Faculty Recital Series: Of One Cloth
- Lieder Of Johannes Brahms
And Hugo Wolf
Thursday, 10 October 2019, 7.30pm
Conservatory Concert Hall

ALAN BENNETT, *tenor*
ALBERT TIU, *piano*

Programme

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

9 Lieder und Gesänge von August von Platen und G. F. Daumer, Op.32

5 Lieder und Gesänge, Op.71

- Intermission -

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

*Selections from* Mörike-Lieder
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

9 Lieder und Gesänge von August von Platen und G. F. Daumer, Op.32
1. Wie raft ich mich
2. Nicht mehr zu dir
3. Ich schleich umher betrübt und stumm
4. Der Strom, der neben mir verrauschte
5. Wehe, so willst du mich wieder
6. Du sprichst, dass ich mich täuschte
7. Bitteres zu sagen
8. So stehn wir
9. Wie bist du, meine Königin
10.

5 Lieder und Gesänge, Op.71
1. Es liebt sich so lieblich
2. An dem Mond
3. Geheimnis
4. Wilst du dass ich geh?
5. Minnelied

Although most concert audiences think of Brahms principally as a composer of instrumental music – specifically the four symphonies, the concertos, chamber works and piano music – his output for the human voice formed by far and away the greatest part of his output. A German Requiem, written between 1863 and 1867, is certainly the best-known of all Brahms’ works for voices, but he also produced no less than 204 songs which were published in 32 volumes at various times between 1851 and 1896, along with several appearing in print posthumously.
In the words of Michael Quinn, “The voice was at the centre of Brahms's music. At its beginning and end, too. Of the first seven completed works he allowed into the public domain, three, significantly, were sets of songs. His last composition, the *Vier ernste Gesänge* ("Four Serious Songs"), was also to be for voice. The preoccupation with song was ever present, always crucial, occasionally defining; the voice perpetually exploited and explored in more than 200 songs for solo voice, duet and solo quartet, and in a myriad of works for accompanied and *a cappella* choir. Suffice to say that the sense of the sung voice was instinctive and integral to Brahms's own sense of himself as both man and musician. “The ideal”, he once remarked, “is the folk-song”. He might well have added, “and the voice that creates it, the sublime”. More than the symphonies and the chamber music, it is the vocal music that most explicitly reveals the head and heart of a composer whose true, full and complex identity has been obscured by time and reputation. Where the autobiographical subtext of his instrumental music was frequently disguised, habitually denied, the provocation and purpose of the vocal music is often gloriously, unashamedly, immediately apparent. It is a repertoire that is honest, direct and intellectually unfettered. Unequal, too, it has to be said, in terms of quality. Yet, in a curious way, it is those obvious occasional weaknesses that give the whole its strength, make it so tantalizing, so endearing, so much more truthful and reliable an expression of the man who composed them. Punctuating the life and career as they do, the compositions for voice provide a revealing series of thumbnail portraits of Brahms that belie the lingering image of him as being ill-equipped or disinclined to deal with the complex reality of his own emotional responses to the people and events that impinged upon his life.”

*Lieder und Gesänge von August von Platen und G. F. Daumer, Op.32*
Probably the best known of all Brahms’s many emotional hang-ups was his uncomfortable relationship with women. His thwarted love affairs were legendary. There were the famous infatuations with both Clara Schumann and her daughter, Julie, and the broken-off engagement to Agathe von Siebold. Then, in a letter to Clara (who had been urging him to settle down and find a wife) Brahms declared that he had met “a very pretty girl with whom, God knows, I might have made a fool of myself”.

That pretty young girl was Ottilie Hauer, a member of a choir Brahms was conducting. On Christmas Day 1863 Brahms made his way to Ottilie’s house determined to make a proposal of marriage only to arrive in the midst of celebrations announcing her betrothal to a certain Dr Edward Ebner. If nothing else, that emotional set-back goaded Brahms to assess his life and work and finally grasp the nettle of creative doubt that had been undermining so much of his work up to that point. His immediate response was to start work on what was to be the largest single choral work he was ever to produce, A German Requiem. In his masterly biography of the composer Malcolm MacDonald suggests that the completion of A German Requiem in 1867 unlocked in Brahms an ability to “advance with total confidence into the great abstract form – especially the symphony and the string quartet – that had tantalized him for so long”. During the years that Brahms worked on it, he wrote a number of smaller pieces which might be seen as experiments in overcoming the issues he was faced with by the composition of A German Requiem.

One of these was a suite of nine songs to texts by August von Platen and Georg Friedrich Daumer which was published in 1867 as his Op.32. As MacDonald puts it, “Brahms’s difficulties and irresolution about future courses - in music as much as in life – are presented with exceptional clarity in [the songs of] Op.32”. He goes on to describe how the ordering of the texts suggests “a progressive emotional separation from a loved one, the accompanying depressions, frustration, and a sense of time wasted, and love that endures nevertheless, undimmed”. While the passage from darkness to light, from pessimism to optimism and from insecurity to comfort might be seen as a parallel to the course of A German Requiem, it is also difficult not to read an autobiographical sub-text into these nine songs. An early biographer, Max Kalbreck, suggests that Op.32 in effect, tells “a story from the heart”.


