

Recital in the Time of Covid-19

Valdis Jansons, baritone

Erik Lawrence - piano

June 24, 2020

PROGRAM

Songs and Dances of Death

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)
text by Golenishtchev-Kutusov

- I Kolybel'naya (Lullaby)
- II Serenade
- III Trepak (Russian Dance)
- IV Polkovodec (Commander-In-Chief)

Selected Chansons

Henri Duparc (1848-1933)
text by S. Prudhomme

Soupir

Phidylé

text by L. De Lisle

Testament

text by A. Silvestre

BREAK

Three Shakespeare Songs Op. 6

Roger Quilter (1877-1953)

- I, Come Away, Death
- II. O Mistress Mine
- III. Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind

Neopolitan Songs

Tu Ca Nun Chiagne

Ernesto De Curtis (1875-1937)
text by L. Bovio

Core 'ngrato

Salvatore Cardillo (1874-1947)
text by R. Cordiferro

'O Surdato 'Nnamurato

Enrico Cannio (1874-1949)
text by A. Califano

Latvian baritone, Valdis Jansons

made his opera debut in 2004 under the direction of Antonello Allemandi. Winner of many international competitions (Giuseppe Di Stefano 2006, As.Li.Co. 2009 etc.), he has sung more than 60 roles in more than 70 theaters all over the world. Among them: Teatro alla Scala in Berg's Lulu, directed by Peter Stein and conducted by Daniele Gatti in 2011; Teatro Carlo Felice di Genoa as Capulet in Romeo et Juliette, directed by Jean Louis Grinda and conducted by Fabio Luisi in 2012; Teatro Filarmonico di Verona, Teatro Regio di Parma; Sao Carlos Theater of Lisbon, Moscow's Bolshoi Theater, Theater an der Wien; Teatro San Carlo di Napoli, Lincoln Center, NCPA in Beijing.



Among his recent engagements are: Enrico Ashton in Lucia di Lammermoor by Donizetti at Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Il Conte di Luna in Il Trovatore at Teatro São Carlos (Lisbon, Portugal), at San Carlo Theatre in Naples as the baritone soloist in Carmina Burana by Orff, at the Monte-Carlo Opéra in Rusalka, Figaro at Carlo Felice Opera House in Genoa, then at Theatro Municipal in Rio De Janeiro (Brazil) as Escamillo in Carmen, again as Escamillo in Genoa, Don Giovanni at the opening of the 16th International Music and Dance Festival of Bangkok (Thailand). In April 2015 Mr. Jansons made his debut as Billy Budd at Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa. In December 2015 he made his debut as Onegin at Opera Wroclawska, in March 2016 as Rodrigo in Verdi's Don Carlo at Lithuanian National Opera, Zurga in The Pearl Fishers at Opera Wroclawska, Rigoletto, Valentin in Faust, Verdi's Macbeth, Wolfram in Tannhäuser by Wagner at Latvian National Opera, Giorgio Germont in La Traviata at Teatro Marrucino in Chieti, Italy, in 2017 he sang with Ramon Vargas in Lucia di Lammermoor at National Opera of Bucarest (Romania), has performed Scarpia in Puccini's Tosca in Tours, France, King Roger in Szymanowsky's eponymous opera in Krakow, Poland, Eisenstein in Die Fledermaus at Teatro Petruzzelli di Bari, Nello in Pia de' Tolomei by Donizetti at the theatres of Pisa, Lucca, Livorno as well as at Spoleto Festival in Charleston (SC) in May and June 2018, then Rodrigo in Don Carlo at Opera pa Skäret (Sweden), Ping in Turandot in a tournée in China. In February - March 2019 made his stage debut at Oper Graz (Austria) as King Roger. His upcoming engagements include Nabucco by Verdi in Latvia and Ramiro in L'Heure Espagnole by Ravel in Italy.

Pianist Erik Lawrence

has experience in orchestral, chamber music, art song, operatic, and choral genres. Erik has given performances at the Canadian Opera Company's Virtuoso Pianist Afternoon Concert Series, at the International Holland Music Sessions in Bergen, Netherlands, and performed Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto with the Lake Charles Symphony. He was orchestral keyboardist with the Topeka Symphony Orchestra. Erik is currently doing doctoral studies in Collaborative Piano at UC Santa Barbara with Robert Koenig, and was a TA at UM Kansas City where he earned a Master's Degree with Dr. Robert Weirich. Before that, he received an Artist's Diploma from the Glenn Gould School with pianist John O'Connor and Bachelor's Degree from Rice University with Dr. Robert Roux in his hometown of Houston, Texas. Erik currently plays with the Santa Barbara Master Chorale, and in private voice lessons as a TA collaborative pianist with Dr. Isabel Bayrakdarian at UCSB, as well as in the voice studio of Marilyn Horne.



