

# Dominick Argento

## Shadow and Substance

Howard  
Haskin  
tenor



**D**ominick Argento is generally considered a vocal composer; he is one of the leading US composers of lyric opera and one of the most successful, in terms of performances. The three song-cycles on this disc give some indications why this should be the case.

Argento was born in York, Pennsylvania and studied at the Peabody Conservatory from 1947 to 1954, where his teachers included Nicholas Nabokov, Henry Cowell and Hugo Weisgall; this period was broken in 1951, when with the aid of a Fulbright Fellowship he was able to complete his studies at the Cherubini Conservatory in Florence with Luigi Dallapiccola. Argento went on to graduate studies with Bernard Rogers, Howard Hanson and Alan Hovhaness at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY from 1955-57. Argento became music director of Hilltop Opera in Baltimore; he also taught theory and composition at the Eastman School. He twice more visited Italy on Guggenheim Fellowships, and completed his opera *Colonel Jonathan the Saint* there. In 1958, he had joined the faculty of the Department of Music at the University of Minnesota, and after returning from Italy in 1961 he continued to teach there until 1997, becoming Regents' Professor of Music. He now holds the title of Professor Emeritus. Among other honours and awards, Argento received the 1975 Pulitzer Prize for Music, for his song-cycle *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. He has also gained the Opera America Award for Achievement, the 2004 Grammy for 'Best

Classical Contemporary Composition', in respect of Frederica von Stade's recording of his song-cycle *Casa Guidi* on the Reference Records label. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1979, and in 1997 the lifetime appointment of Composer Laureate to the Minnesota Orchestra was bestowed on him.

Argento has composed copious orchestral and chamber music (notably the Variations for orchestra *The Mask of Night*, 1965) but the bulk of his output is vocal: either stage works, choral pieces, or solo songs. His concern for the human voice, with singing lines and 'speaking' melodies, informs virtually all his music, whether instrumental or vocal. (Argento is married to the soprano Carolyn Bailey, who has premiered many of his works.) He has written over a dozen operas, often acting as his own librettist. Among the best known of these are *Christopher Sly* (1963), *Postcard from Morocco* (1970), *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* (1975), *A Water Bird Talk* (1981), *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* (1981), *Casanova's Homecoming* (1985) and *The Aspern Papers* (1988) – works which have been featured in many opera houses across the US and Europe. Argento's close association with Sir Tyrone Guthrie and Douglas Campbell, directors of the Minnesota Theatre Company in the later 1960s, led to his composing incidental music for several Guthrie productions, and also a ballad opera, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1967). His most recent opera, *The Dream of Valentino*, a commission from Washington Opera for its 1994

season, is set in the early days of Hollywood and examines the effects of fame and the immigrant's experience in America.

A man of wide literary tastes, during the 1970s and 1980s Argento turned increasingly to the composition of song-cycles. His major productions in this form include *Six Elizabethan Songs* (1958), *Letters from Composers* (1968) for voice and guitar, *To Be Sung Upon the Water* (1973) for voice, piano and clarinet, *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* (1975), *The Andree Expedition* (1983), *Casa Guidi* (1983) and *A Few Words About Chekhov* (1996) for mezzo-soprano, baritone, and piano. Throughout, his concern with the meaningful setting of words in terms of their syllabic and semantic content, as well as their musical intertwining and accouchement with the accompanying instrument or instruments, marks him out as a song composer of rare penetration and sensitivity.

The **Six Elizabethan Songs** for voice and piano seems to be Argento's earliest song-cycle, and shows its composer as nothing if not ambitious. His chosen texts are all – 'Diaphenia', perhaps, apart – lyrics of immortal fame, mostly conceived in their beginning as words for music, and since set many times by some of the greatest song-writers from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thomas Nash's 'Spring, the Sweet Spring' is already an acme of blithe, vernal lyricism, and Argento does not attempt to set it against its nature, with a direct and elegant vocal line and a busy semi-

quaver accompaniment that just occasionally may remind us of Balinese gamelan patterns. Very different is the treatment of Samuel Daniel's 'Care-Charmer Sleep', a depressive poem memorably set by Peter Warlock and Havergal Brian, amongst others. The agitation of Argento's middle section is graphically expressive of the poet's tormented emotions. Shakespeare's marvellous 'When icicles hang by the wall' is set as a kind of vigorous round-dance – a good remedy to keep out the cold. With its three-syllable cry, Argento's 'staring owl' in this song appears to be a screech (or young tawny) owl rather than the more expected two-syllable barn owl.

Plangent piano thirds in contrary motion, reminiscent perhaps of Aaron Copland, introduce a second Shakespeare setting, a moving treatment of 'Come away, come away, Death' all the more affecting for its sparse textural simplicity. A poem of shepherd lovers by Henry Constable, 'Diaphenia' is the brilliant scherzo of this collection, its bubbling 6/8 motion twice stilled by a highly effective chordal refrain. The concluding number sets Ben Jonson's 'Hymn' to Diana, which Benjamin Britten made the bubbling hunting scherzo of his *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*; but in view of 'Diaphenia' Argento has structural reasons, as well as that of his own individuality, to eschew fast music here. His tempo marking is *Andante maestoso*, as he acknowledges in music the hymnic gravity of Jonson's poem, bringing the cycle to a serene close.