What of the two poets (pictured above) whose names Brahms, unusually, incorporated into the title page of the published edition? August von Platen (1796-1835) was a Bavarian soldier who, in 1818, abandoned the military in favour of literature, which he studied at the University of Würzburg, and devoted the rest of his life to writing poetry. Since drama was considered superior to poetry in the eyes of German philosophers of the 19th century, he faced much criticism for his work at home so moved to Italy in 1826 where he lived for the rest of his life. Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800-1875) was very much more popular but correspondingly less gifted than Platen, yet Brahms seems to have been particularly attracted to his work. Daumer was a professor of Philosophy at the university in Nuremburg until forced to retire through ill-health in 1832. He spent the rest of his life writing literary works which propounded his strong anti-religious views and exhorted passion in love. In 1874 Brahms travelled to Würzburg to meet him. “He was a little dried-up old man. I soon perceived that he knew nothing either of me or my compositions, or anything at all of music. And when I pointed to his ardent, passionate verses, he gestured, with a tender wave of the hand, to a little old mother almost more withered than himself saying, ‘Ah, I have only loved the one; my wife’.”.
1. Wie rafft' ich mich auf in der Nacht ("How I Roused Myself in the Night")
August von Platen

Wie rafft' ich mich auf in der Nacht, in der Nacht,
Und fühlte mich fürder gezogen,
Die Gassen verließ ich vom Wächter bewacht,
Durchwandelte sacht
In der Nacht, in der Nacht,
Das Tor mit dem gotischen Bogen.

Der Mühlbach rauschte durch felsigen Schacht,
Ich lehnte mich über die Brücke,
Tief unter mir nahm ich der Wogen in Acht,
Die wallten so sacht,
In der Nacht, in der Nacht,
Doch wallte nicht eine zurücke.

Es drehte sich oben, unzählig entfacht,
Melodischer Wandel der Sterne,
Mit ihnen der Mond in beruhigter Pracht,
Sie funkelten sacht
In der Nacht, in der Nacht,
At a deceptively remote distance.

Ich blickte hinauf in der Nacht, in der Nacht,
Und blickte hinunter aufs neue:
O weh, wie hast du die Tage verbracht,
Nun stille du sacht
In der Nacht, in der Nacht,
Im pochenden Herzen die Reue!

Oh, how I roused myself in the night, in the night,
And felt myself drawn farther;
I left the alleys,
Guarded by the watchmen,
And wandered through quietly,
In the night, in the night,
The gate with the gothic arch.

The millbrook rushed through the rocky gorge,
I leaned over the bridge,
Observing far below me the waves,
Which rolled so quietly,
In the night, in the night,
Yet never did one roll back.

Overhead wanders the infinite, flickering, melodic traffic of the stars,
With them, the moon in calm splendour;
They gleam quietly
In the night, in the night,
At a deceptively remote distance.

2. Nicht mehr zu dir zu gehen ("To Visit You No Longer")
G. F. Daumer

Nicht mehr zu dir zu gehen
Beschloß ich und beschwor ich,
Und gehe jeden Abend,
Denn jede Kraft und jeden Halt verlor ich.

Ich möchte nicht mehr leben,
Möcht' augenblicks verderben,
Und möchte doch auch leben
Für dich, mit dir, und nimmer, nimmer sterben.

Ach, rede, sprich ein Wort nur,
Ein einziges, ein klares;
Gib Leben oder Tod mir,
Nur dein Gefühl enthülle mir, dein wahres!

To visit you no longer
Did I resolve and swear.
Yet I go to you each evening,
For all strength and resolve have I lost.

I long to live no longer,
I long to perish instantly
And yet I also long to live
For you, with you, and never, never die.

Ah, speak, say only one word,
A single word, a clear one;
Give me life or death,
Only reveal your true feelings to me!
3. Ich schleich’ umher betrübt und stumm (“I creep about, sad and mute”)  
August von Platen

Ich schleich umher,  
Betrübt und stumm,  
Du fragst, o frage  
Mich nicht, warum?  
Das Herz erschüttert  
So manche Pein!  
Und könnt’ ich je  
Zu düster sein?

I creep about,  
sad and mute.  
You ask, o ask  
me not, why?  
My heart shakes  
with so much pain!  
Could I ever be  
too gloomy?

Der Baum verdorrt,  
Der Duft vergeht,  
Die Blätter liegen  
So gelb im Beet,  
Es stürmt ein Schauer  
Mit Macht herein,  
Und könnt ich je  
Zu düster sein?

The tree withers and dies,  
the breeze fades away,  
The leaves lie  
so yellow in the yard,  
A shower storms  
with might toward us;  
Could I ever be  
too gloomy?

4. Der Strom, der neben mir verrauchste (“The stream that rushed past”)  
August von Platen

Der Strom, der neben mir verrauchste, wo ist er nun?  
Der Vogel, dessen Lied ich lauschte, wo ist er nun?  
Wo ist die Rose, die die Freundin am Herzen trug?  
Und jener Kuß, der mich berauschte, wo ist er nun?  
Und jener Mensch, der ich gewesen, und den ich längst  
Mit einem andern ich vertauschte, wo ist er nun?

The stream that rolled past me, where is it now?  
The bird to whose song I listened, where is it now?  
Where is the rose that my sweetheart wore on her heart?  
And that kiss that intoxicated me, where is it now?  
And that man that I once was, whom long ago I exchanged  
for another self - where is he now?

5. Wehe, so willst du mich wieder (“Alas, so you would again”)  
August von Platen

Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,  
Hemmende Fessel, umfangen?  
Auf, und hinaus in die Luft!  
Ströme der Seele Verlangen,  
Ström ’es in brausende Lieder,  
Saugend ätherischen Duft!

Alas, so you would again,  
You hindering shackles, imprison me?  
Up and out into the air!  
Out streams the longing of the soul,  
flowing out in clamorous songs,  
Inhaling ethereal fragrances!

Strebe dem Wind nur entgegen  
Daß er die Wange dir kühle,  
Grüße den Himmel mit Lust!  
Werden sich bange Gefühle  
Im Unermeßlichen regen?  
Atme den Feind aus der Brust!

Struggle against the wind,  
That it might cool your cheeks,  
Greet the heavens with joy!  
Will timid emotions  
Move you as you gaze upon the Infinite?  
Exhale the foe from out of your breast!
6. Du sprichst, daß ich mich täuschte
   (“You say that I deluded myself”)
   August von Platen

Du sprichst, daß ich mich täuschte,
Beschwörest es hoch und hehr,
Ich weiß ja doch, du liebstest,
Allein du liebst nicht mehr!