TRANSLATIONS

Songs and Dances of Death by M. Mussorgsky

Text by Arseny Golenischev-Kutuzov

Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky was a Russian composer, one of the group known as "The Five". He was an innovator of Russian music in the romantic period. He strove to achieve a uniquely Russian musical identity, often in deliberate defiance of the established conventions of Western music.

Each of the songs in this cycle deals with death in a poetic manner although the depictions are realistic in that they reflect experiences not uncommon in 19th century Russia: child death, death in youth, drunken misadventure and war. The song cycle is considered Mussorgsky's masterpiece in the art song genre.

Kolybel'naya (Lullaby) (1875)

English Translation by Philip Ross Bullock

A child moans... A candle, burning low,
Casts its dull flicker all around.
All through the night, as she rocks the cradle,
A mother has not slept.
Early in the morning comes the gentle knock
Of Death, the compassionate one, at the door!
The mother shudders, anxiously looking around
her...
'There's no need to be afraid, my friend!
The pale morning is peeping through the window...
You have worn yourself out with crying, longing,
loving,
So rest a while, my dear,
And I will take your place at his side.
You couldn't soothe the little child,
But I can sing more sweetly than you.'
'Shhh! The child is tossing and turning,
My heart grieves to see him thus!'
'Come now, with me he will soon calm down,
Hushaby, hushaby-hush.'
'His cheeks are so pale, his breathing so shallow...
Please be quiet, I beg you!'
'That's a good sign, his suffering will soon be over,
Hushaby, hushaby-hush.'
'Be away with you, accursed woman!
You will destroy my joy with your caresses!'
'No, I will waft the sleep of peace over the infant,
Hushaby, hushaby-hush.'
'Have pity! Cease your singing for just a moment,
Cease your terrible song!'
'See now, my quiet song has sung him to sleep,
Hushaby, hushaby-hush.'

Serenade (1875)

Languid enchantment, the blue of the night,
The quivering half-light of spring.
Ailing, her head hung low, the young woman
Listens to the whisper of night's stillness.
Sleep cannot close her shining eyes,
Life's pleasures summon her still,
But under her window, in the silence of midnight,
Death sings this soft serenade:
'In the gloom of confinement, severe and narrow,
Your youth is fading;
But I, a mysterious knight,
Will free you with my wondrous power.
Rise and look on yourself: your countenance
Shines with limpid beauty,
Your cheeks are flushed, and your rippling tresses
Encircle your waist like clouds.
The radiant blue of your eager eyes
Is brighter than heaven or flame;
Your breath is as the midday heat...
You have bewitched me.
Your hearing is captivated by my serenade,
Your whispering summoned this knight,
Who has come for his final reward:
The hour of rapture is nigh.
Your form is fair and your trembling –
enchanted...
Ah, I shall smother you in my strong embrace:
Listen to my words of love!
Be silent!... You are mine!'

Trepak (Russian Dance) (1875)

Forests and glades, not a soul in sight.
A blizzard wails and howls.
In the darkness of night,
It is as if someone is being buried by some evil
force:
Just look – it is so! In the darkness,
Death tenderly embraces a peasant,
Leading the drunken man in a lively dance,
And singing this song in his ear:
'Oh, poor peasant, pitiful old man,
Drunk and stumbling on your way,
And the blizzard, like a witch, rose up and raged,
Driving you by chance from the field into the deep
woods.
Oppressed by grief and sadness and want,
Lay down, rest and sleep, my dear!
I will warm you, my friend, with a cover of snow,
Weaving a great game around you.
Whip up a bed, oh swan-like snowstorm!
Hey, you elements, strike up a song,
Spin a tale that will last all night,
So that that old drunk might sleep soundly to its
strains!
Hey, you woods and heavens and storm clouds,
Darkness and winds and driving snow!
Spin him a shroud of downy snow,
And I will swathe the old man, like a new-born
child...
Sleep, my friend, you fortunate peasant,
Summer has come, all in bloom!
The sun smiles down on the cornfield and the
sickles glimmer,
A song wafts across the air and the doves are
flying...'