**Letters from Composers** shows Argento responding to texts of a very different kind: epistolary prose both casual and formal, infinitely removed from the patterned symmetries of verse and surely, in the writers' wildest imaginings, never intended to be set to music. They are not at all lyric effusions; they cover a gamut of emotions, and they are fascinating character-studies of the personalities who wrote them. And Argento has chosen to accompany them with a guitar, used with the utmost resource and virtuosity and complete understanding of the instrument. The guitar suggests privacy, intimacy, the writer of each letter musing to himself in a way that perhaps no piano accompaniment could convey.

Chopin writes from Palma, Minorca: this hint is enough for Argento to deploy a wide range of 'Spanish' evocations in his guitar writing, while spinning an intensely lyrical, dreamy line out of the composer's prose. Chopin, in this interpretation, finds himself marooned in strangeness, already slipping away to another world. Mozart's rage and exasperation with his treatment at the hands of a Viennese nobleman discovers its correlative in the jagged, expostulatory figures of the guitar with which the voice engages in recitative-like antiphony. Schubert's deep depression at his loneliness and lack of success brings the most plangent of accompaniments. The text of the letter is prefaced by a melancholic guitar prelude. When Schubert quotes Gretchen's song at the

spinning-wheel from Goethe's *Faust*, Argento skilfully works in Schubert's own setting of that very poem.

J. S. Bach's formal and stubborn epistle to the Leipzig authorities insisting his proper fees is in matching mock-baroque style with vocal embellishments, turns and mordents, slipping in and out of reminiscences of several of Bach's lute and keyboard works. A pathetic (and dramatic) late letter of the dying Debussy, mingling his personal despair with references to the war going on in Europe, is lightly accompanied, largely in hallucinatory harmonics. But a vigorous toccata with energetic strummed chords perfectly expresses Puccini's desire to escape the confines of Paris and everything artificial, and return to the natural life of the country and the sea. Finally Robert Schumann's loving letter to his fiancée Clara Wieck, written in the face of misfortune and the adamant opposition of her tyrannical father, is warm and intimate in expression: when he imagines her as an ideal bride, the music rises in quiet triumph in the rhythm of a wedding march (*alla marcia nuziale*), completing the cycle in a sense of rapt fulfilment.

**To Be Sung Upon the Water**, subtitled 'Barcarolles and Nocturnes', displays Argento's resourcefulness as a song-composer from a third angle. Here there is only one poet – Wordsworth – whose poems and passages are selected to

imply a narrative of a journey by boat. But there is also a controlling presence: Schubert, whom we have already met in *Letters from Composers*. Schubert is directly evoked in the fifth song but continually implicit in the expressive stance and, not least, in the instrumentation for high voice, piano and clarinet (which mimics his *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*) as well as the title – which is English for *Auf dem Wasser zu Singen*, Schubert's Stolberg song of 1823. Perhaps Argento knew that Schubert's friend Franz Lachner, himself no mean song composer, had also had the idea of arranging poems to suggest a journey by boat, as in his *Sängerfahrt* to poems of Heine.

In fact the clarinetist is required to double on bass clarinet, lending an unusual, sepulchral quality to the sound-quality from time to time – as at the opening of the first song, where the bass clarinet echoes the piano and then liquidly counterpoints the voice, which, once the clarinet is joined by the piano's deepest register, seems to float upon profound waters indeed. The slowly eddying motion of this Prologue is contrasted with the motionlessly hanging chords of 'The Lake at Evening', mirroring the clouds and sky. The clarinet enters half-way through the song with an innocent, rustic strain: the reed pipe of Pan, it seems. A similarly 'natural' sonority – perhaps an Aeolian harp – is suggested by the lazy piano arpeggios of 'Music on the Water'. The song is a kind of tranced serenade, with a serene refrain from the clarinet giving a quietly ecstatic gloss on the proceedings.

'Fair is the Swan' is a liquid scherzo, and also a duet – partly in strict canon – for voice and clarinet, the piano only appearing in the concluding bars. 'In Remembrance of Schubert' is a haunting barcarolle, this time for voice and piano only. While the texture of the outer sections hints at the style and registers of Schubert Lieder, the recitative-like middle section spans the entire gamut of the keyboard in steeply rising arpeggios. In 'Hymn near the Rapids' the voice's hymn-like phrases in long values are contrasted with the turbulent, churning figuration of piano and clarinet. Becoming steadily more intense and imploring, this elaborate song is perhaps the cycle's climax. Voice and piano are finally in accord with the concluding cadential 'Miserere Domini'.