You say that I deluded myself,
You swear it imposingly;
I know however, that you loved me,
Only now you love me no more.

Dein schönes Auge brannte,
Die Küsse brannten sehr,
Du liebest mich, bekenn es,
Allein du liebst nicht mehr!

Your lovely eyes glowed bright,
Your kisses burned greatly;
You loved me, confess it,
Only now you love me no more!

Ich zähle nicht auf neue,
Getreue Wiederkehr;
Gesteh nur, daß du liebest,
Und liebe mich nicht mehr!

I count on nothing new,
No return to faithfulness;
Just admit that you did love,
And now love me no more!

7. Bitteres zu sagen denkst du
   (“You are thinking of something bitter”)
   G. F. Daumer

Bitteres zu sagen denkst du;
 Aber nun und nimmer kränkest du,
Ob du noch so böse bist.
Deine herben Redetaten
Scheitern an korall'ner Klippe,
Werden all zu reinen Gnaden,
Denn sie müssen, um zu schaden,
Schiffen über eine Lippe,
Die die Süße selber ist.

You are thinking of something bitter to say
But never might you cause offence,
Although you are so angry.
Your sharp speech
Founders on coral rocks,
And becomes pure grace,
For it must, in order to cause shame,
Sail over a pair of lips
Which is Sweetness itself.

8. So stehn wir, ich und meine Weide
   (“So we stand”)
   G F Daumer

So stehn wir, ich und meine Weide,
So leider miteinander beide.
Nie kann ich ihr was tun zu Liebe,
Nie kann sie mir was tun zu Leide.
Sie kränket es, wenn ich die Stirn ihr
Mit einem Diadem bekleide;
Ich danke selbst, wie für ein Lächeln
Der Huld, für ihre Zornbescheide.

So we stand, I and my mistress,
So unfortunate with each other!
Never can I do anything to please her;
Never can she do anything to pain me.
It hurts her feelings when upon her brow
I adorn her with a diadem;
I myself am thankful, as much for a smile
of favour, as for a furious reply.
9. Wie bist du, meine Königin ("How blissful you are, my queen").

G F Daumer

Wie bist du, meine Königin,  
Durch sanfte Güte wonnevoll!  
Du lächle nur, Lenzdüfte wehn  
Durch mein Gemüte, wonnevoll!

Frisch aufgeblühter Rosen Glanz,  
Vergleich ich ihn dem deinen?  
Ach, über alles, was da blüht,  
Ist deine Blüte wonnevoll!

Durch tote Wüsten wandle hin,  
Und grüne Schatten breiten sich,  
Ob fürchterliche Schwüle dort  
Ohn Ende brüte, wonnevoll!

Laß mich vergehn in deinem Arm!  
Es ist ihm ja selbst der Tod,  
Ob auch die herbstle Todesqual  
Die Brust durchwüte, wonnevoll!

How blissful you are, my queen,  
When you are gentle and good!  
Merely smile, and spring fragrance wafts  
Through my spirit blissfully!

The brightness of freshly blooming roses,  
Shall I compare it to yours?  
Ah, soaring over all that blooms  
Is your bloom, blissful!

Wander through dead wastelands,  
And green shadows will be spreading,  
Even if fearful sultriness  
Broods there without end... blissfully!

Let me die in your arms!  
It is in them that Death itself,  
Even if the sharpest pain  
Rages in my breast... is blissful!

[English translations © Emily Ezust - from the LiederNet Archive https://www.lieder.net/]

Lieder und Gesänge, Opus 71

As if on the rebound from his disastrous affair with Ottilie Hauer, Brahms promptly transferred his affections to one of his piano pupils, Elisabet von Stockhausen, who was then aged 16. Contemporary reports describe her as “not really beautiful but
better than beautiful, at once dazzling and bewitching; the fairest of skins, fine-spun, wavy golden hair, curious arresting greenish-brown eyes. With her, sunshine came in at the door”. In his biography of the composer, Jan Swafford writes; “Elisabet inflicted on Brahms a kind of trembling awe. Especially just after his recent brush with the altar, he was terrified of touching her, of falling in love with her”, so to avoid any risk of getting too emotionally involved and then suffering the same sort of disappointment he had suffered with Ottilie, Brahms sent her away. Two years later she married the composer Heinrich von Herzogenberg, and it was only in the mid-1870s that they met each other again. As Swafford writes, “Elisabet von Herzogenberg re-entered Brahms’s life at exactly the time he needed her”, and their relationship flourished. By 1877 it had grown into a full-blown infatuation on Brahms’s behalf (for the next 10 years he kept a photo of her on his desk as he composed) and seems to have triggered an outburst of song-writing.

In early 1877 Brahms had stayed with Elisabet and her husband, and in March of that year wrote a letter to her in which he confessed: “It was so delightful staying with you. The memory is still warm, and I feel I want to keep it snugly buttoned up for a long time. But these things are easier to express in music...later I shall choose the most beautiful key and the most beautiful poem to write the continuation [of this letter]”. As good as his word, the following month he wrote 18 songs which, added to four written in 1875 and 1876, were published in four volumes as his Opp.69, 70, 71 and 72. More than one commentator has identified elements in these songs which express Brahms’s feelings for Elisabet, but taking a less emotionally-charged approach, Inge Van Rij points out that “The various aspects of thwarted love affairs were staple fare in Brahms’s Lieder – indeed, in Lieder generally – and require no specific autobiographical explanation”. Today Alan Bennett performs the Funf Gesänge für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung des Pianoforte (“5 Songs for solo voice accompanied by piano”) which form the third published set of that year’s outpouring of songs.
Es liebt sich so lieblich im Lenze ("Love is so Lovely in Spring").
Heinrich Heine.

