

Three Songs by Franz Schubert

Who is Sylvia? (Shakespeare)

Who is Sylvia? what is she?

That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;

The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.

Is she kind as she is fair?

For beauty lives with kindness:
Love doth to her eyes repair,
To help him of his blindness;
And, being help'd inhabits there.

Then to Sylvia let us sing,

That Sylvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling;
To her let us garlands bring.

Ave Maria (Sir Walter Scott)

Ave Maria! maiden mild!

Listen to a maiden's prayer!
Thou canst hear though from the wild,
Thou canst save amid despair.
Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
Though banish'd, outcast, and reviled,
Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;
Mother, hear a suppliant child!

Ave Maria! undefiled!

The flinty couch we now must share
Shall seem with down of eider piled,
If thy protection hover there.
The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;
Mother, list a suppliant child!

Ave Maria! stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wanton haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
And for a father hear a child!

Hark! Hark! The Lark! (Shakespeare)

Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chalic'd flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes:
With everything that pretty is,
My lady sweet, arise:
Arise, arise!

"Je suis Titania" from Mignon

..Thomas

The story of *Mignon* is derived from Goethe's novel, *Wilhelm Meister*, and revolves around the title character, a girl who is rescued from the gypsies who have abducted her, and joins a traveling theatrical company. The leading actress of the troupe is Philine, who in Act II, Scene 2, comes to a garden party directly from the theater, still in the costume in which she has given a splendid performance as Titania, Queen of the Fairies, in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Philine sings this brilliant polonaise:

"I am Titania the fair, daughter of the air. Laughing, I traverse the earth faster than a bird, swifter than lightning. My court sings of love and pleasure, and flees from the first ray of Phoebus' light. Through the flowers, over the waves I go in light-footed flight. I am Titania, daughter of the air."

"O quante volte" from I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini

Bellini's only Shakespearean opera is loosely based on *Romeo and Juliet*, but he gave it a title from the Italian forms of the two characters' family names, because the libretto by Felice Romani had already been used by another composer. Romani's dramatic poem has some important differences from Shakespeare's. He adds to the family feud the wars of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, affiances Juliet to Tybalt rather than Paris, and makes Friar Lawrence a physician rather than a Franciscan.

Juliet's operatic recitative and romance, "O quante volte," has no exact equivalent in the play, but there is a dramatic parallel near the end of Act III, after she has told her parents that she refuses to marry Paris, and when they have left, exclaims:

O God! O Nurse, how shall this be prevented?
My husband is on earth, my faith in Heaven.
How shall that faith return again to earth
Unless that husband send it me from Heaven
By leaving earth? Comfort me, counsel me!
Alack, alack, that Heav'n should practice
stratagemes
Upon so soft a subject as myself!

In the opera, she is alone in her room and sings:

"Oh, how many times I have cried to heaven!
With what ardor I wait! See me gaily bedecked
and adorned like a victim for the altar! Oh,
that I could die there! Where are you Romeo?
To what land have you wandered? Where shall
I send my sighs?"

Three Ophelia Songs

Shakespeare text from *Hamlet*

Musical settings by R. Strauss

I

How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.

He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

White his shroud as the mountain snow,
Larded with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers.

II

To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine:
Then up he rose and donn'd his clothes,
And dupp'd the chamber door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.

By Gis and by Saint Charity,
Alack and fie for shame!
Young men will do't, if they come to't;
By Cock they are to blame.
Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promised me to wed:
So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.

III

They bore him barefaced on the bier;
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;
And in his grave rain'd many a tear;

You must sing a-down, a-down,
An you call him a-down-a.
For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead:
Go to thy death-bed.
He never will come again.

His beard as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll;
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan:
God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' ye!

Two Songs by R. Strauss

Der Stern ("The Star")
(von Arnim text)

Its tail flying, the comet rushes toward
me, bringing the people dreams of victory,
while I dream of peace.

Als mir dein Lied erklang (Brentano)

I heard your song! I listened to it while
through the roses it flew up to the moon.
The moon that's listening across the sky,
the stars and roses, to them I bear my heart.
I heard you song!