'The Lake at Evening' begins with a clarinet cadenza and develops into a rhapsodic nocturne, the repeated echoing tones of the piano played off against the elaborate lines and involutions of clarinet and voice. Voice and bass clarinet shadow each other at two octaves' distance in the final song, 'De Profundis', a hollow combined sonority that is contrasted with the soft or languorous bell-sounds of the piano. When Wordsworth longs for the pagan vision that would allow him to see Proteus or Triton, the clarinet brings back the 'Pan's pipe' music from 'The Lake at Evening', moving the music to a peaceful ending.

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**D**ominick Argento est né à York, dans l'Etat de Pennsylvanie et a étudié au Conservatoire de Peabody de 1947 à 1954, où l'on trouvait parmi ses professeurs Nicholas Nabokov et Henry Cowell. En 1951, aidé d'une bourse Fulbright, il put étudier au Conservatoire Cherubini de Florence avec Luigi Dallapiccola. Argento poursuivit ses études de premier cycle avec Bernard Rogers, Howard Hanson et Alan Hovhaness à l'Eastman School of Music de Rochester dans l'Etat de New York de 1955 à 57. Argento devint directeur musical de l'Hilltop Opera de Baltimore; il enseigna également la théorie et la composition à l'Eastman School. En 1958, il entra dans la faculté de musique à l'Université du Minnesota, où il enseigna jusqu'en 1997, devenant professeur régent de musique. Il est à présent professeur émérite. Entre autres honneurs et récompenses, Argento reçut en 1975 le Prix Pulitzer de musique, pour son cycle de chansons *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Il remporta aussi l'Opera America Award for Achievement, le Grammy 2004 pour la « Meilleure Composition Classique Contemporaine », grâce à l'enregistrement de son cycle de chansons *Casa Guidi* par Frederica von Stade. Il devint membre de l'American Academy of Arts and Letters en 1979, et en 1997 obtint sa nomination à vie de Composer Laureate du Minnesota Orchestra.

Argento a composé de grandes œuvres pour musique d'orchestre et de chambre, mais le plus gros de sa production est vocal : soit pour la scène, soit des morceaux choraux, soit des

chants en solo. L'intérêt qu'il portait à la voix humaine, à travers les textes chantés et les mélodies « parlées », influence presque toute sa musique, instrumentale ou vocale. (Argento est l'époux de la soprano Carolyn Bailey, interprète de nombre de premières de ses œuvres). Il a signé une douzaine d'opéras, en étant souvent son propre librettiste. Parmi les plus célèbres figurent *Postcard from Morocco* (1970), *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* (1975), *A Water Bird Talk* (1981), *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* (1981) et *The Aspern Papers* (1988), des œuvres aux multiples représentations dans des opéras des Etats-Unis et d'Europe. La collaboration étroite d'Argento avec Sir Tyrone Guthrie et Douglas Campbell, directeurs de la Minnesota Theatre Company à la fin des années soixante, l'amena à composer de la musique de scène pour plusieurs productions de Guthrie, ainsi qu'un opéra ballade, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1967).

Homme aux goûts littéraires étendus, pendant les années 1970 et 1980, Argento se tourna de plus en plus vers les cycles de chants, ses plus grandes œuvres sous cette forme incluent *Six Elizabethan Songs* (1958), *Letters from Composers* (1968) pour voix et guitare, *To Be Sung Upon the Water* (1973) pour voix, piano et clarinette, *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* (1975), *The Andree Expedition* (1983), *Casa Guidi* (1983) et *A Few Words About Chekhov* (1996) pour mezzo-soprano, baryton et piano. Au fil de ces œuvres, son intérêt pour la signification de la mise en musique des paroles, au niveau de leur contenu syllabique et sémantique, de même que

leur entrelacement musical et leur accouplement avec le ou les instruments d'accompagnement, font de lui un compositeur de chansons à la pénétration et à la sensibilité rares.

Les **Six Elizabethan Songs** pour voix et piano sont apparemment le plus ancien cycle chanté d'Argento et mettent en évidence tout au moins l'ambition du compositeur. Les textes qu'il avait choisis présentent tous – sauf, peut-être « Diaphenia » – des paroles de gloire immortelle, dans un premier temps conçus pour la musique, et depuis mis en musique à maintes reprises par certains des plus grands paroliers du XVII<sup>ème</sup> ou XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Mais Argento présente une individualité abondante dans son approche de ces poèmes célèbres.

**Letters from Composers** nous montrent Argento répondant à des textes d'un ordre différent : la prose épistolaire, informelle comme formelle, bien loin des motifs symétriques de la poésie en vers et, certainement, même dans ses rêves les plus fous, l'auteur ne les avait destinées à la musique. Ce ne sont pas du tout des effusions lyriques, elles passent par toute une gamme d'émotions, et sont des études de personnages fascinantes des personnalités qui les ont écrites. Et Argento a choisi de les accompagner à la guitare, en en maximisant par le jeu les ressources et la virtuosité, et grâce à une compréhension complète de cet instrument. La guitare suggère la vie privée, l'intimité, l'auteur de chaque lettre méditant d'une façon qu'aucun

accompagnement au piano n'aurait pu représenter.