Die Wellen blinken und fließen dahin,
Es liebt sich so lieblich im Lenze!
Am Flusse sitzet die Schäferin
Und windet die zärtlichsten Kränze.

Das knospet und quillt und duftet und blüht,
es liebt sich so lieblich im Lenze!

Die Schäferin seufzt aus tiefer Brust:
»Wem geb' ich meine Kränze?«

Ein Reiter reitet den Fluß entlang,
er grüßet so blühenden Mutes,
die Schäferin schaut ihm nach so bang,
fern flattert die Feder des Hutes.

Sie weint und wirft in den gleitenden Fluß
die schönen Blumenkränze.
Die Nachtigall singt von Lieb' und Kuß,
es liebt sich so lieblich im Lenze!

1. An den Mond ("To the Moon").
Karl Joseph Simrock.

Silbermond mit bleichen Strahlen
pflegst du Wald und Feld zu malen,
gibst den Bergen, gibst den Talen
der Empfindung Seufzer ein.

Sei Vertrauter meiner Schmerzen,
Segler in der Lüfte See:
Sag' ihr, die ich trag' im Herzen,
wie mich tötet Liebesweh.

Sag' ihr, über tausend Meilen
sehne sich mein Herz nach ihr.
»Keine Ferne kann es heilen,
ner ein holder Blick von dir.«

Sag' ihr, daß zu Tod getroffen
diese Hülle bald zerfällt;
nur ein schmeichlerisches Hoffen
sei's, das sie zusammenhält.

Silver moon with pale rays,
you often paint the forest and field;
you give the mountains, you give the valleys
a sigh of feeling.

Be the confidant of my sorrows,
sailor on the sea of the air:
Tell her, whom I carry in my heart,
how yearning for love is killing me.

Tell her that over a thousand miles
my heart pines for her.
"No distance can heal it,
only a loving glance from you."

Tell her that I have been struck mortally
and my body soon shall fall;
only a flattering hope
keeps me together.
3. Geheimnis ("Secret").
Karl Candidus.

O Frühlingsabenddämmerung!
O laues, lindes Weh’n,
Ihr Blütenbäume, sprechet, was tut
ihr so zusammensteh’n?

Vertraut ihr das Geheimnis euch
Von uns’rer Liebe süß?
Was flüstert ihr einander zu
Von uns’rer Liebe süß?

O spring’s evening twilight!
O mild, gently breezes,
You blossoming trees, speak; what are you
doing, standing so close together?

Do you confide to one another
the secret of our sweet love?
What do you whisper to one another
about our sweet love?

4. Willst du, daß ich geh’? ("Do You Wish Me to Go?").
Karl Lemcke.

Auf der Heide weht der Wind -
Herzig Kind, herzig Kind -
WIllst du, daß trotz Sturm und Graus
In die Nacht ich muß hinaus -
Willst du, daß ich geh’?

Auf der Heid’ zu Bergeshöh’
Treibt der Schnee, treibt der Schnee;
Feget Straßen, Schlucht und Teich
Mit den weißen Flügeln gleich.
Willst du, daß ich geh’?

Horch, wie klingt’s herauf vom See
Wild und weh, wild und weh!
An den Weiden sitzt die Fei
Und mein Weg geht dort vorbei -
Willst du, daß ich geh’?

Wie ist’s hier in deinem Arm
Traut und warm, traut und warm;
Ach, wie oft hab’ ich gedacht:
So bei dir nur eine Nacht -
Willst du, daß ich geh’?

On the heath blows the wind -
Sweet child, sweet child -
do you wish me, despite the storm and
terror,
to go out into the night -
do you wish me to go?

On the heath at the top of the mountain
Piles the snow, piles the snow;
It sweeps the street, the gorge and pool
alike
with white wings.
Do you wish me to go?

Hark! the sound of the sea
is wild and woeful, wild and woeful!
By the willows sits an evil sprite
and my path goes past that place -
Do you wish me to go?

For here in your arms,
how cozy and warm, cozy and warm;
Ah, how often have I thought:
if only I could have just one night with you…
Do you wish me to go?
5. **Minnelied (“Love Song”).**
Ludwig Heinrich Christoph Hölty.

Holder klingt der Vogelsang,  
Wenn die Engelreine,  
Die mein Jünglingsherz bezwang  
Wandelt durch die Haine.

Delightfully sound the birdsongs  
when the pure angel  
who conquered my young heart  
wanders through the wood.

Rötter blühen Tal und Au,  
Grüner wird der Wasen,  
Wo die Finger meiner Frau  
Maienblumen lasen.

Redder bloom the valleys and meadows,  
Greener becomes the grass  
where the fingers of my lady  
Are picking little mayflowers.

Ohne sie ist alles tot,  
Welk sind Blüt' und Kräuter;  
Und kein Frühlingsabendrot  
Dünkt mir schön und heiter.

Without her, everything is dead.  
Blossoms and herbs are wilted;  
and no spring sunset  
would seem to me as fair and fine.

Traute, minnigliche Frau,  
Wollest nimmer fliehen;  
Daß mein Herz, gleich dieser Au,  
Mög' in Wonne blühen!

Darling, lovely woman,  
Never wish to flee;  
that my heart, as well as this meadow,  
might bloom in joy!

[Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)]

**Mörike-Lieder**
Fussreise (no.10)  
Im Frühling (no.13)  
Auf einer Wanderung (no.15)  
Zitronenfalter im April (no.18)  
Der Tambour (no.5)  
Elfenlied (no.16)  
Der Knabe und das Immlein (no.2)  
Selbstgeständniss (no.52)  
Zur Warnung (no.49)  
Der Jäger (no.40)  
Abschied (no.53)

Beware of meeting your heroes! They may not be as heroic as you thought. That was certainly Hugo Wolf’s experience when, in 1879 as an eager, hot-headed and passionate ex-composition student (he had been thrown out of the Vienna Conservatory two years earlier for threatening in a letter – which he foolishly signed with his own name – to assassinate the Director). He looked on Brahms as his hero, and when he went to the great man to show him some songs he had written and ask for advice, he was rebuffed with the admonition that he should start taking things seriously, knuckle down properly and undergo a
course of study in counterpoint with the eminent Beethoven scholar and early editor of Bach’s works, Gustav Nottebohm.

It may be that Brahms’s rebuff of Wolf was not unconnected with the fact that the Director whom the young man had so foolish threatened to kill was none other than Brahms’s good friend, Josef Hellmesberger. So incensed was Wolf at Brahms’s surly rejection of him, that hero-worship was transformed overnight into sheer, vicious hatred. From that moment onwards, Wolf did all he could to undermine Brahms’s reputation, using his later role as an influential music critic to pour contempt on him; an example of his vitriolic criticism exemplified by this published comment; “The art of composing without ideas has found its most worthy representative in Brahms”.

From any standpoint, Hugo Wolf appears to have been a pretty vile character, driven by an obsession for cigarettes, alcohol and loose women (and not drawing the line when it came to seducing members of his own family). He was small in stature, ravished from an early age by the disease which eventually turned him insane and caused his premature death, and his rudeness was legendary. Yet, whether he knew it or not, Brahms was doing him a favour by rejecting him; the two men were creatively and artistically so far apart that any forging of links could only have been to the detriment of Wolf’s own creative genius.
Hugo Wolf’s obsession with music began at the age of eight when he attended a performance of Donizetti’s *Belisario*. His wayward and rebellious personality led to most attempts at formal training being prematurely curtailed, and nobody wanted to employ him in any capacity. However, his passion for music along with his keen literary tastes, led to him becoming an outspoken music critic and, most importantly, an extremely perceptive song-writer. He wrote over 300 songs in the space of just six years, and despite his early death and his lack of formal training, history places him up alongside Schubert and Schumann as one of the three pre-eminent masters of *lieder*. For Wolf, the song was the perfect vehicle, allowing him his adventures into the world of complex harmonies, without the need for some kind of long-term structure, and providing, through the text, the emotional stimulus he so desperately needed. He composed songs only intermittently, interspersing periods of great activity with long periods of musical silence, but one such burst of activity occurring between 16th February and 18th May 1888 when he composed 43 songs to texts by Eduard Mörike (1804-1875). His enthusiasm for these is reflected in comments he made to a friend; “I have just written down a new song, a divine song, I tell you...I feel my cheeks glow like molten iron with excitement, and this state of pure inspiration is to me exquisite torment, not pure happiness”. He set 10 more in October 1888 and the complete 53 song collection was published in 1889 as his *Mörike Lieder*. As the German scholar Gerhard Persché
has put it, “The composer has looked around and settled down in all the rooms of Mörike’s poetic house, in the meditative and religious ones, just as in those where deliberate naivety and the folksong are domiciled, or the ghostly, the comic and the light-hearted joke, and has added his own accents”.

Eduard Mörike (1804-1875)

Eduard Mörike was another of Wolf’s heroes. Luckily, the two men never met, so the disillusionment he had experienced on encountering Brahms did not sour that relationship; as Susan Youens suggests, “had they met in real life, one can imagine their mutual disgust with each other”, since they were divided by “an enormous aesthetic gap”. Mörike was a Lutheran pastor who wrote poetry very much as a means of escapism from the pressures of daily life. In his younger days he had suffered badly from a disastrous failed love affair with a Swiss barmaid of exceptional beauty, and vowed thereafter to devote himself to a life of tranquillity and simplicity. He embraced simplicity and moderation, lived an uneventful life of relative solitude, found himself unable to cope with the social interaction required by his role as a pastor, so resigned and ended his days in solitude. His artistic preferences were firmly rooted in the past: the polar opposite of Wolf. And whatever Mörike intended to convey in his poetry, Wolf invested it with a level of passion (“voluptuous pleasure in pain”) and emotional power (“written with blood, and such tones can only strike one who, suffering, surrenders his innermost being to deeply truthful knowledge”) that he effectively reinvented the poet completely. As the famous Viennese critic, Eduard Hanslick wrote of Wolf (whom, it has to be said, he despised), he “did not compose poems; “he composed entire poets”. Yet the artistic meeting of these two wildly
different characters resulted in a collection of some of the finest songs composed in the latter half of the 19th century, from which Alan Bennett has selected 11 which he presents in three thematic groups.

**Wanderlust**
As Richard Stokes has written, although Mörike “never travelled far in the real world, he journeyed extensively in his imagination”. These three songs are journeys in the poet’s imagination.

**Fussreise (“Journey on Foot”)**

Am frischgeschnittnen Wanderstab,  With my fresh-cut walking staff  
Wenn ich in der Frühe  Early in the morning  
So durch [die]1 Wälder ziehe,  I go through the woods,  
Hügel auf und ab:  Over the hills, and away.  
Dann, wie's Vöglein im Laube  Then, like the birds in the arbour  
Singet und sich rührt,  That sing and stir,  
Oder wie die gold'ne Traube  Or like the golden grapes  
Wonnegeister spürt  That trace their blissful spirits  
In der ersten Morgensonne:  In the first morning light  
So fühlt auch mein alter, lieber  I feel in my age, too, beloved  
Adam Herbst und Frühlingsfieber,  Adam's spring- and autumn-fever --  
Gottbeherzte,  God fearing,  
Nie verscherzte  But not discarded:  
Erstlings Paradiseswonne.  The first delights of Paradise.

