tower hangs
The famous bell we know as Boomer
And from the tower you can see all of Vienna.

Now, if you please, we carry on
To the rider on Heldenplatz:
If you please, this is Prince Eugene,
You should have seen how he battled for Austria,
Almost like no other.

Ladies and gentlemen, on we go,
So you will see Burgtheater,
With city hall and the university next to it.

What did you say?
You estimated wrong?
Your train leaves in fifteen minutes?
Dear God, now I have to hurry.

And there were so many other sights to see,
But there is no time,
So I'll take you to the station,
My horses are fast, you'll see.

Hold on, if you please,
You'll see how fast I can go,
Giddy-up, tired horsies, giddy-up.
Otherwise these good people will be out of time.

As if they couldn't have said so sooner,
Well, you'll just have to look at Vienna from the train.
Here we are, on time.
If you please!

I'll take your cases, give them to me,
If you please, the honour was all mine.
Thank you, thank you
And good-bye. If you please!

Johann Strauss, jr. (1825 – 1899)
Wiener Blut (Viennese Spirits), waltz opus 354 (1873)
Arr. Gerald Wirth

Wiener Blut was written for and first performed at the court opera's annual ball on 22 April 1873, by the opera's own orchestra conducted by its composer. Strauss donated the composition and its proceeds to the court opera's pension fund. Later editions bear a dedication to King Christian IX of Denmark, and Strauss reused the waltz in the eponymous operetta, which was discovered only after his death.

Text

Wiener Blut, Wiener Blut,
lockt zum Tanz, macht das Herz frohgemut.
Freudig klingt, hoch beschwingt,
unser Lied, das die Herzen bezwingt.

Jeder Mann, jede Frau, jedes Kind,
ohn' Unterschied, singt freudig mit
das Walzerlied,
selbst die Vögel im Wald, dass es hallt,
singen mit Lust
und Vetter Specht, der klopft den Takt dazu.

Die Mädchen, sie tanzen im Walzerschritt,
sind ganz vergnügt und still beglückt,
wenn die Burschen sich dreh'n im Dreivierteltakt
und ein Herz das andere fragt.

Und die Schürzen, die Kleider, sie drehen sich bunt
und sie wirbeln im Takt in der fröhlichen Rund,
und ob alt oder jung, alles lachtet und singt
und die Herzen, sie schlagen, sie jauchzen so beschwingt.

Und vom Kahl'nberg über Nussdorf hin,
übers ganze Wien mit dem Steffel drin,
hörst du singen, hörst du klingen fein
ein Lied, das lustig und frohgemut,
s'ist Wiener Blut.

In den Strassen, den Gassen, dem Häusermeer,
es freut dich so sehr, dein Herz klopft viel mehr,
wenn Walzermusik von Lanner und Strauss
von überall tönt heraus.

Das ist mein Wien, du allein
lässt übergücklich uns nun sein,
du meine Stadt, du mein Traum,
bist für mich ein Blüentraum.

Ich tanze, ich springe, ich lache, ich singe,
bin lustig und frohgemut immer, immerzu.

Translation

Viennese spirits,
make you want to dance, make your heart light;
cheerful and fast,
that is our song, drawing you in.

Every man, woman, child,
without fail, sings along happily,
even the birds in the forest sing loudly,
with gusto,
and cousin woodpecker keeps the beat.

The girls dance the waltz,
completely happy and quietly content,
as the boys dance in three four time,
as one heart joins the other.

The aprons and dresses whirl by as colors,
they whirl to the beat of the cheerful assembly,
old and young, everyone is laughing and singing,
hearts beating fast and rejoicing.

From Kahlenberg to Nussdorf,
in all of Vienna with St. Stephen's Cathedral in its centre,
you hear singing, you hear music,
a cheerful, joyful song -
that is Viennese spirit.

In the streets and alleys, in the houses,
and you are happy, your heart beating fast,
as waltzes by Lanner and Strauss
are heard.

That is my Vienna, you alone
make us deliriously happy,
my city, my dream,
you are a splendid dream to me.