**To Be Sung Upon the Water**, sous-titré « Barcarolles and Nocturnes », nous montre l'ingéniosité d'Argento en tant que compositeur de chansons sous un troisième angle. Il n'y emprunte que les poèmes et les passages d'un seul poète – Wordsworth – pour suggérer l'histoire d'un voyage en bateau. Mais on y retrouve également une présence déterminante : celle de Schubert, déjà rencontré dans *Letters from Composers*. Schubert est directement évoqué dans la cinquième chanson, mais continuellement de façon implicite dans la position expressive et, non des moindres, dans l'instrumentation pour voix aiguë, piano et clarinette (qui imite son *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*) tout aussi bien que le titre (*A chanter sur l'eau*), traduction de *Auf dem Wasser zu Singen*, le lied de Stolberg mis en musique par Schubert en 1823. Argento savait peut-être que l'ami de Schubert, Franz Lachner, lui-même compositeur de chansons non-négligeable, avait également pensé arranger des poèmes pour suggérer un voyage en bateau, comme dans ses *Sängerfahrt* de poèmes de Heine. En fait, le clarinetiste doit doubler en clarinette basse, prêtant une qualité inhabituelle et funèbre à la qualité sonore de temps en temps.

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(traduction Florence Grammond)

**D**ominick Argento wurde in York (Pennsylvania) geboren und studierte von 1947 bis 1954 am Peabody Konservatorium, wo Nicholas Nabokov und Henry Cowell zu seinen Lehrern gehörten. 1951 studierte er mit Hilfe eines Fulbright Stipendiums am Cherubini Konservatorium in Florenz bei Luigi Dallapiccola. Sein Graduate-Studium setzte Argento von 1955 bis 1957 bei Bernard Rogers, Howard Hanson und Alan Hovhaness an der Eastman School of Music in Rochester (New York) fort. Er wurde Musikdirektor der Hilltop Opera in Baltimore und unterrichtete zusätzlich Musiktheorie und Komposition an der Eastman School. 1958 trat er dem Fachbereich des Department of Music der University of Minnesota bei, wo er bis 1997 lehrte und Regents' Professor of Music wurde. Heute ist er Professor Emeritus. Argento erhielt neben anderen Ehrungen und Auszeichnungen 1975 den Pulitzer Preis für Musik für seinen Liederzyklus *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Ihm wurde darüber hinaus der Opera America Award for Achievement verliehen, sowie 2004 der Grammy für „Best Classical Contemporary Composition“ für seinen, mit Frederica von Stade aufgenommenen Liederzyklus *Casa Guidi*. 1979 wurde er in die American Academy of Arts and Letters gewählt und 1997 zum Composer Laureate auf Lebenszeit des Minnesota Orchestra ernannt.

Argento hat zwar eine sehr große Anzahl von Werken für Orchester- und Kammermusik komponiert, der größte Teil seines Gesamt-schaffens besteht aber aus Vokalmusik, d.h. Bühnen- und Chormusik sowie Sololiedern. Sein

Interesse an der menschlichen Stimme mit ihren Gesangsstimmen und Sprachmelodien beeinflusst praktisch seine gesamte Musik, sowohl die Instrumental- wie auch die Vokalmusik. (Argento ist mit der Metzzo-sopranistin Carolyn Bailey verheiratet, die viele seiner Werke uraufgeführt hat.) Er hat über 12 Opern geschrieben und dazu oft selbst die Librettos verfasst. Zu den bekanntesten von ihnen gehören Werke wie *Postcard from Morocco* (1970), *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* (1975), *A Water Bird Talk* (1981), *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* (1981) und *The Aspern Papers* (1988), die an vielen Opernhäusern überall in den Vereinigten Staaten und Europa aufgeführt wurden. In den späten Sechziger Jahren führte die enge Zusammenarbeit zwischen Argento und Sir Tyrone Guthrie und Douglas Campbell, den Direktoren der Minnesota Theatre Company dazu, dass Argento die Bühnenmusik zu zahlreichen Produktionen von Guthrie komponierte, sowie für die Ballad-Opera *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1967).

Als ein Mann mit vielfältigen literarischen Vorlieben widmete sich Argento in den Siebziger und Achtziger Jahren immer stärker der Komposition von Liederzyklen. Mit zu seinen größten Werken in diesem Genre gehören *Six Elizabethan Songs* (1958), *Letters from Composers* (1968) für Gesang und Gitarre, *To Be Sung Upon the Water* (1973) für Gesang, Klavier und Klarinette, *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* (1975), *The Andree Expedition* (1983), *Casa Guidi* (1983), sowie *A Few Words About Chekhov* (1996) für Mezzosopran, Bariton und Klavier. Sein

Anliegen, eine bedeutungsvolle Fassung der Worte in Bezug auf ihren silbischen und semantischen Inhalt, sowie deren musikalische Verflechtung und Aufführung mit den Begleitinstrument(en) zu erreichen, zeichnet ihn als einen Komponisten mit einzigartigem Eindringungsvermögen und Sensitivität aus.