Also bist du nicht so schlimm, o alter  You are not so bad, oh old  
Adam, wie die strengen Lehrer sagen;  Adam, as the strict teachers say;  
Liebst und lobst du immer doch,  You love and rejoice,  
Singst und preisest immer noch,  Sing and praise --  
Wie an ewig neuen Schöpfungstagen,  As it is eternally the first day of creation --  
Deinen lieben Schöpfer und Erhalter.  Your beloved Creator and Preserver.

Möcht' es dieser geben  I would like to be given to this  
Und mein ganzes Leben  And my whole life  
Wär' im leichten Wanderschweiße  Would be in simple wandering wonder  
Eine solche Morgenreise!  Of one such morning stroll.
Im Frühling (“In Spring“)

Hier lieg' ich auf dem Frühlingshügel:
Die Wolke wird mein Flügel,
Ein Vogel fliegt mir voraus.

Hier I lie on the hill in springtime:
The clouds become my wings,
A bird flies before me.

Ach, sag' mir, all-einzige Liebe,
Wo du bleibst, daß ich bei dir bleibe,
Doch du und die Lüfte, ihr habt kein Haus.

Ah, tell me, one and only love,
Where you live, so that I may live with you!
But you and the breezes have no home.

Der Sonnenblume gleich steht mein Gemüte
offen,
Sehnend,
Sich dehnend,
In Lieben und Hoffen.

Like the sunflower, my mind stands open,
Yearning,
Stretching,
In love and hope.

Frühling, was bist du gewillt?
Wann werd ich gestillt?

Spring, what do you want of me?
When shall I be stilled?

Die Wolke seh' ich wandeln und den Fluß,
Es dringt der Sonne goldner Kuß
Mir tief bis in's Geblüt hinein;

I see the clouds moving, and the river,
The sun's golden kiss penetrates
Deeply into my veins;

Die Augen, wunderbar berauschet,
Thun, als schliefen sie ein,
Nur noch das Ohr dem Ton der Biene
lauschet.

The eyes, wonderfully enchanted,
Close, as if in sleep,
Only my ear captures the buzz of the bee.

Ich denke Dieß und denke Das,
Ich sehne mich, und weiß nicht recht, nach
was:

I think of this and that,
I am yearning, but I do not know hat for?

Halb ist es Lust, halb ist es Klage;
Mein Herz, o sage:

It is half rapture, half lament;
Was webst du für Erinnerung
In golden grüner Zweige Dämmerung?

What memories are you weaving
In the golden-green boughs?

-- Alte unnennbare Tage!

-- Ancient, unnamed days!

Auf einer Wanderung (“On a Walk“)

In ein freundliches Städtchen tret' ich ein,
In den Straßen liegt roter Abendschein.

Into a friendly little town I stroll -
in its streets lie the red evening glow.

Aus einem offnen Fenster eben,
Über den reichsten Blumenflor

From an open window,
across the most splendid riot of flowers,

Hinweg, hört man Goldglockentöne
schweben,
Und eine Stimme scheint ein
Nachtigallenchor,
Daß die Blüten beben,
Daß die Lüfte leben,
Daß in höherem Rot die Rosen leuchten vor.

So that the blossoms tremble,
so that the breezes come to life,
and so that the roses glow even redder.

Lang' hielt ich staunend, lustbeklommen.
Ich weiß es wahrlich selber nicht.

Long I pause, astounded and oppressed by joy.
Ich hier, wie liegt die Welt so licht!

Ah, here, how lightly does the world lie!
Der Himmel wogt in purpurnem Gewühle,
Rückwärts die Stadt in goldinem Rauch;
Wie rauscht der Erlenbach, wie rauscht im
Grund die Mühle,
Ich bin wie trunken, irggeführt --

How I finally found myself past the gate
I truly do not myself know.
O Muse, du hast mein Herz berührt
Mit einem Liebeschauh!

O Muse, you have stirred my heart
with a breath of love!
Little Ones
Again to quote from Richard Stokes, “The naivety, the idylls and the humour of many Mörike poems are, in fact, a bastion erected by the poet against those extreme emotions which threatened to overwhelm him throughout his life”. These four songs hint at darker things through their use of child-like imagery and humour.

Zitronenfalter im April (“Brimstone Butterfly in April”)

Grausame Frühlingssonne,
Du weckst mich vor der Zeit,
Dem nur in Maianwonne
Die zarte Kost gedeiht!
Ist nicht ein liebes Mädchen hier,
Das auf der Rosenlippe mir
Ein Tröpfchen Honig beut,
So muß ich jämmerlich vergehn
Und wird der Mai mich nimmer sehn
In meinem gelben Kleid.

Cruel spring sun,
You wake me prematurely --
It is not until May
That my delicate food grows!
If there is no dear girl here
To offer me a drop of honey
From her rosy lips,
Then I must perish in misery,
And May will never see me
In my yellow garb.

Der Tambour (“The Drummer Boy”)

Wenn meine Mutter hexen könnt,
Da müßt sie mit dem Regiment,
Nach Frankreich, überall mit hin,
Und wär die Marketenderin.
Im Lager, wohl um Mitternacht,
Wenn Niemand auf ist als die Wacht,
Und Alles schnarchet, Roß und Mann,
Vor meiner Trommel säß’ ich dann:
Die Trommel müß’ eine Schüssel sein,
Ein warmes Sauerkraut darein,
Die Schlegel Messer und Gabel,
Eine lange Wurst mein Sabel,
Mein Tschako wär’ ein Humpen gut,
Den füll’ ich mit Burgunderblut.
Und weil es mir an Lichte fehlt,
Da scheint der Mond in mein Gezelt;
Scheint er auch auf Franzö’sch herein,
Mir fällt doch meine Liebste ein:
Ach weh! Jetzt hat der Spaß ein End!
- Wenn nur meine Mutter hexen könnt!

