



**Geoffrey
BUSH**

**Joseph
HOROVITZ**

Songs

**Mirabile Misterium
archy at the zoo
Yesterday**

**Lady Macbeth
The Garden of Love
Malicious Madrigal**

Susanna Fairbairn, Soprano

Matthew Schellhorn, Piano

Geoffrey Bush (1920–1998):**Mirabile Misterium****(A great and mighty wonder) (1985) 15:16**
Words: trad.

- 1 I. A marvellous thing have I mused in my mind 3:26
- 2 II. About the field they pipèd right 1:40
- 3 III. There is a flow'r sprung of a tree 2:26
- 4 IV. Jesu Christ, my leman sweet 1:18
- 5 V. Blessed Mary, moder virginal 1:47
- 6 VI. When I see on Rode Jesu, my leman 1:44
- 7 VII. Out of your sleep arise and wake 2:55

Three Songs of Ben Jonson (1952) 7:43
Words: Ben Jonson (1572–1637)

- 8 I. Echo's Lament for Narcissus 4:29
- 9 II. The Kiss 1:37
- 10 III. A Rebuke 1:37

11 Cuisine Provençale (1982) 5:29
*Words adapted from Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) by the composer***Joseph Horovitz (b. 1926):****12 Foie-gras (1974) 5:12**
*Words: Michael Flanders (1922–1975)***13 Romance (1975, arr. 2016) 2:25**
*Words: Alistair Sampson (1929–2006)***14 The Garden of Love (2014) 2:58**
*Words: William Blake (1757–1827)***15 Lady Macbeth (1970) 8:58**
*Words: William Shakespeare (c.1564–1616)***16 Zum 11^{ten} März (1995) 4:40**
*Words: Theodor Körner (1791–1813)***17 Malicious Madrigal (1970) 2:11**
*Words: Alistair Sampson***Geoffrey Bush:****18 Love for such a cherry lip (1984) 1:29**
*Words: Thomas Middleton (1580–1627)***archy at the zoo (1994) 9:56**
Words: Don Marquis (1878–1937)

- 19 i. centipede 0:47
- 20 ii. camel and giraffe 1:04
- 21 iii. hippopotamus 1:20
- 22 iv. hen 0:33
- 23 v. octopus 0:37
- 24 vi. man and monkey 1:38
- 25 vii. penguin 0:51
- 26 viii. ichneumon 0:41
- 27 ix. shark 1:25
- 28 x. young whale 1:00

Yesterday (Nine songs for Kay to poems by Charles Causley) (1990) 13:24
Words: Charles Causley (1917–2003)

- 29 I. Daniel Brent 0:55
- 30 II. Lady Jane Grey 1:38
- 31 III. Smuggler's Song 1:55
- 32 IV. Mistletoe 0:39
- 33 V. Sleigh Ride 1:03
- 34 VI. By the Tamar 2:26
- 35 VII. Morwenstow: a dialogue 1:40
- 36 VIII. Transience 1:50
- 37 IX. Wishes 1:18

Geoffrey Bush (1920–1998) • Joseph Horovitz (b. 1926)**Songs**

Geoffrey Bush remarked on several occasions that the first and most important consideration for a song writer was finding the right words: 'Once these are found the rest (eventually) follows', he said. Bush read widely and deeply, responding to a great range of poetry. Once a poem was chosen, he memorised the words, examining the content, structure and use of expressions and images thoroughly. This close relationship with the text led him to find the right musical settings: a frame in which to view and fully express the lyrical content. His choices usually focused on either a single poet or a unifying idea.

When Bush started composing songs he was drawn to the poetry and literature of the 16th and 17th centuries, just as many composers had done before him. His *Three Songs of Ben Jonson* (1572–1637) date from 1952 and occupy the well-established language of English 20th-century song writers. For Bush these songs were the culmination of a particular style that he had developed early in his career. Both *The Kiss* and *A Rebuke* display Bush's gift for irony prompted by the lyrical twists. The sighing D minor phrases in *Echo's Lament* are mitigated only at the final turn to D major. *The Kiss* builds to an apparently grand climax before dissolving on the words 'with kissing'. In *A Rebuke* an almost self-important climax is offset by the understated final line '...but not my heart'.