I dance, I jump, I laugh, I sing,
am forever cheerful and happy.

Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)

Die Forelle (The Trout), opus 32, D 550

Text: Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubarth (1739 – 1791)

Franz Peter Schubert was born in Lichtenthal, now a district of Vienna, in 1797. His father, a teacher, gave him violin and piano lessons. In 1808 Schubert auditioned for the imperial choir boys and was given a place in the choir which had already been promised to someone else. Antonio Salieri became his teacher, supporting Schubert's talent in every way ("I cannot teach that one anything; he has learnt it from God"). Schubert did well at the choir school and wrote his first compositions there, but he did not like the food. A letter to his brother begs for an apple, "because it is hard to subsist on gruel and to wait for hours from one meagre meal to the next".

In spite of his enormous gifts Schubert was never able to live off his music; he had to eke out a meagre living from teaching. First he worked as an assistant at his father's school, then he taught music at the Hungarian estate of Count Esterházy.

Schubert wrote eight symphonies, six masses and chamber music. He is most famous for his lieder, he wrote more than six hundred songs on poems by Goethe, Heine, Shakespeare and others. Schubert died at the age of 31, very likely from the effects of the brutal contemporary treatment for syphilis.

Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubarth (1739 – 1791) was a journalist, poet and musician. He led a restless life, partly from choice (he liked wine and women), partly because his unruly behaviour and irreverent attitude towards authority got him thrown out of a number of cities. Schubarth championed free speech: In Augsburg and Ulm, he published a newspaper which was famous for its frankness. In the event, it earned him a ten-year prison term. Schubarth was kidnapped by police and thrown into jail in Hohenasperg Keep, without a trial or a conviction. Duke Carl Eugen of Württemberg wanted him "re-educated". Friedrich Schiller, who was equally outspoken and often in trouble with authority, visited him in prison in 1781; he used Schubarth's fate in his drama "The Robbers".

"Die Forelle" was written during Schubarth's imprisonment, and is a metaphor for Schubarth's own treatment by the powers that were. At the beginning of the poem, the writer identifies with the observer (the journalist); in last two verses, when the waters are muddied, he becomes the victim, i.e. the trout. The narrative perspective moves back to the beginning, and the narrator becomes the observer again. The word "betrayed" at the end is crucial; that is what Schubarth felt: betrayed.

The song was filmed for Curt Faudon's film "Bridging the Gap" to illustrate how singing can overcome speechlessness.

Text

In einem Bächlein helle,
Da schoss in froher Eil
Die launische Forelle
Vorüber wie ein Pfeil.

Ich stand an dem Gestade
Und sah in süßer Ruh
Des muntern Fischleins Bade
Im klaren Bächlein zu.

Ein Fischer mit der Rute
Wohl an dem Ufer stand,
Und sah's mit kaltem Blute,
Wie sich das Fischlein wand.

So lang dem Wasser Helle,
So dacht ich, nicht gebricht,
So fängt er die Forelle
Mit seiner Angel nicht.

Doch endlich ward dem Diebe
Die Zeit zu lang. Er macht
Das Bächlein tückisch trübe,
Und eh ich es gedacht,

So zuckte seine Rute,
Das Fischlein zappelt dran,
Und ich mit regem Blute
Sah die Betrogene an.

Translation
In a clear little brook
In merry haste
A capricious trout
Shot past like an arrow.

I stood by the waterside
And watched idly
The small fish's caprices
In the clear brook.

A fisherman with his rod
Stood on the bank
And looked on in cold blood
As the fish twisted and turned.

As long as the water stays clear,
I thought to myself,
He will not catch the trout
With his rod.

But finally the thief grew bored.
He treacherously fouled
the waters,
and before I knew it

his rod twitched,
with the fish attached to it,
and I, shaken and upset,
looked at the betrayed.