**Six Elizabethan Songs** für Gesang und Klavier ist wohl Argentos frühester Liederzyklus, der den hohen Anspruch des Komponisten zeigt. Seine ausgewählten Texte, vielleicht mit der Ausnahme von „Diaphenia“, sind Liedtexte über unvergänglichen Ruhm. Sie waren ursprünglich meist als Texte für Musik erdacht, und sind seitdem viele Male von einigen der berühmtesten Liederkomponisten des 17. bis 20. Jahrhunderts vertont worden. Argento beweist jedoch in seiner Annäherung an diese bekannten Gedichte eine starke Individualität.

**Letters from Composers** zeigen Argentos Umgang mit Texten einer ganz anderen Art: zwangloser und formaler Briefprosa, die unendlich weit entfernt ist von den gebildeten Symmetrien der Verse, und bestimmt auch in den kühnsten Vorstellungen ihrer Autoren nicht für die musikalische Vertonung vorgesehen war. Die *Letters from Composers* sind in keiner Weise lyrische Ergüsse. Sie decken die gesamte Skala der Emotionen ab und sind faszinierende Charakterstudien der Persönlichkeiten ihrer Verfasser. Argento wählte die Gitarre zur Liedbegleitung, die mit äußerstem Einfallsreichtum sowie Virtuosität und vollkommenem

Verständnis für das Instrument gespielt werden muss. Die Gitarre suggeriert Ungestörtheit und Vertrautheit, das Grubeln eines jeden Verfassers über seinem Brief, wie es auf diese Weise vielleicht keine Klavierbegleitung zum Ausdruck bringen könnte.

**To Be Sung Upon the Water**, mit den Untertiteln 'Barcarolles and Nocturnes', zeigt Argentos Vielseitigkeit als Liederkomponisten aus einem dritten Blickwinkel. Hier gibt es nur einen einzigen Dichter, Wordsworth, dessen Gedichte und Textstellen ausgewählt wurden, um die Erzählung einer Schiffsreise anzudeuten. Es gibt allerdings auch eine dominierende Präsenz: Schubert, dem wir schon in *Letters from Composers* begegnet sind. Schubert wird im fünften Lied direkt heraufbeschworen, er ist aber durchgehend implizit in der ausdrucksvollen Haltung und, nicht zuletzt, in der Instrumentation für hohe Stimme, Klavier und Klarinette (die Schuberts *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* imitiert) vorhanden, sowie in dem Titel, der die Englische Übersetzung von *Auf dem Wasser zu Singen* ist, Schuberts Stolberg-Lied von 1823. Argento hat vielleicht gewusst, dass Schuberts Freund Franz Lachner, der selbst kein schlechter Liederkomponist war, ebenfalls die Idee hatte, Gedichte derart zu arrangieren, dass sie eine Schiffsfahrt suggerieren würden, wie in Lachners *Sängerfahrt* zu Gedichten von Heine. Tatsächlich muss der Klarinetist auch auf der Bassklarinette spielen, um von Zeit zu Zeit der Klangqualität eine ungewöhnliche, düstere Note zu geben.

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(Übersetzt von Claudia Schottlander)

## Six Elizabethan Songs

### Spring

*Thomas Nash*

Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king;  
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,  
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,  
cuckoo, jug-jug, towitta woo!  
The palm and may make country houses gay,  
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherd pipes all day,  
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay,  
cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, towitta woo!  
The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,  
Young lovers meet, old wives a sunning sit  
In every street, these tunes our ears do greet,  
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, towitta woo!  
Spring, the sweet Spring!

### Sleep

*Samuel Daniel*

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,  
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,  
Relieve my anguish and restore thy light,  
With dark forgetting of my care return.  
And let the day be time enough to mourn  
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:  
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn  
Without the torment of the night's untruth.  
Cease, dreams, the images of day-desires  
To model forth the passions of the morrow;  
Never let rising sun approve you liars  
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow:  
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain.  
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

### Winter

*William Shakespeare*

When icicles hang by the wall  
And Dick the Shepherd blows his nail,  
And Tom bears logs into the hall,  
And milk comes frozen home in pail;  
When blood is nipt and ways be foul,  
Then nightly sings the staring owl,  
Tuwhee! Tuwhit! Tuwhoo! A merry note!  
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.  
When all aloud the wind doth blow,  
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,  
And birds sit brooding in the snow,  
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;  
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl  
Then nightly sings the staring owl  
Tuwhee! Tuwhit! Tuwhoo! A merry note!  
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

### Dirge

*William Shakespeare*

Come away, Come away, Death,  
And in sad cypress let me be laid;  
Fly away, Fly away, breath;  
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.  
My shroud of white stuck all with you.  
O prepare it! O prepare it!  
My part of death, no one so true  
Did share it. Did share it.  
Not a flower, not a flower sweet  
On my black coffin let there be strown;  
Not a friend, not a friend greet  
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:  
Lay me, O where  
Sad true lover never find my grave,  
To weep there.