Cuisine Provençale was commissioned by the Songmakers' Almanac in 1982 and premiered in the same year by Felicity Palmer and Graham Johnson. It is dedicated to 'My friends M et Mme Paul Dunand'. The words are taken from *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) and adapted by the composer. The text describes an occasion when Mrs Ramsey cooks for her husband 'Boeuf en Daube', a French dish, as she proudly exclaims, whose succulent aroma and appearance are evoked in the words. The song is a little scena, so Bush allocates most of the emotions to the singer, with delighted exclamations about the dish ('an exquisite scent of olives') suspended over chordal splashes. The same break from the narrative style of the opening is given to

the words 'It is a French recipe'. Mrs Ramsey's husband is directly contrasted with her: she is in the moment of the revelation of her delicious dish; for him the smell provokes a kind of Proustian nostalgia as he imagines Luriana coming up the garden path. Each image is carefully conveyed in short but evocative piano phrases. The melismata suggest the state of mind of both Mr and Mrs Ramsey.

Love for such a cherry lip uses words by Thomas Middleton (1580–1627) and is dedicated to Brian Trowell, Professor of Music at King's College London, and his wife Rhiannon, a trained singer, both old friends of Bush. The song is marvellously witty, contrasting what Love, Venus, Jove and others would do to own those lips. The would-be suitors scurry across voice and piano in scales, syncopations and occasional melismata. But the protagonist's claims are expressed in a flash of slower lyricism, which in the end prevails, as the final six bars show, particularly the throw away concluding 'cherry lip!'

The song-cycle *Mirabile Misterium* dates from 1985. It was first performed by David Johnson at the BBC in October that year, and is dedicated to Warren Hoffer and Mary Pendleton. The words are a selection of medieval eulogies for the Virgin Mary: some are reflections on the cross, others are Christmas poems. Bush explained that while he had searched for the best version of each poem, selected from various sources, in the end he decided to make his own version of the text. In it he explores various types of ecstasy as heard in the elaborate opening scales of the first song *A marvellous thing have I mused in my mind*: a picture of mystery being witnessed. The vocal line is almost independent of the piano part: an elaborate recitative around which the piano weaves a ring of scales, chords and flourishes. All stand in awe at the birth of Christ.

About the field they pipèd right changes the mood to a rapid strophic setting that depicts the shepherds being visited by angels on Christmas night. For this, Bush has adopted a folk-based tune with some vocal elaboration.

As an accompaniment the piano darts around, projecting different joyful images as though to illustrate the angels departing. The energy of the song is gradually dissipated at the end on the final 'Tyrly tyrlow'.

There is a flow'r sprung of a tree is another strophic setting with a ballad-like vocal melody, accompanied at first by a very simple ostinato in D minor. This little pattern recurs at the start of each verse, but grows into more elaborate melodic shapes as the text unfolds. The song ends as simply as it began with a moment's respite with the F sharp on 'Jesse', then a single low D on the piano.

Jesu Christ, my leman sweet is pared to the bone. It lasts a mere eleven bars and reverts to the style of the opening song with a recitative-like vocal line interspersed on the piano by chords and a flourish on the word 'rooted'. Bush declared he was always searching to say the most with the least possible means. This is a good example.

Blessed Mary, moder virginal is once again composed economically with a few chords accompanying an *arioso* vocal line which blossoms to underline the text 'Succour it from my enemies' rage' and 'moder, moder'. The song ends with the unadorned seventh chords with which it began.

When I see on Rode Jesu, my leman is much more elaborate and impassioned, harking back to the 'leman' image. The scene has moved from the charms of Christmas to the horrors and agonies of the cross on which 'my leman' is hung. The vocal line is split into short phrases sung separately and sequentially. The piano is the main carrier of the passion in this poem, darting around with triplets, semiquavers and other devices until the final moments when the rapid passages cease and the high-placed voice thinks of love lessening Christ's pain. The anguished song ends on a radiant chord of A major.