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)
Two pieces from: Liebeslieder-Walzer, opus 52 (1868)
Arr. Jimmy Chiang

Wenn so lind dein Auge mir (Your loving eye), opus 52/8
Text: Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800 - 1875)

Nein, es ist nicht auszukommen (People are impossible), opus 52/11
Text: Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800 – 1875)

Hamburg-born Johannes Brahms was a reserved, logical and thorough man, whose terse manner is reflected in his works. He knew a lot of music, and had obviously studied ancient music in some detail (this is reflected in his own use of Renaissance and Baroque polyphony). When writing vocal music, Brahms paid close attention to words; his sacred music is a deeply felt, non-denominational statement of faith.

Brahms, who for a while was the artistic director of a women's choir in Hamburg, wrote much music for high voices, motets, lieder and folk songs. He made use of traditional folk tunes, sometimes simply arranging them but also invented his own, such as his famous lullaby.

The Liebeslieder-Walzer were written in the summer of 1868, the lighthearted, jocular texts come from a poetry anthology by Georg Daumer, Polydora.

Text

Wenn so lind dein Auge mir
und so lieblich schauet,
jede letzte Trübe flieht,
welche mich umgrauet.

Dieser Liebe schöne Glut,
lass sie nicht verstieben.
Nimmer wird wie ich so treu
dich ein andrer lieben.

Translation

When you look at me
with such kindness and tenderness,
even the last shred of sadness disappears,
which may hang around me.

This wonderful glow of love,
do not let us dissipate.
No one will ever love you
as faithfully as I.

Text

Nein, es ist nicht auszukommen mit den Leuten,
alles wissen sie so giftig auszudeuten.
Bin ich heiter, hegen soll ich lose Triebe,
bin ich still, so heisst's, ich wäre irr aus Liebe.

Translation

People are impossible, you cannot win,
they see everything in a nasty light.
If I am cheerful, they say I harbor loose leanings,
if I am quiet, they say I am mad for love.

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 - 1901)

Witches' chorus, from the opera Macbeth

Text: Francesco Maria Piave (1810 - 1876), Andrea Maffei (1798 - 1885)

Verdi wrote his opera Macbeth in 1847; a revised version premiered in 1865. The libretto is based on the drama by Shakespeare. The story is set in 11th century Scotland. In Verdi's version, the Scottish king remains dull and feeble; the driving forces behind the evil action are clearly Lady Macbeth and, perhaps, the witches. Their opening chorus – just before they deliver their first prophesy - is a wild ride

Text

Le sorelle vagabonde van per l'aria, van sull' onde
sanno un circolo intrecciar che comprende terra e mar.

Translation

The roaming sisters fly through air, ride on waves,
they weave a circle comprising earth and sea.

Jacques Offenbach (1819 - 1880)

Belle nuit, o nuit d'amour (Beautiful night, oh Night of Love)

Barcarole, from the opera: Les Contes d'Hoffmann

Text: Jules Barbier (1825 - 1901), after E.T.A. Hoffmann

Belle nuit – also simply known as „Barcarole“ is a duet for soprano and mezzo soprano from Offenbach's last opera, Les Contes d'Hoffmann, Hoffmann's Tales.

The duet is one of the most famous melodies ever, often performed in concert settings; it has been used in musicals, films and TV shows.

Text

Le temps fuit et sans retour
emporte nos tendresses,
loin de cet heureux séjour
le temps fuit sans retour.

Zéphirs embrassés
versez-nous vos caresses,
donnez-nous vos baisers.

Belle nuit, nuit d'amour,
souris à nos ivresses,
nuit plus douce que le jour,
belle nuit d'amour!

Translation

Time flies and without turning back,
it takes away our tendernesses,
far from that blissful moment,
time flies without turning back.

Kissing winds,
bestow on us your caresses,
give us your kisses.

Beautiful night, night of love,
smile on our bliss,
night – much gentler than the day -
beautiful night of love.

International Folk Songs

Juchhe Tirolerbua (Hey, Tyrolean lad)

Song from the Tyrol; about the alpine cattle drive in spring.

Arr. Gerald Wirth

Folk songs are a tradition. Every country, every nation has it. Everyone who sings, carries the tradition on, spreads it and changes it while doing so. This is an important contribution to one's own culture.