### Diaphenia

*Henry Constable*

Diaphenia, like the daffa-down-dilly,  
White as the sun, fair as the lily,  
Heigh ho, how I do love thee!  
I do love thee as my lambs  
Are beloved of their dams;  
How blest were I if thou would'st prove me.  
Diaphenia, like the spreading roses,  
That in thy sweets all sweets encloses,  
Fair sweet, how I do love thee!  
I do love thee as each flower  
Loves the sun's life-giving power;  
For dead, thy breath to life might move me.  
Diaphenia like to all things blessed  
When all thy praises are expressed  
Dear joy, how I do love thee!  
As the birds do love the spring,  
Or the bees their careful king:  
Then in requite, sweet virgin, love me!

### Hymn

*Ben Jonson*

Queen and Huntress, chaste and fair,  
Now the sun is laid to sleep,  
Seated in thy silver chair  
State in wonted manner keep:  
Hesperus entreats thy light, thy light,  
Goddess excellently bright.  
Earth, let not they envious shade  
Dare itself to interpose:  
Cynthia's shining orb was made  
Heaven to clear when day did close:  
Bless us then with wished sight  
Goddess, Goddess excellently bright.  
Lay thy bow of pearl apart  
And thy crystal-shining quiver;  
Give unto the flying hart  
Space to Breathe, how short so ever:  
Thou that mak'st a day of night,  
Goddess, Goddess excellently bright!

## Letters from Composers

**Frédéric Chopin** *to a friend.* *Palma, 28 Dec 1838*

Imagine me, between rocks and sea, in a cell in an immense, deserted monastery, it's doors bigger than the coach entrance to any Paris mansion. Here I am with my hair uncurled, no white gloves, and as pale as usual. My cell, shaped like a great coffin, has a vast and dusty arched ceiling, and a little window looking to the garden with its orange trees, palms and cypresses. Opposite the window, below a rosette in the lacy Moorish style, is a camp-bed. Beside the bed is an old *untouchable*, a kind of square desk, on which stands a wax candle...on the same desk, Bach, my scribbles, and other papers, not mine...(...and the orange trees, palms and cypresses...) Silence... If you shout...silence again... In short I am writing from a very strange place...

**W A Mozart** *to his father.* *Vienna, 9 Jun 1781*

Well, Count Arco has managed things to perfection! So that is the way to persuade people, to win them over, to refuse petitions out of congenital stupidity, not to say a word to your master for lack of spirit and love of sycophancy, to keep a man hanging about for four weeks and at last, when he is obliged to present the petition himself, instead of arranging for his admittance, to throw him out and give him a kick in the pants... I wrote three petitions, handed them in five times, and each time had them thrown back at me...and since the Archbishop was planning to leave on the next day, I was quite beside myself with rage and wrote another petition, in which I disclosed to him that I had had a petition in readiness for the past four weeks! With that petition I received my discharge in the most gallant way. So seeing the reasons why I left him no father could be angry with his own son.

**Franz Schubert** *to a friend.* *Vienna, 31 Mar 1824*

My brightest hopes have come to nothing, the joys of friendship and love soon turn to sorrows, and even my pleasure in beauty itself is in danger of dying away! *"Meine*

*Ruh' ist hin, mein Herz ist schwer;*" thus sang Gretchen at her spinning wheel. So might I now sing every day, for every night I got to bed hoping that I shall not wake again, and each morning only brings back all the sorrows and grief of the day before. "*Meine Ruh' ist hin, mein Herz ist schwer;*" thus sang Gretchen at her spinning wheel. And so I spend my days, joyless and friendless.

**J S Bach** *to the Town Council. Leipzig, 24 Aug 1736*  
Magnificent, most honourable gentlemen, our wise and learned councilors, distinguished Lords and Patrons, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera... . May it please you to condescend to hear how Herr Johannes Fredrich Eitelwein, a merchant in the town of Leipzig, was married on the twelfth of August of the present year out of town, and therefore thinks himself entitled to withhold the fees due us in all such cases, and has made bold to disregard our many kind reminders. Where as the said fees make up the greater part of our emoluments, a perquisite of this position and no one has hitherto endeavoured to withhold from us our lawful share. We therefore feel compelled to beg you, honoured Lords and Gracious Patrons for this reason to take us under your protection and by your decision to uphold us in our old right and agreed *Salario*, and further to enjoin upon the said Herr Eitelwein that he remit to us a due proportion of the foresaid marriage fees, together with the costs occasioned, in this instance, which we also claim, with all respect and reverence. Magnificent and honourable gentlemen, most wise and learned councilors, distinguished Lords and Patrons, from your most humble and devoted servant, Johann Sebastian Bach.