The seventh and final song, *Out of your sleep arise and wake*, is a selection of lines from the well-known 15th-century Christmas poem. The opening setting resembles a trumpet call, an alarm. Bush elides the next two verses, linking over a repeated contrary motion piano phrase that gathers in density and volume, and ending on the strange image of Mary as Empress of Helle. The poem is about

the Harrowing of Hell and the liberation of mankind from damnation by Christ's death. The next section reverts to Bush's recitative-melodic line interspersed with rapid scales on the piano. The music of section two returns to underline the central belief of the Christian church: that Mary bore the son who was to save mankind through his death. Here Christ is referred to in the metaphor of a bell, an image that prompts the distant bell-like music of the last seven bars in which the ringing gradually recedes.

Yesterday dates from 1990 and was dedicated to Bush's grandson Kay. It consists of nine settings of poems by the Cornish poet, Charles Causley (1917–2003). Bush was occasionally reticent about setting contemporary poems because of copyright problems and the unwillingness of some poets to have their words set to music. But in Causley he found a kindred spirit who was enthusiastic about the idea. Bush loved comic verse, and verses with twists, which in their turning might reveal hidden depths or ironies. A good example is the last song, *Wishes*, where the sequence of evermore extravagant requests is set to short one-bar phrases, underpinned by an accompaniment based on five-finger exercises. At first some names are singled out for a moment's expansion and a departure from the prevailing C major. As the requests get grander and grander (river, sky, ocean, ship, kingdom, crown, gold) the music deviates from C major but returns to it at the end when Jenny, marked by melisma and the highest note in the song, asks for love 'or nothing at all'. Playfully the piano follows this wish with a witty summary of the main ideas of the accompaniment. A similar five-finger exercise accompaniment (a favourite of Bush's) provides the piano part of the first song, *Daniel Brent*, which is another list: Daniel's purchases. Again, Causley gives a final twist when it turns out Daniel cannot pay ('went to market without a cent'). As if in anticipation of this, the piano part has all along been about to 'run away'.

Lady Jane Grey is cast by Causley as a simple, wistful ballad understating the rather grim story which underlines the pathos – a characteristic captured by Bush in the monodic opening piano part, the simple chords and the conclusion which adds just a touch of optimism with

the final C being sharpened on 'Grey'. Along the way there is a brief touch of colour with the word-painting of the bells that greeted Lady Jane on her ill-fated visit to London.

Smuggler's Song is another list now measured by rising numbers ending in a twist. Once again, Bush has coloured each image with its own brief musical portrait, the mainly syllabic setting being embellished by a melisma on 'burning', 'dining', and finally the twist, 'never'. In each case the piano part breaks from its lilting simplicity to follow the embellished words with its own expanded phrase.

In *Mistletoe*, Bush once again uses five-finger scales and exercises to accompany a simple melodic line setting words that implore mistletoe to offer protection against gruesome evils.

Sleigh Ride presents a more optimistic world view with the prospect of a fun day out in a sleigh with only five dollars to pay. Bush captures this rapture with a lilting 6/8, jaunty accompaniment and a high-placed vocal *tessitura*.

By the Tamar reverts to a ballad style with Bush initially setting the first verse as a folk song without accompaniment. The same line begins each verse, which prompts the composer to vary the piano part and to build up to the ironic Housemanesque conclusion when the Tamar walker encounters a maid with a smiling face but with tears falling from it like rain. The final chord is tonally rather unexpected, in keeping with the final surprise in the poem.

Bush constructed *Morwenstow* over a four-note ground bass, broken on the words 'Are you hard as a diamond, sea' by the eager anticipation projected by rapidly rising quintuplets. Bush manages to make the repeated bass and its variation convey a sort of quotidian drudgery suggesting the unrelenting desire of the sea to obliterate the land.