Folk songs very often have a convoluted history. Most times the authors, lyricists as well as composers, are anonymous, and there is a feeling that the songs are in some way "generated by the people" and typical of a landscape. Usually they were passed on orally. If they were printed, publishers simply printed the words, assuming that the melody was known anyway. Printing musical notes was prohibitively expensive. An important, although rare source are hand-written private song books. They contain the songs a person knew and liked, but also recipes and useful advice about life in general. Sometimes a melody was jotted down as well. These books accompanied their owner through his or her entire life, some were kept over generations in a family. The oldest extant song books date to the 17th century.

Alpine folk songs have certain characteristics that are easy to recognise. Many include yodels or a refrain or shout similar to yodelling. In many cases, the melody is in the middle voice, because that is most people's natural range, a range people can sing without much training. The exposed voices twist around the melody; they are for trained singers. Over the course of time and tradition, different melodies were invented for the same text, and some melodies developed striking variants. The texts of these folk songs mirror the local customs; they include descriptions of the seasons and of the surrounding nature. They deal with driving cattle to and from the pastures, hunting, poaching, milking, carting, logging, dancing, loving and dying – things that are done everywhere around the world. The alps and the yodels simply add the local flavour.

The oldest reference to this song is found in a hand-written song book dating to 1820; it was first published in a book of folk songs in 1863. By folk songs' standards, this is a long written tradition, and there is, accordingly, an abundance of references and parodies like "Hey, Tyrolean lad / tie my bodice / but not too tight / or there'll be a lawsuit", written in 1896, proving that the cheerful, bouncy song was extremely popular.

Text

Juchhe, Tirolerbua,

Hollaradio,

Jauchaz i der Alma zua,

Hollaradio, dio.
Die Madalan, die Buabn,
Wachsn her wie die Ruabn
Springen beim Tanzn in d'Höh'
Hollaradio,
Hupfn auf als wie die Flöh'.
Hollaradio, dio.

Z'morgetes in aller Fruah
Hollaradio,
Fahrn mir der Alma zua,
Hollaradio, dio.
Die Küahlan tun grasn,
der Küahbuah tut blasn,
der Stier, der brüllt den Bass dazua,
Hollaradio,
Z'morgetes in aller Fruah
Hollaradio, dio.

Wann i zua der Hüttn kimm,
Hollaradio,
kimmt aft glei die Sennerin,
Hollaradio, dio.
Sie bringt in a Schüssl
Die herrlichsten Bissl,
Rahmmuas und a Weinbeern drein,
Hollaradio,
werd wohl a guats Essn sein,
Hollaradio, dio.

Translation
Hey, Tyrolean lad,
Hollaradio,
I am singing cheerfully towards the meadow,
Hollaradio, dio.
Girls and boys
Grow like turnips,
hollaradio,
Jump high when they dance,
hollaradio,
jump like fleas,
Hollaradio, dio.

Early in the morning,
Hollaradio,
We drive [the cattle] up to the pastures,

Hollaradio, dio.
The cows graze,
the cowboy blows [a horn].
The bull lows the bass line,
Hollaradio,
early in the morning,
hollaradio, dio.

As soon as I arrive at the chalet,
Hollaradio,
the dairymaid comes,
Hollaradio, dio.
She brings a bowl
With the choicest morsels
Of cream custard with grapes,
Hollaradio,
A fine meal indeed,
Hollaradio, dio.

Üsküdar'a gider iken (On the way to Üsküdar). Turkish folk song
Text: Nuri Halil Poyraz (1885 – 1950) and Muzaffer Sarisozen (1899 – 1963);
Arr. Gerald Wirth

This is an old song, dating back to at least the 19th century. It is known throughout the Balkan, as love song, as religious hymn, as revolutionary anthem, and as a Scottish(!) march. There are different stories as to its origin.

The Turkish lyrics are credited to Nuri Halil Poyraz and Muzaffer Sarisozen.

