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Justin Vickers, Tenor

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Justin Vickers

Tenor

R. Kent Cook

Piano

18 SEPTEMBER 2012 – EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS – CONCERT HALL

PROGRAM

Adelaide, Op. 46

Poème d'un jour, Op. 21 Rencontre Toujours Adieu Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

> Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Homenaje a Lope de Vega, Op. 90 Cuando tan hermosa os miro... Si con mis deseos... Al val de Fuente Ovejuna... Joaquin Turina (1882-1949)

INTERMISSION

Songs for Ariel, 1962Michael TippettCome unto these yellow sands(1905-1998)Full fathom fiveWhere the bee sucks

Tre Sonetti di Petrarca, S. 270Franz LisztPace non trovo(1811-1886)Benedetto sia'l giornoI vidi in terra angelici costumi

PROGRAM NOTES, TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Adelaide (Friedrich von Matthison)

[Translation by Philip Miller]

Ludwig van Beethoven composed Adelaide in either 1795 or 1796 during his first years in Vienna. He studied the works of Paisiello, Mozart, Salieri, Handel, and Süssmayr. Among his contributions to the vocal repertory is the lengthy, through-composed An die ferne Geliebte, regarded by many musicologists as inciting the song cycle genre. In a letter which is ever-regarded as one of the greatest literary outpourings from a non-literary pen, the "Letter to the Immortal Beloved" draws the following sentiment: "Yes, I am resolved to be a wanderer abroad until I can fly to your arms and say that I have found my true home with you and enfolded in your arms can let my soul be wafted to the realm of blessed spirits..." Written to an unidentified lover in his life, one cannot doubt why or how Beethoven was drawn to Matthison's depiction of longing and an eternal love for Adelaide.

Einsam wandelt dein Freund im Frülingsgarten, Mild vom lieblichen Zauberlicht umflossen, Das durch wankende Blüthenzweige zittert, Adelaide!

In der spiegelnden Flut, im Schnee der Alpen, In des sinkendes Tages Goldgewölken, Im gefilde der Sterne strahlt dein Bildniss, Adelaide!

Abendlüftchen im zarten Laube flüstern, Silberglöckchen des Mai's im Grase säuseln, Wellen rauschen und Nachtigallen Flöten: Adelaide!

Einst, o Wunder! entblüht auf meinem Grabe, eine Blume der Asche meines Herzens; deutlisch schimmert auf jedem Purpurblättchen: Adelaide! Lonely your friend wanders in the garden of spring blossoms, surrounded by the magical soft light that trembles through the moving blooming branches, Adelaide!

In the shimmering waves, in the snow of the Alps, in the golden clouds of the sinking day, in the field of stars shines your image, Adelaide!

The evening breezes whisper through the soft leaves, silver May bells nurnur it in the grass, waves roar it and nightingales warble it: Adelaide!

Some day, o miracle, upon my grave shall spring a flower from the ashes of my heart; clearly it shall shine on every purple leaf: Adelaide!

Poème d'un jour / Poem of One Day (Charles Grandmougin)

[Translation by Perry Gethner]

<u>Gabriel Fauré</u> was a contemporary of Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms, and was also a sort of elder statesman to Maurice Ravel, Claude Debussy, and even Igor Stravinsky. However, his stylings were never influenced by the waves of Impressionism with which he was surrounded, rather Fauré owes a great deal to the heritage of French *mélodie* established by Charles Gounod. Ravel felt that, *"It is truly in bis songs that Fauré offers us the flower of his genius."* Fauré has three distinct stylistic periods, into which the subtleties of the *Poème d'un jour* fall solidly within the first. The distinctly different emotional arcs of each of the pieces that comprise the *Poème d'un jour* reflect the breaking off of Fauré's engagement to Pauline Viardot in 1878.

Rencontre

Meeting

J'étais triste et pensif quand je t'ai rencontée; Je sens moins auhord'hui mon obstiné tourment. O dis-moi, serais-tu la femme inespérée, Et le rêve ideal poursuivi vainement?