If my mother could work magic
she would go off with the regiment
to France and everywhere.
She would be a camp-follower
Selling supplies at midnight,
When there is no one up except the guard,
and everybody is snoring, horses and men.
That's when I would sit by my drum.
The drum would turn into a bowl
with warm sauerkraut in it,
The drumsticks would be the knife and fork,
My sabre, a long sausage;
My shako would be a tankard
Filled with red Burgundy.
And because I would not have a light
the moon would shine into my tent.
Even if it was shining in French
I would still be reminded of my love.
Oh dear! That's brought the fun to an end.
- If only my mother could work magic!
Elfenlied (Elf Song)

Bei Nacht im Dorf der Wächter rief:
„Elfel!“
Ein ganz kleines Elfchen im Walde schlief --
Wohl um die Elfel! --
Und meint, es rief ihm aus dem Tal
Bei seinem Namen die Nachtigall,
Oder Silpelit hätt' ihm gerufen.
Reibt sich der Elf' die Augen aus,
Begibt sich vor sein Schneckenhaus
Und ist als wie ein trunken Mann,
Sein Schläflein war nicht voll getan,
Und humpelt also tippe tapp
Durch's Haselholz in's Tal hinab,
Schlüpft an der Mauer hin so dicht,
Da sitzt der Glühwurm Licht an Licht.
»Was sind das helle Fensterlein?
Da drin wird eine Hochzeit sein:
Die Kleinen sitzen bei'm Mahle,
Und treiben's in dem Saale.
Da guck' ich wohl ein wenig 'nein!«
-- Pfui, stößt den Kopf an harten Stein!
Elfe, gelt, du hast genug?
Gukuk! Gukuk!

At night in the village the watchman cried:
"Eleven!"
Aver small elf was asleep in the forest --
Just at eleven o'clock! --
And he thinks that the nightingale
Called him by name from out of the valley!
Or that Silpelit had sent for him.
The elf rubs his eyes,
Steps out in front of his snail-shell house,
And is like a drunken man,
His sleep had been interrupted;
And he hobbles about, tip tap
Through the hazel wood and into the valley,
Slips right up to the wall;
There sits the glow-worm, light on light.
"What bright windows are those?
There must be a wedding celebration inside;
The little folk are sitting at the feast
And dancing in the ballroom.
I shall just peep inside!"
-- Shame! He bumps his head on the stone!
Well, elf, I guess you've had enough?
Cuckoo! Cuckoo!
Der Knabe und das Immlein (“The Boy and the Bee”)

Im Weinberg auf der Höhe
ein Häuslein steht so winde bang;
hat weder Tür noch Fenster,
die Weile wird ihm lang.

Und ist der Tag so schwüle,
sind all' verstummt die Vögelein,
summt an der Sonnenblume
ein Immlein ganz allein.

Lieb hat einen Garten,
da steht ein hübsches Immenhaus:
kommst du daher geflogen?
schickt sie dich nach mir aus?

O nein, du feiner Knabe,
es hieß mich Niemand Boten gehn;
dieses Kind weiß nichts von Lieben,
hat dich noch kaum gesehn.

Was würsten auch die Mädchen,
wen sie kaum aus der Schule sind!
Dein herzallerliebstes Schätzchen
ist noch ein Mutterkind.

Ich bring' ihm Wachs und Honig; ade!
ich hab' ein ganzes Pfund;
wie wird das Schätzchen lachen,
him wässert schon der Mund -

Ach, wolltest du ihr sagen,
ich wüsste, was viel süßer ist:
ichts Lieblichere auf Erden
als wenn man herzt und küßt!

In a vineyard on a hill
stands a ruined cottage;
It has neither door nor window
and time hangs heavy on it.

But when the day is sultry
And all the birds are silent,
you will hear buzzing round the sunflower.
A solitary bee.

My sweetheart has a garden
in which there is a pretty beehive.
Is that where you have flown from?
Did she send you to me?

"Oh no, you handsome boy,
nobody has sent me with any message.
The child knows nothing of love.
And she has hardly noticed you.

What on earth can girls know
when they have only just left school?
Your beloved sweetheart
is still her mother's child.

I'm taking her some wax and honey.
Goodbye. I've got a whole pound.
How your sweetheart will laugh!
Her mouth will be watering already!"

Ah, I wish you would tell her
I know of something that is much sweeter:
There is nothing lovelier on earth
than a hug and a kiss.
Solitary Ones
We have already seen how the poet craved solitude and the final four songs look at solitude from three very different perspectives.

Selbstgeständnis ("Confession")
Ich bin meiner Mutter einzig Kind,
Und weil die andern ausblieben sind,
Was weiß ich wieviel, die sechs oder sieben,
Ist eben alles an mir hängen blieben;
Ich hab' müssen die Liebe, die Treue, die Güte
Für ein ganz halb Dutzend allein aufessen,
Ich will's mein Lebtag nicht vergessen.
Es hätte mir aber noch wohl mögen
frommen,
Hätt' ich nur auch Schläg' für Sechse bekommen.

Zur Warnung ("By Way of Warning")
Einmal nach einer lustigen Nacht
War ich am Morgen seltsam aufgewacht:
Durst, Wasserscheu, ungleich Geblüt;
Dabei gerührt und weichlich im Gemüt,
Beinah poetisch, ja, ich bat die Muse um ein Lied.

Sie, mit verstelltem Pathos, spottet' mein,
Gab mir den schnöden Bafel ein:
"Es schlägt eine Nachtigall
Am Wasserfall;
Und ein Vogel ebenfalls,
Der schreibt sich Wendehals,
Johann Jakob Wendehals;
Der tut tanzen
Bei den Pflanzen
Ob bemeldten Wasserfalls --"

So ging es fort; mir wurde immer bänger.
Jetzt sprang ich auf: zum Wein!
Der war denn auch mein Retter.