Text

Üsküdar'a gider iken aldi da bir yağmur
Katibimin setresi uzun eteği çamur
Katip uykudan uyanmış gözleri mahmur
Katip benim ben katibin el ne karışır
Katibime kolalı da gömlek ne güzel yaraşır

Üsküdar'a gider iken bir mendil buldum
Mendilimin içine lokum doldurdum
Ben yarimi arar iken yanımda buldum
Katip benim ben katibin el ne karışır
Katibime kolalı da gömlek ne güzel yaraşır

Translation

On the way to Üsküdar, it began to rain

The coat of my scribe is long, his coat tails are covered in mud
The scribe has woken up from sleep, his eyes are glazed
The scribe is mine, and I am his, hands will join
How it suits my scribe to have a starched collar

On the way to Üsküdar I found a kerchief
I filled the kerchief with Turkish delight
When I looked for my helper, I found him by my side.
The scribe is mine, and I am his, hands will join
How it suits my scribe to have a starched collar.

Un poquito cantas (Dance a little). Spanish folk song
Arr. Gerald Wirth

This feel-good song is designed to put a spring in your step and bring a smile to your face; it is sung by choirs the world over.

Text

Un poquito cantas, un poquito bailas,
un poquito leola, come un canario:
Leola . . .

Un poquito vino, un poquito aire,
un poquito leola, come un canario:
Leola . . .

Un poquito vientos, un poquito sombras,
un poquito leola, come un canario:
Leola . . .

Translation

Sing a little, dance a little,
sing a little leola, like a Canary Islander:
Leola . . .

A little bit of wine, a little bit of air,
sing a little leola, like a Canary Islander:
Leola . . .

A fresh breeze, a bit of shadow,
sing a little leola, like a Canary Islander:
Leola . . .

Aaron Copland (1900 – 1990)

I Bought Me a Cat, from: Old American Songs, Set I : V (1950)

In 1950 and 1952 Copland wrote new settings of ten old American folk and popular tunes. Set I was finished in March 1950; it comprises The Boatmen's Dance, The Dodger, Long Time Ago, Simple Gifts, and I Bought Me a Cat. The songs were first performed by Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten at the 1950 Aldeburgh Festival. In 1952, Irving Fine published the songs transcribed for chorus.

I Bought Me a Cat is a nonsense song with imitations of animals quite similar to Old MacDonald. More and more animals are added to the verses, until the singer finally "buys" a wife.

The song is mentioned in a number of Copland's letters; and was first sung to Copland by the playwright Lynn Riggs, who had learned it as a boy in Oklahoma.

Text

I bought me a cat, my cat pleased me,
I fed my cat under yonder tree.
My cat says fiddle eye fee.

I bought me a goose, my goose pleased me
I fed my goose under yonder tree.
My goose says, "Quaw, quaw",
My duck says, "Quaa, quaa",
My cat says fiddle eye fee.

I bought me a hen, my hen pleased me.
I fed my hen under yonder tree.
My hen says, "Shimmy shack, shimmy shack",
My goose says . . .

I bought me a pig, my pig pleased me.
I fed my pig under yonder tree.
My pig says, "Griffey, griffey".
My hen says . . .

I bought me a horse, my horse pleased me.
I fed my horse under yonder tree.
My horse says, "Neigh, neigh",
My pig says . . .

I bought me a cow, my cow pleased me.
I fed my cow under yonder tree.
My cow says "Moo, moo",

my horse says . . .

I bought me a wife, my wife pleased me.
I fed my wife under yonder tree.
My wife says, "Honey, honey",
My horse says "Neigh, neigh",
My cow says . . .

HOLLYWOOD

Richard Rodgers (1902 - 1979)
Three songs from *The Sound of Music*
Text: Oscar Hammerstein (1895 – 1960)

The Hills are Alive with the Sound of Music
Do-Re-Mi
Edelweiss

Rodgers was born and bred in New York. He wrote his first songs as a teenager, and by the time he entered Columbia University in 1919, he had already one Broadway musical to his name. A year later, he was asked to provide the music for the university's Varsity show, an unusual honour for a freshman.

In 1921, Rodgers left Columbia to attend the Institute of Musical Art (now the Juilliard School of Music), where he studied for three years. Rodgers and his partner Lorenz Hart found it difficult initially to interest Broadway producers in their songs. Their luck changed when the Theatre Guild signed them to furnish the music for a revue called *The Garrick Gaieties* in 1925.