O passante aux doux yeux, serais-tu donc l'amie Qui rendrait le bonheur au poète isolé? Et vas-tu rayonner sur mon âme affermie, Comme le ciel natal sur un coeur d'exilé?

Ta tristesse sauvage, à la mienne pareille, Aime à voir le soleil décliner sur la mer. Devant l'immensité ton extase s'éveille, Et le charme des soirs, à ta belle âme est cher.

Une mystérieuse et douce sympathie Déjà m'enchaine à toi comme un vivant lien, Et mon âme fremit, par l'amour envahie, I was sad and pensive when I met you; Today I feel my obstinate torment less. O tell me, might you be the unhoped-for woman And the ideal dream that I pursued in vain?

O passer-by with gentle eyes, might you then be the friend Who would bring back happiness to the lonely poet? And are you going to shine on my strengthened soul Like the native sky on an exile's heart?

Your wild sadness, just like mine, Likes to see the sun over the sea. Facing that vastness your ecstasy awakens, And the charm of evenings is dear to your beautiful soul!

A mysterious and sweet sympathy Already binds me to you like a loving bond, And my soul quivers, invaded by love, Et mon coeur tu chérit, sans te connaître bien!

Toujours

Vous me demandez de ma taire, De fuir loins de vous pour jamais, Et de m'en aller solitaire, Sans me rappeler qui j'aimais!

Demandez plutôt aux étoiles De tomber dans l'immensité, A la nuit de perdre ses voiles, Au jour de perdre sa claret!

Demandez à la mer immense De dessécher ses vas tes flots, Et quand les vents sont en démence, And when the winds are in mad fury, D'appaiser ses sombres sanglots!

Mais n'espérez pas que mon âme S'arrache à ses après douleurs, Et se dépouille de sa flamme Comme le printemps de ses fleurs.

Adieu

Comme tout meurt vite, la rose déclose, Et les frais manteaux diaprés des prés; Les longs soupirs, les bien-aimées, fumées!

On voit dans ce monde léger, changer Plus vite que les flots des grèves, nos rêves! Plus vite que le givre en fleurs, nos coeurs!

A vous l'on se croiyait fidèle, cruelle, Mais hélas! les plus longs amours sont courts!

And my heart cherishes you without knowing you well!

Forever

You ask me to keep silent, To flee far from you forever, And to go away, lonely, Without remembering whom I loved!

Rather ask the stars To fall into the immensity of space, The night to lose its veils, The day to lose its light!

Ask the immense sea To dry up its vast waves, To calm its somber moaning!

> But do not hope that my soul Will tear itself away from its sorrows And will shed its passion As spring sheds its flowers.

Farewell

How fast everything dies, The rose that has opened up, And the fresh mottled cloaks Of the meadows; The long sighs, The beloved women, Who have vanished in smoke!

In this fickle world We see, the change, Faster than that of the shore's Waves, of our dreams! Faster than that of hoarfrost Into flowers, of our hearts!

To you one thought oneself Faithful, cruel woman, But alas! the longest Love affairs are short!

Et je dis en quitant vos charmes sans larmes, Presqu'au moment de mon aveu, adieu! And I say upon leaving Your charms without tears, Almost at the moment of My avowal, farewell!

Homenaje a Lope de Vega / Homage to Lope de Vega (de Vega)

[Translation by Justin Vickers]