**Claude Debussy** *to a friend. Le Molleau, 3 Dec 1916*  
I go on with this waiting life, waiting life, I might say, for I am a poor traveler waiting for a train that will never come again. They tell me it's the morphine! No! Something is broken in this strange mechanism that used to be my brain. Who's to blame? Perhaps this miserable war that loses some of its nobility with every passing day. Who's to blame? It was stupid enough to trust the Bulgarians. But it's even

worse to trust the Greeks for anything! And good King George looks like a hawker of lead pencils with no lead in them. Of course, rumors spread like weeds. Everyone appoints a new commander-in-chief every morning. It's like a hunchback changing his tailor in hope that the new one will be able to conceal his hump.....and after all, what does it matter?

**Giacomo Puccini** *to a friend. Paris 10 May 1898*  
I am sick of Paris! I am sick of panting for the fragrant wood, for the free movement of my belly in wide trousers and no waistcoat; I pant, I pant after the wind that blows free and fragrant from the sea; I savor with wide flaring nostrils its salty breath, and stretch my lungs to breathe it all! I hate pavements! I hate palaces! I hate capitals! I hate columns of marble! I love the beautiful column of poplar and fir; I love the vault of shady glades; I love the green expanse of cool shelter in forest old or young; I love the blackbird in flight; I love the woodpecker, seagull, and lark! I hate the horse, the cat and the toy dog! I hate the steamer, the top hat, the dress coat, and I hate Paris!

**Robert Schumann** *to his fiancée. Leipzig, 3 Jun 1839*  
The most certain this is still that we continue to love each other with all our hearts and I feel sure that in your heart there is a rich fund of love, and you will make your husband happy for a long, long time. You are a wonderful girl, Klara! There is such a host of varied and beautiful qualities in you that I will never know how you have managed to bring them all together during your short life. But there is one thing I know, Klara, and that is: I believe you would have been a very different girl if you had never met me at so early a stage and been impressed by my gentle way. Leave me this belief, it makes me happy. I taught you to love, and drew you close, to be the ideal bride as I imagined her; you were my most gifted pupil, and as my reward you said to me: "Well, then, take me, take me, take me, take me, take me, take me, take me!"

## To Be Sung Upon the Water

*Poems by William Wordsworth*

### I Prologue:

#### Shadow And Substance

As one who hangs down-bending from the side  
Of a slow-moving boat, upon the breast  
Of a still water, solacing himself  
With such discoveries as his eye can make  
Beneath him in the bottom of the deep,  
Sees many beauteous sights – weeds, fishes, flowers,  
Grots, pebbles, roots of trees, and fancies more,  
Yet often is perplexed and cannot part  
The shadow from the substance, rocks and sky,  
Mountains and clouds, reflected in the depth  
Of the clear flood, from things which there abide  
In their true dwelling; now is crossed by gleam  
Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,  
And wavering motions sent he knows not whence,  
Impediments that make his task more sweet;  
Such pleasant office have I long pursued  
Incumbent o'er the surface of past time.

### II The Lake At Evening

Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars  
Through the grey west; and lo! these water, steeled  
By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield  
A vivid repetition of the stars;  
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars  
Amid his fellows beauteously revealed  
At happy distance from the earth's groaning field,  
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.  
Is it a mirror? – or the nether Sphere  
Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds  
Her own calm fires? – But list! A voice is near;  
Great pan himself low-whispering through the reeds,  
'Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds  
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!'

### III Music On The Water

Lutes and voices down th'enchanted woods  
Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods,  
While Evening's solemn bird melodious weeps,  
Heard, by star-spotted boys, beneath the steep;  
Slow glides the sail along th'illuminated shore,  
And steals into the shade the lazy oar.  
Soft bosoms breath around contagious sighs,  
And amorous music on the water dies.

### IV Fair Is The Swan

Fair is the Swan, whose majesty, prevailing  
O'er breezeless water, on Locarno's Jake,  
Bears him on while proudly sailing  
He leaves behind a moon-illumined wake:  
-Behold!- as with a gushing impulse heaves  
That downy prow, and softly cleaves  
The mirror of the crystal flood,  
Vanish inverted hill, and shadowy wood,  
And pendent rocks, where'er, in gliding state,  
Winds the mute Creature without visible Mate  
Or Rival, save the Queen of night  
Showering down a silver light,  
From heaven, upon her chosen Favourite!

### V In Remembrance Of Schubert

O glide, fair stream! for ever so,  
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,  
Till all our minds for ever flow  
As they deep waters now are flowing.  
Vain thought! – Yet be as now thou art,  
That in thy waters may be seen  
The image of a poet's heart,  
How bright, how solemn, how serene!  
Now let us, as we float along,  
For *him* suspend the dashing oar;  
And pray that never child of song  
May know that Poet's sorrows more.  
How calm! how still! the only sound,  
The dripping of the oar suspended!