From 1931 to 1935, Rodgers and Hart wrote film scores in Hollywood, such as *Love Me Tonight* (1932), starring Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette MacDonald, and *Mississippi* (1935), starring Bing Crosby and W.C. Fields. In 1935, they returned to New York. They continued to work together until Hart's death in 1943.

In 1942, Rodgers teamed up with Hammerstein. Their innovative and adventurous style delighted audiences in Europe and the USA. Their first collaboration was *Oklahoma!*, which achieved a record-breaking run of 2,212 performances and won a Pulitzer Prize. *Carousel* was voted best musical of 1945 by the Drama Critics Circle, and in 1949, *South Pacific* won both the Pulitzer Prize for drama and the Drama Critics Circle award for best musical. *The King and I* won a Tony award for best musical in 1951.

1959's *The Sound of Music* was probably their most successful work. It won a Tony and a Grammy. The film, starring Julie Andrews, won an Oscar.

Text

The hills are alive with the sound of music
With songs they have sung for a thousand years.
The hills fill my heart with the sound of music.
My heart wants to sing ev'ry song it hears.
My heart wants to beat like the wings of the birds that rise from the lake to the trees.
My heart wants to sigh like a chime that flies from a church on a breeze
To laugh like a brook when it trips and falls over stones on its way,
To sing through the night like a lark who is learning to pray.
I go to the hills when my heart is lonely-
I know I will hear what I've heard before.
My heart will be blessed with the sound of music
And I'll sing once more.

Do-Re-Mi

Let's start at the very beginning,
A very good place to start.
When you read you begin with A, B, C,
when you sing you begin with do, re, mi.

Choir

Do re mi?

Soloists

Do re mi. The first three notes just happen to be
Do re mi.
Do re mi fa so la ti.
Doe, a deer, a female deer,
ray, a drop of golden sun,
me, a name I call myself,
far, a long long way to run.
Sew, a needle pulling thread,
la, a note to follow sew,
tea, a drink with jam and bread
that will bring us back to do.
Do re mi fa so la ti do.

Edelweiss

Edelweiss, Edelweiss, ev'ry morning you greet me,
small and white, clean and bright
you look happy to meet me.
Blossom of snow, may you bloom and grow forever
Edelweiss, Edelweiss, bless my homeland forever.

Nacio Herb Brown (1896 - 1964)

Singin' in the Rain, from the MGM motion picture Hollywood Revue (1929)

Lyrics: Arthur Freed (1894 - 1973)

Arr. Anita Kerr

Singin' in the Rain is the eponymous and most famous song from the 1952 film directed by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen and starring Gene Kelly, Jean Hagen and Debra Reynolds. To all intents and purposes, it is a musical made for film, using known hits. The story of silent film stars Don Lockwood (Kelly) and Lina Lamont (Hagen) trying to "make it" in a talking film, placed 10th on the American Film Institute's list of 100 great films; the AFI ranks it as the last century's best musical. Lockwood, who can dance, survives as a star, whereas Lamont, who has a grating foghorn for a voice, fails and is replaced by her vocal double Kathy Selden (Reynolds).

Kelly choreographed the song as a soaking wet dance: Lockwood has just realised that he has fallen in love and therefore rather enjoys the bath, dancing with his umbrella in the middle a puddle. Kelly, who was running a fever at the time, actually danced in a mix of water and milk, so that the water would show up on film. The scene is often quoted or parodied.

The song was originally written for MGM's Hollywood Revue of 1929, sung by "Ukulele Ike" Cliff Edwards.

Text

I'm singin' in the rain
Just singin' in the rain,
What a glorious feeling,
I'm happy again.
I'm laughin' at clouds
So dark, up above,
The sun's in my heart
And I'm ready for love.
Let the stormy clouds chase.
Everyone from the place,
Come on with the rain
I've a smile on your face.
I'll walk down the lane
With a happy refrain
And singin', singin' in the rain.

Notes (c) by Tina Breckwoldt