Joaquin Turina was a native of Seville, Spain, but studied in Paris. While there, he was greatly influenced by French compositional style, particularly the music of Debussy. Rather than fall victim to epigonism, he chose to imbue his music with elements of his beloved homeland. To that end, Turina employed Spanish folk elements, dance rhythms, and the Andalusian melodic effect of fluctuating majorminor modalities within his canciones. Turina was a master of sensitively setting the intricacies of his native Castillian Spanish tongue. Homenaje a Lope de Vega is a vivid example of music that is borne of the composer's simpatico for the Lope de Vega's vision of their shared heritage. In the third piece, the knight errant is of the Order of the Cross of Calatrava, which is the oldest and most prestigious Order of Knighthood in Spain, given by Charlemagne (in Verdi's La Forza del Destino, it is referred to as il marchesi di Calatrava). Despite his Order, the knight is intent to seduce this young maiden more than anything, and thus, his true Spanish sensibilities are displayed. Traditionally, Spanish men approach a woman with a piropo, or, a beautiful flower of a compliment - something which is an entirely lost art outside of Spain or Latin America. Such a piropo is never obscene or lewd, but is the height of flattery and is given to a beautiful woman with elegance in a manner that is never brutal. It is this sophistication that Turina weaves throughout the fabric of these songs.

Cuando tan hermosa os miro...

Cuando tan hermosa os miro, de amor suspiro y cuando no os veo suspira por mi el deseo.

Cuando mis ojos os ven van a gozar tanto bien, mas como por su desdén de los vuestros me retiro, de amor suspiro; y cuando no os veo, suspiro por mi deseo. When I see you so beautiful...

When I see you so beautiful, of love I sigh and when I look at you my desire becomes a sigh.

When my eyes glance at you truly they get so much joy, just as when your eyes show disdain from yours, mine must retire, of love I sigh; and when I gaze at you, my desire becomes a sigh. Si con mis deseos...

Si con mis deseos los tiempos caminaran, al sol aventajaran los pasos giganteos, y mis dulces empleos celebrara Sevilla, sin invidiar celosa, amante venturosa, la regalada y tierna tortolilla, que con arrullos roncos talamos hace de los huecos torncos.

Al val de Fuente Ovejuna...

Al val de Fuente Ovejuna la niña en cabellos baja; el caballero la sigue de la Cruz de Calatrava.

Entre las ramas se asconde, de vergonzosa turbada; fingiendo que no le ha visto, pone delante las ramas.

"¿Para qué te ascondes? niña gallarda? Que mis linces deseos paredes pasan."

Acercose el caballero, y ella, confusa y turbada, hacer quiso celosias de los intrincadas ramas; mas como quien tiene amor los mares y las montañas atraviesa fácilmente, la dice tales palabras:

"¿Para qué te ascondes? Niña gallarda? Que mis linces deseos paredes pasan." If with my desires...

If time could march on with my desires at the same rate, and if their gigantic steps could go faster than the sun, and my sweet pleading was celebrated in Seville, without envy and jealousy, toward the happy lover, the tender turtle-dove which was given me, that with subdued cooing is able to make a nuptial bed inside of the hollow trunks of the trees.

To the valley of Fuente Ovejuna...

Down into the valley of Fuente Ovejuna comes the young maiden with an uncovered head; while the knight from the Cross of Calatrava follows her.

Between branches she hides, shy and disturbed; she pretends not to see him, hidden behind the branches.

"Why are you hiding? Handsome maiden? Since my fiery desires can go through any walls."

The knight drew closer, and she, confused and disturbed, tried to make a lattice out of the intricate branches; just as anyone in love may easily cross the seas and the mountains to her he again spoke these words:

"Why are you hiding? Handsome maiden? Since my fiery desires can go through any walls."

Songs for Ariel (Shakespeare)

In 1962, Michael Tippett was asked to provide incidental music for a production of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* at London's Old Vic Theatre. The result was three individual songs for the character Ariel to sing during the course of the stage play, which was a throwback to performance conventions during Shakespeare's days at The Globe Theatre. Originally scored for a small ensemble of woodwinds, harp, timpani, bells, and harpsichord, the songs were to have been sung by an actor. Thus, the songs maintain a simplicity that allows an untrained singer to interpret them effectively and candidly. Tippett arranged the work again for performance with tenor and harpsichord as the miniature cycle, the *Songs for Ariel*. This cycle was performed by the English tenor Peter Pears for a sixtieth birthday gala fêting Tippett in 1965. On the same concert, Pears performed the first work that Tippett had composed for the tenor and Benjamin Britten, as pianist, the cantata *Boyhood's End* (1943).