Transience is another quasi-strophic folk-like setting in D minor. Regret permeates the nature of the poem when its vision tantalisingly turns out to exist only in the past. This is the core song of the collection, with the stark final utterance, 'yesterday', providing its overall title.

archy at the zoo dates from 1994 and is a setting of

the witty, almost anarchic words of Don Marquis. archy is a cockroach who borrows Don Marquis's typewriter by night to write about life as seen by himself and his friend, the alley cat mehitabel. (As he can type only by hitting each key with his head, he is unable to employ the shift key, so all his musings appear in lower case.) On this particular adventure, archy visits the zoo and sees all manner of creatures in this amazing menagerie! Bush loved comic poetry particularly Don Marquis's kind with its brief ventures into a kind of sense-filled nonsense. It seemed to give Bush a wide range of images to transfer into music. It also appealed to his desire to say as much with as little means as possible. Few of the songs last a minute, and none make it to two. Blink and the images are gone, images so witty and apt that they need no explanation.

Roderick Swanston

Although Joseph Horowitz was born in Vienna in 1926, his family moved to England in 1938, and his subsequent musical training followed a traditional British pattern: Oxford, the Royal College of Music (under Gordon Jacob), and a year with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. His Viennese roots emerge rarely in his music: most notably in his *Fifth String Quartet* (1969), and in the song *Zum 11^{ten} März*. Although the text dates from 1811, Horowitz noted that 'the Eleventh of March has special significance for Austrian émigrés, marking the date of Austria's Anschluss to Germany in 1938. The sentiments expressed in the poem are relevant in that context'. There is a sense of nostalgia in the words, as well as in the late-Romantic Viennese musical style, with its gentle chromaticism and wide-ranging vocal line.

Quite different in character are the cabaret items *Malicious Madrigal* and *Romance*, both composed to words by Horowitz's great friend Alistair Sampson, who had been the librettist of his two parody-cantatas for the 1958 and 1961 Hoffnung Music Festivals. *Romance* was often sung in a version for the King's Singers, who recorded it for their *Lollipops* album in 1975; and

Malicious Madrigal, subtitled *Freddy and Jane*, appeared for Unison or Two-part voices and Piano as the music supplement to *The Musical Times* in April 1970: the solo version recorded here is another later conceit.

Also humorous, but with a dark twist, *Foie-gras* was originally another King's Singers item, commissioned by the Cheltenham International Music Festival for an evening entertainment in 1974. Each of the seven deadly sins was allotted to a different composer, and Horovitz, at the prompting of his wife, chose gluttony, which he presented in two sections: the second of these was *Foie-gras*, with words by Michael Flanders, with whom he had already collaborated on the cantata for children *Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo* in 1970.

That same year, an entirely different work, harmonically much more astringent, appeared. The scena *Lady Macbeth* was commissioned for a special Shakespeare evening at the Bergen festival in Norway. Horovitz writes: 'I constructed the scena by selecting three scenes in which Lady Macbeth's speeches would portray the development of the character from early

aspirations to grandeur, to later power and finally to guilt and madness. The scenes are taken from Acts 1, 2 and 5, forming a miniature operatic role. The dramatic implication is that the scena begins after Lady Macbeth has read her husband's report of his military victory at the start of the play.'

Most recently, in 2015, Horovitz made his setting of *The Garden of Love*, from William Blake's *Songs of Experience*. He was originally going to write a collection of Blake songs, but says that the idea 'turned sour', so this is this sole survivor of the project, reflecting 'Blake's idyllic pastoral scene which is, however, soon clouded by shattered dreams'.

The compositional skill and emotional range of these songs, not to mention their feeling for the voice as an instrument, can only inspire regret that they represent the composer's entire oeuvre for singer and piano.