-- Merkt's euch, ihr tränenreichen Sänger,
Im Katzenjammer ruf man keine Götter!

I am my mother's only child
And since the others did not stay,
(Who knows how many, six or seven)
Everything was given to me;
Love, loyalty, kindness, devotion
Enough for a full half-dozen
I will never forget it as long as I live,
It may have made me more pious
If I had received the smacks for all six as well.

Once after a merry night
I woke one morning feeling odd:
thirst (but not for water), pounding blood,
feeling disturbed and sentimental;
almost poetic, yes, I asked my Muse for a song.

Pretending pathos, she mocked me
with me this contemptible piece of doggerel:
"A nightingale is singing
by the waterfall;
and another bird as well,
Wendehals is his name,
Johann Jakob Wendehals;
who dances
by the plants
of the aforementioned waterfall."
and so it continued, and my anxiety grew.
Now I sprang up: Wine! That would restore me!

Mark you well, weeping bards,
Call not on God when you have a hangover!
Der Jäger ("The Hunter")

Drei Tage Regen fort und fort,
Kein Sonnenschein zur Stunde;
Drei Tage lang kein gutes Wort
Aus meiner Liebsten Munde!

Sie trutz mit mir und ich mit ihr,
So hat sie's haben wollen;
Mir aber nag't am Herzen hier,
Das Schmollen und das Grollen.

Willkommen denn, des Jägers Lust,
Gewittersturm und Regen!
Fest zugeknöpft die heisse Brust,
Und jauchzend euch entgegen!

Nun sitzt sie wohl daheim und lacht
Und scherzt mit den Geschwistern;
Ich höre in des Waldes Nacht
Die alten Blätter flüstern.

Nun sitzt sie wohl und weinet laut
Im Kämmerlein, in Sorgen;
Mir ist es wie dem Wilde traut,
In Finsterniss geborgen.

Kein Hirsch und Rehlein überall!
Ein Schuß zum Zeit vertreibe!
Gesunder Knall und Wiederhall
Erfrischt das Mark im Leibe. --

Doch wie der Donner nun verhallt
In Tälern, durch die Runde,
Ein plötzlich Weh mich überwallt,
Mir sinkt das Herz zu Grunde.

Sie trutz mit mir und ich mit ihr,
So hat sie's haben wollen,
Mir aber friß't am Herzen hier,
Das Schmollen und das Grollen.

Und auf! und nach der Liebsten Haus!
Und sie gefaßt um's Mieder!
"Drück' mir die naßen Locken aus,
und küß' und hab' mich wieder!"

Three days of non-stop rain,
No sunshine as yet:
Three whole days without a good word
From my love's mouth.

She defied me and I her;
Which is just what she wanted.
It's gnawing at my heart
all this sulking and grumbling.

So welcome to the joy of the hunt
to thunderstorms and to rain!
My hot breast is well wrapped up
ready to exult in taking you on!

Now she'll be sitting at home laughing
and joking with her brothers and sisters;
but I am in the woods at night listening to
the whispers of the old leaves.

Now she'll be sitting and crying her eyes out.
She'll be in her little room with her cares;
but I am cosy like a wild animal
hidden in the darkness.

There is no stag or fawn anywhere.
A shot to kill time.
A healthy bang and an echo
refreshes you deep down inside the body.

But as the thunder dies away
in the valleys and all around
a sudden pain overwhelms me,
my heart sinks to the depths.

She defied me and I her;
Which is just what she wanted.
It's eating into my heart
all this sulking and grumbling.

So, get up! To my love's house
to put my arms round her waist,
"Dry my wet locks,
Kiss me and take me back!"
Abschied ("Farewell")

Unangeklopf ein Herr tritt Abends bei mir ein:
»Ich habe die Ehr', Ihr Rezensent zu sein!«
Sofort nimmt er das Licht in die Hand,
besieht lang meinen Schatten an der Wand,
rückt nah und fern:
»Nun, lieber junger Mann,
sehn Sie doch gefälligst mal
Ihre Nas' so von der Seite an!
Sie geben zu, daß das ein Auswuchs is'.«
Das? Alle Wetter - gewiß!
Ei Hasen! ich dachte nicht, all' mein Lebtage
nicht,
daß ich so eine Weltsnase führt' im Gesicht!

Der Mann sprach noch[Verschiedenes hin und her,
ich weiß, auf meine Ehre, nicht mehr;
meinte vielleicht, ich sollt' ihm beichten.

Zuletzt stand er auf; ich tat ihm leuchten.
Wie wir nun an der Treppe sind,
da geb' ich ihm, ganz frohgesinnt,
einen kleinen Tritt,
nur so von hinten aufs Gesäße mit -
alle Hagel! ward das ein Gerumpel,
ein Gepurzel, ein Gehumpel!
Dergleichen hab' ich nie gesehn,
al' mein Lebtage nicht gesehn
einen Menschen so rasch die Trepp' hinabgehn!

One evening, without knocking, a gentleman comes visiting me:
"I am honoured to be your critic!", he says.
Immediately he takes the light in his hand,
gazes long at my shadow on the wall,
stepping close and then stepping back:
"Now, my good young man,
kindly see how your nose
looks from the side!
You must admit that it is a protuberance."
This? Good gracious - so it is!
My word! I never imagined in my whole life
long
that I bore a world-sized nose on my face!

The man said various other things about this and that,
and on my honour, I remember no more;
perhaps he thought I should make a confession.
Finally, he stood up and I lit his way out.
As we stood at the top of the stairs,
I gave him, cheerfully,
a small kick
from behind, on the backside,
and by hail! what a jolting,
tumbling, and hobbling!
The equal I have never seen,
my whole life long,
of a man going so quickly down the stairs!