The Songs for Ariel is alive with a neo-Elizabethan vitality and tenderness, yet is unmistakably infused with a twentieth-century harmonic modernism. The rhythmic structure of the accompaniment hearkens of lute strumming and plucking and bears the mark of a roving minstrel. The first song, "Come unto these yellow sands," evokes the early Baroque in its accompanimental patterns but not in its refined harmonic gesture. However, the entrance of the voice immediately alters the motion of the harpsichord, beckoning the listener into Tippett's new sound world. The whimsical "Bow-wow" of the "watch dogs" and the "Cock-a-diddle dow" of the chanticleer mark the song with a lightness and jocularity. Within the accompaniment, references are made to the opening motifs, which again close the song. In a performance alone with harpsichord, the middle song, "Full fathom five," evokes the very depths it depicts; in the small chamber version bells accompany it. Tippett's harmonic shifts align themselves with the text in surprising ways, notably at "But doth suffer a sea change," literally *changing* with the vocal line. If the final song of the short cycle is its dance, then the innermost song is its dirge. Finally, the cycle closes with Shakespeare's "Where the bee sucks," a text that is suggestive after a manner that is neither offensive nor tame. Flights of Purcellian rhythm accentuate the song without sounding affected.

Tippett is unique among composers for a number of reasons. Perhaps the most exceptional example is his penchant for extracting portions of his own operas and forming cycles around them. He did this with the *Songs for Achilles* (1961), upon which the second song, "In the tent," appeared in his opera *King Priam* of the same year. Essentially, Tippett created new scenes for the character that happened to occur outside the action that transpired onstage. The converse is true for the *Songs for Ariel*, its kernel having first appeared in the Old Vic production, but which inspired small motifs in the final act of his opera *The Knot Garden* (1970). Out of that opera grew his extended orchestral cycle, the *Songs for Dov*, which again builds a work around an excerpt from the opera, to which Tippett re-imagines a further series of experiences or monologues for the character Dov.

Tre sonetti di Petrarca / Three Petrarcan Sonnets (Petrarch)

[Translation by Justin Vickers]

<u>Franz Liszt</u> received his musical education in Vienna and Paris, which was followed by his staggering success as a virtuoso pianist touring throughout Europe. The dawning of his composition of song began in 1840, the year he met the great *Lieder* composer Robert Schumann. As a great interpreter of other's works, as well as his own, he then championed the works of Schumann and Franz Schubert, accompanying the famous tenor Adolf Nourrit (the premiére Raoul in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* and Eléazar in Halevy's *La Juive*) in the salons of Paris. Among his early songs, the *Tre Sonetti di Petrarva*, are extremely operatic in their vocal demands and *bel canto* melodic construction. These songs have a greater affinity to opera arias than to *Lieder*, and this may be due to Liszt's vast experience writing transcriptions of famous operas for the piano.

Pace non trovo (Sonetto CIV)

Pace non trovo, e non ho da far guerra, e temo, e spero, ed ardo, e son un ghiaccio: e volo sopra'l cielo, e giaccio in terra; e nulla stringo, e tutto'l mondo abbraccio.

Tal m'ha in priggion, che non m'apre, nè serra, nè per suo mi ritien, nè scioglie il laccio, e non m'ancide Amor, e non mi sferra; nè mi vuol vivo, nè mi trahe d'impaccio.

Veggio senz'occhi; e non ho lingua e grido; e bramo di perir, e cheggio, e cheggio aita; ed ho in odio me stesso, ed amo, ed amo altrui: Pascomi di dolor; piangendo rido; egualmente mi spiace morte e vita.

In questo stato son, Donna, per Voi, o Laura per Voi. Peace I cannot find (Sonnet 104)

Peace I cannot find, and I don't have from making war, and I am afraid, and I hope, and I burn, yet I am as ice: and I fly upon Heaven, and I lie on the earth; and I hold nothing, Yet I embrace the entire world.