Martin Cotton
(with thanks to Joseph Horovitz)

Susanna Fairbairn



English soprano Susanna Fairbairn gained an MA with Distinction from the Wales International Academy of Voice, under the tutelage of Dennis O'Neill and Nuccia Focile. Previously, she was a pupil of Alison Wells at Trinity College of Music, London, winning the English Song Competition, the Wilfred Greenhouse Allt Prize and the Paul Simm Opera Prize. Fairbairn formerly studied flute as an Instrumental Scholar while completing her undergraduate degree at Magdalen College, Oxford. She is now mentored by Raymond Connell, A Park Lane Group Young Artist and winner of the Selma D and Leon Fishbach Memorial Prize at the 2014 Handel Singing Competition. Fairbairn enjoys singing diverse and varied repertoire, from new commissions to opera of all periods. Significant solo appearances include a programme of Schumann with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Brahms's *Requiem* in St David's Hall, Cardiff; *Messiah* at the Wales Millennium Centre; the *St John Passion* in Birmingham Symphony Hall; Mozart's *C Minor Mass* conducted by Sian Edwards; Tavener's *Veil of the Temple* in Canterbury Cathedral in the composer's presence; Finzi's *Dies Natalis* at SJE in Oxford; Vaughan Williams's *Sea Symphony*; Poulenc's *Gloria*; and several solo appearances for BBC1 and BBC Radio 3. Fairbairn is also a keen recitalist and has performed at the Wigmore Hall, the Purcell Room and St James's Piccadilly with duo partner Matthew Schellhorn. Together they enjoy regular appearances nationwide, most recently performing Messiaen's song cycle *Poèmes pour Mi* in Cambridge. Operatic highlights include the Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*) for Longborough Festival Opera; Galatea (*Acis and Galatea*) for the Opera Theatre Company, Dublin; Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*); and the soloist in Bach's *St John Passion* with the English Touring Opera.

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Matthew Schellhorn



Born in Yorkshire in 1977, Matthew Schellhorn studied in Manchester and Cambridge. His teachers included Peter Hill and Yvonne Loriod-Messiaen. He has given recitals in many major venues throughout the UK, including the Wigmore Hall and the Purcell Room, and has been a guest soloist at several international festivals. A prominent performer of new music, Matthew Schellhorn has given numerous premieres. Recent commissions include a collection of studies by Nicola LeFanu and various works by Gráinne Mulvey, Linda Buckley and Colin Riley. He has a particularly close working relationship with Irish composer Ian Wilson, of whose music he is a frequent dedicatee. In 2012, he gave the world premiere of Ian Wilson's *Flags and Emblems* at the Belfast Festival with the Ulster

Orchestra, followed three years later by another world premiere with the same orchestra of Ian Wilson's *Mutazione: Piano Concerto*; both performances were recorded live for BBC Radio 3. In 2014, Diatribe Records released Matthew Schellhorn's solo disc, *Ian Wilson: Stations*, the world premiere recording of a new commission featured on RTE lyric fm as one of the 'great cycles of 21st-century piano music'. Schellhorn's performances of the music of Olivier Messiaen have been met with critical acclaim. He has been regular guest soloist in performances of *Trois petites Liturgies de la Présence Divine*, *Turangallā-Symphonie*, *Réveil des Oiseaux* and *Oiseaux Exotiques*. His 2008 Signum Classics recording with the Soloists of the Philharmonia Orchestra, *Messiaen: Chamber Works*, received positive reviews on both sides of the Atlantic and was awarded an AllMusic Classical Editors' Favourite.

www.matthewschellhorn.com



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Geoffrey Bush made a significant contribution to English song, while Joseph Horovitz's modest but equally varied contribution includes *Lady Macbeth*, a powerful, harmonically astringent scena, as well as witty cabaret items and one song which, in its late-Romantic nostalgia, reveals his Viennese roots. Bush's *Cuisine Provençale* has elements of an operatic drama, while the cycle *Yesterday* enshrines ballad simplicity and deft word-painting. *Mirabile Misterium* sets medieval texts which explore various types of ecstasy, and *archy at the zoo* demonstrates Bush's zest and wit.

Geoffrey
BUSH
(1920–1998)

Joseph
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*WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING

Susanna Fairbairn, Soprano • Matthew Schellhorn, Piano



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