## VI Hymn Near The Rapids

Jesu! Bless our slender Boat,  
By the current swept along;  
Loud its threatenings- let them not  
Drown the music of a song;  
Breathed thy mercy to implore,  
Where these troubled waters roar!  
Saviour, for our warning, seen  
Bleeding on that precious Rood;  
If, while through the meadows green  
Gently wound the peaceful flood,  
We forgot Thee, do not Thou  
Disregard, They Suppliants now!  
Hither, like yon ancient Tower  
Watching o'er the River's bed,  
Fling the shadow of thy power,  
Else we sleep among the dead;  
Thou who trod'st the billowy sea,  
Shield us in our jeopardy!  
Guide our Bark among the waves;  
Through the rocks our passage smooth;  
Where the whirlpool frets and raves  
Let Them love its anger soothe;  
All our hope is placed in Thee;  
*Miserere Domine!*

## VII The Lake At Night

Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,  
Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,  
Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling sedge,  
And feeding pike starts from the water's edge.  
Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill  
Wetting, that drip upon the water still;  
And now, on every side, the surface breaks  
And now, on every side, the surface breaks  
Into blue spots, and slowly lengthening streaks;  
Here, plots of sparkling water tremble bright  
With thousand thousand twinkling points of light:  
And now the whole wide lake in deep repose  
Is hushed, and like a burnished mirror glows.

## VIII Epilogue:

### De Profundis

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;  
Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!  
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;  
The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;  
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;  
It moves us not.- Great God! I'd rather be  
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

## Howard Haskin

Born in Kansas City, Kansas, dramatic tenor Howard Haskin enjoys international renown for the extraordinary vocal expressiveness, impeccable musicality and theatrical intensity he brings to every performance, with a repertoire extending from Verdi to Richard Strauss, Saint-Saëns to Britten and beyond. Since his debut at Opernhaus Zürich, Mr. Haskin has performed leading roles in many of the world's great opera houses, including Covent Garden, Théâtre du Châtelet, Lyon, Nice, Marseille, Amsterdam, Madrid and São Paulo, at the festivals of Buxton, Wexford, Bregenz, the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and in Royal Albert Hall. Equally esteemed as a recitalist and orchestral soloist, he has appeared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Tonhalle Orchester Zurich, London Symphony Orchestra, Residentie Orkest, Minnesota Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony and Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, among others. His discography includes the Grammy-nominated recording of Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*, Massenet's *Thérèse* and the world premiere of Schnittke's *Life with an Idiot*.

## David Triestram pianist

A renowned figure on the international music scene, pianist David Triestram is a favorite opera coach and lieder collaborator of many of today's leading singers and opera companies. A graduate of Oberlin Conservatory, Mr. Triestram is often in demand for his in-depth knowledge of the late 19th and 20th century repertoire.

## Timothy Walker *guitar*

Tim Walker began playing at 12, and was invited to study in Spain with the great maestro, Narciso Yepes. In addition to his solo career, Walker is recognised as one of the foremost guitarists in the world of chamber music, and has encouraged composers to use the instrument more in ensemble works. He has played with the London Sinfonietta, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Royal Opera Covent Garden, the Nash Ensemble, the Lindsay Quartet and many other leading ensembles. Besides recitals, radio and TV he has recorded with some of the world's finest singers and instrumentalists including Robert Tear, Philip Langridge and Sarah Walker. He has performed in duo with John Williams. He has given masterclasses on 5 continents and is a professor at the Royal Academy of Music in London. A number of his compositions and arrangements have been published and recorded.

## Tansie Mayer *clarinet, bass clarinet*

Tansie Mayer studied with George Silfies, principal clarinetist of the Saint Louis Symphony while performing with the Saint Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra under the direction of Leonard Slatkin. After studies with Henry Gulick and a degree from Indiana University School of Music, he returned to Saint Louis and performed with the Saint Louis Municipal Opera. In New York City he worked extensively, performing with numerous orchestral and chamber ensembles including his own group, the Nexus trio. In 1989 career opportunities brought him to Europe where he settled, first in Paris and now in Berlin.

# Dominick Argento

## Shadow and Substance

Howard Haskin     *tenor*  
 David Triestram     *piano*  
 Timothy Walker     *guitar*  
 Tansie Mayer     *clarinet*

### Six Elizabethan Songs

- 1 Spring 1:52
- 2 Sleep 3:28
- 3 Winter 1:51
- 4 Dirge 3:37
- 5 Diaphenia 2:11
- 6 Hymn 4:01

### Letters from Composers

- 7 Frederic Chopin 3:45
- 8 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 3:09
- 9 Franz Schubert 4:40
- 10 Johann Sebastian Bach 3:28
- 11 Claude Debussy 3:26
- 12 Giacomo Puccini 2:47
- 13 Robert Schumann 4:36

### To be Sung upon the Water

*Poems by William Wordsworth*

- 14 Prologue: Shadow and Substance 4:00
- 15 The Lake at Evening 3:14
- 16 Music on the Water 3:01
- 17 Fair is the Swan 1:47
- 18 In Remembrance of Schubert 3:38
- 19 Hymn near the Rapids 3:15
- 20 The Lake at Night 4:23
- 21 Epilogue: De Profundis 5:38



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