She has put me in a prison, which I can neither open nor close, neither does she think of me, nor does she loosen the noose, and love does not kill me, nor does it heal me; it will not let me live, nor free me from its hindrance.

I see without eyes; I have no tongue yet I cry out; I long to die, I ask, I ask for help; and I have hatred in myself, and I love, and I love another: I am fed by pain; I laugh through tears; equally I loathe both death and life.

I am in this condition, Woman, because of You, oh Laura because of You.

Benedetto (Sonetto XLVII)

Benedetto sia'l giorno, e'l mese, e'l'anno, e la stagione, e'l tempo, e l'ora, e'l punto, e'l bel paese, e'l loco, ov'io fui giunto da duo begli occhi che legato m'hanno; e benedetto il primo dolce affanno ch'i ebbi ad esser con Amor congiunto, e l'arco e le saette ond'io fui punto, e le piaghe, ch'infino al cor mi vanno.

Benedette le voci tante, ch'io chiamando il nome di Laura, di mia Laura ho sparte, e i sospire e le lagrime, e'l desio. E benedette sian tutte le carte ov'io fama le aquisto, e il pensier mio, ch'è sol di lei, ch'altra non v'ha parte.

I vidi in terra angelici costumi (Sonetto CXXIII)

I vidi in terra angelici costumi, e celesti bellezze al mondo sole; tal che di rimembrar mi giova, e dole: che quant'io miro, par sogni, ombre, e fumi.

E vidi lagrimar que' duo bei lumi, ch'han fatto mille volte invidia al sole:

Blessed (Sonnet 47)

Blessed is the day, and the month, and the year, and the season, and the time, and the bour, and the moment, and the beautiful country, and the location, where I encountered two beautiful eyes which have captured me; and blessed the first sweet worry that I felt when joined with Love, and the bow and the arrows which pricked me, and the wounds, that have reached my beart.

Blessed are the voice's sounds, that I have spoken in the name of Laura, of my Laura I have spoken, and the sighs and the tears, and the desire. And blessed are all the pages wherein I have aquired her fame, and my thoughts, which are full of her, such that for others there is no space.

I saw upon earth the angel's customs (Sonnet 123)

I saw upon earth the angel's customs, and celestial beauty only on this world; it brings to my remembrance joy, and grief: The more I look, it is like dreams, shadows, and fumes.

And I saw tears from those two beautiful lights, which have made the sun jealous a thousand times: ed udì sospirando dir parole che farian gir i monti, e stare i fiumi.

Amor! Senno! Valor, pietate, e doglia facean piangendo un più dolce concento d'ogni altro, che nel mondo udir si soglia.

Ed era'l cielo all'armonia s'intento che non si vedea in ramo mover foglia. Tanta dolcezza avea pien l'aer e'l vento. and sighing, I heard words spoken that would move mountains and stop rivers.

Love! Wisdom! Valour, compassion, and grief made with tears a more sweet harmony than any other, in the world has ever been heard.

And Heaven's age to this harmony so listened that no leaf moving on its branch was seen. So full of sweetness were the air and the wind.

BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. Justin Vickers, the American lyric tenor, has performed frequently at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center, Vienna's Stephansdom, Moscow's International House of Music, and Beijing's Forbidden City Concert Hall. In 2011 alone, Vickers appeared in China, Moscow, France, England, New York, Boston, and Philadelphia—in opera, concert, recital, and in the recording studio—singing literature ranging from Michael Tippett and Benjamin Britten to Verdi's *La traviata* and Joseph Summer's operatic setting of *Hamlet* (forthcoming on Parma Recordings). Vickers was also pleased to première the song cycle he commissioned by American composer Tony Solitro, entitled *War Wedding*, setting the poetry of the Welsh poet Alun Lewis. Vickers created this work with pianist R. Kent Cook.

Vickers made his Carnegie Hall debut in November 1999 with Maestro Eve Queler and the Opera Orchestra of New York in the American première of Donizetti's Adelia, returning to perform in Lucrezia Borgia alongside Renée Fleming and Marcello Giordani. Vickers returned to Carnegie Hall with Opera Orchestra of New York in Meyerbeer's masterpiece Les Huguenots. The tenor has also performed the role of Cassio in Verdi's Otello under Queler's baton in Mexico. He has since appeared with The Washington National Opera, the Minnesota Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Opera Boston, and the Connecticut Opera, as well as the National Symphony Orchestra, the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, the Russian State Symphony Capella, the Liaoning Symphony Orchestra, and the Orquesta Sinfónica del Estado de México, to name a few. His international engagements have taken him to the concert halls and opera houses of Austria, Spain, Albania, Russia, China, and Mexico. In 2006, after his first Gennaro in Lucrezia Borgia for Opera Boston, he was celebrated in the Boston Globe as "tall and swaggering, his singing sensitive and elegant... with a ringing tone!" Based on the success of that role, he was invited by The Washington National Opera to cover the role of Gennaro at the last minute for their 2008-2009 performances of Lucrezia Borgia with Renée Fleming again singing the title role, under the baton of Maestro Plácido Domingo. With an operatic repertoire of more than thirty leading tenor roles, Vickers has performed the title role in Mozart's Idomeneo, Tamino in Die Zauberflöte, Belmonte in Die Entführung aus dem Serail, Ferrando in Così fan tutte, Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni, Roméo in Roméo et Juliette, Rodolfo in La bohème, Rinuccio in Gianni Schicchi, Alfredo in La traviata, Lennie in Of Mice and Men, Gabriel von Eisenstein and Alfredo in Die Fledermaus, and the Italian Tenor in Der Rosenkavalier.

Vickers has created numerous roles in world première operas and symphonies, including Mario in Francis Thorne's *Mario and the Magician* (Albany Records); Giovanni in the revised version of Daniel Catán's *La hija de Rappaccini*, in which Vickers performed the world première of a newly-composed aria for Giovanni; and the tenor in Alexander Zhurbin's Fourth Symphony, *City of the Plague*. Additional premières include Amedeo "Dedo" Modigliani in Jerold Morgulas's *Anna and Dedo* for the Moscow Chamber Opera (Arbat); Leo Stein in William Banfield's *Gertrude Stein Invents a Jump Early On*; Tom Cobb in Seymour Barab's comic opera *A Perfect Plan*; and the American première of Zhurbin's *The Seagull*, singing the role of Konstantin Treplev to Judith Blazer's Arkadina.

In addition to enjoying a full studio of talented artists at Illinois State University where he is Assistant Professor of Voice, he is currently conducting research for his Ph.D. Musicology dissertation: "A Tradition of Native Opera': Benjamin Britten's Aldeburgh and the History of the English Opera Group, 1947-1980."

Please visit justinvickers.com for additional information and updates.

Cook hails from Odessa, Texas where he began to play the piano at age six. He attended Baylor University to pursue dentistry, but quickly began serious study of the piano. After finishing a Piano Performance Degree with honors under the guidance of Roger Keyes, he continued his studies at Indiana University receiving both his Masters and Doctorate Degrees in Piano Performance. He has worked with distinguished pianists Leonard Hokanson, Eteri Andjaparidze, Michel Block, James Tocco, Karen Shaw, and in 1992-93, he studied with Herbert Seidel as a Fulbright Scholar at the Hochschule für Musik in Frankfurt, Germany.

Before joining the piano faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University in 1999, Cook served on music faculties at DePauw University, the Indiana University Piano Academy, and the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. He is currently active as an adjudicator and master teacher throughout the Midwest, and during the summer he teaches at the Illinois Chamber Music Festival. In 2009, he joined the faculty of the International Chamber Music Festival based in Kyustendil, Bulgaria.

<u>Dr. R. Kent Cook</u>, is Professor of Piano and Head of the Keyboard Department at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois. He keeps an active schedule as soloist and chamber musician, having performed throughout the United States. He has also performed widely in Europe with performances in Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, England, France, Germany and Italy.