Polkovodec (Commander-In-Chief) (1877)

The battle rages, the armour flashes,
Bronze canons roar,
Regiments charge, horses gallop by
And red rivers flow.
Midday burns and men still fight;
The sun sinks low, yet the battle rages ever more;
Twilight fades, yet enemies are locked
More violently, more fiercely in conflict.
Night falls on the field of battle.
Legions disperse in the darkness...
All is calm, and in the darkness of night
Groans rise up to the sky.
And then, in the moonlight,
On her warhorse,
Her white bones shining brightly,
Death appears; and in the silence,
Listening to the groans and prayers
With pride and pleasure,
She bestrides the field of battle
Like a field marshal.
From atop of a mound she looks around,
Stops and smiles...
And across the war-torn plain
Rings the sound of her fateful voice:
'The battle is over! I have vanquished you all!
You have all surrendered before me, ye warriors!
Life set you at odds, but I have reconciled you!
Stand to attention for review, ye dead!
March by in solemn procession,

I wish to account for my troops;
Then lay down your bones in the earth,
The years will pass by imperceptibly,
And you will slip from the memory of the living.
Yet I will not forget you and will host
A banquet at midnight over your bones!
The heavy tread of my dance will trample down
The moist earth, so that your bones may never more
Escape the fastness of the grave,
So that you may never more rise from the grave!'

Songs by Henri Duparc (1848-1933)

Henri Duparc is best known for his 17 *mélodies* ("art songs"), with texts by poets such as Baudelaire, Gautier, Leconte de Lisle and Goethe. A mental illness, diagnosed at the time as "neurasthenia", caused him abruptly to cease composing at age 37, in 1885. He devoted himself to his family and his other passions, drawing and painting. But increasing vision loss after the turn of the century eventually led to total blindness. He destroyed most of his music, leaving fewer than 40 works to posterity

Soupir (Sigh) (1869)

Text by Sully Prudhomme

English Translation by Marion Leeds Carroll

Never to see her or hear her,
never to speak her name aloud,
but, faithful, always to wait for her,
always to love her.
To open one's arms, and, weary of waiting,
to close them upon emptiness,
but still, forever to hold them out to her,
always to love her.
Ah, to be able to do nothing but hold them out to
her,
and to waste away in weeping,
but always to shed those tears,
always to love her.
Never to see her or hear her,
never to speak her name aloud,
but, with a love always more tender,
always to love her,
Always!

Phidylé (1882)

Text by Charles-Marie-René Leconte de Lisle

English Translation by Richard Stokes

The grass is soft for sleep beneath the cool poplars
On the banks of the mossy springs
That flow in flowering meadows from a thousand
sources,
And vanish beneath dark thickets.
Rest, O Phidylé! Noon on the leaves
Is gleaming, inviting you to sleep.

By the clover and thyme, alone, in the bright
sunlight,
The fickle bees are humming.
A warm fragrance floats about the winding paths,
The red flowers of the cornfield droop;
And the birds, skimming the hillside with their
wings,
Seek the shade of the eglantine.
But when the sun, low on its dazzling curve,
Sees its brilliance wane,
Let your loveliest smile and finest kiss
Reward me to for my waiting!

Testament (1883)

Text by Armand Silvestre

English Translation by Richard Stokes

That the wind might bear them to you
On the black wing of remorse,
I shall inscribe on the dead leaf
The torments of my dead heart!
All my strength has drained away
In the bright noon of your beauty,
And, like the withered leaf,
Nothing living is left for me.
Your eyes have scorched me to the soul
Like suns devoid of mercy!
The chasm will claim the leaf,
The south wind sweep me away...
But first, that it might bear them to you
On the black wing of remorse,
I shall inscribe on the dead leaf,
The torments of my dead heart!

Three Shakespeare Songs Op. 6 (1905) by Roger Quilter

Roger Quilter was born in Hove, Sussex; a commemorative blue plaque is on the house at 4 Brunswick Square. He went to Eton College and later became a fellow-student of Percy Grainger, Cyril Scott and H. Balfour Gardiner at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, where he studied composition. Quilter belonged to the Frankfurt Group, a circle of composers who studied at the Hoch Conservatory in the late 1890s. His reputation in England rests largely on his songs and on his light music for orchestra, such as his *Children's Overture*, with its interwoven nursery rhyme tunes, and a suite of music for the play *Where the Rainbow Ends*. Quilter found it difficult to cope with some of the pressures which he felt were imposed upon him as a homosexual living in the first half of the 20th Century, and eventually deteriorated into mental illness after the loss of his nephew Arnold Guy Vivian during the Second World War. He died at his home in St John's Wood, London, a few months after celebrations to mark his 75th birthday, and was buried in the family vault at St Mary's Church, Bawdsey, Suffolk.

Come Away, Death

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 yew,
O, prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
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.
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O, where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there!

O Mistress Mine

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O stay and hear, your true love's coming
That can sing both high and low.

Trip no further, pretty sweetening;
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
Ev'ry wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:

In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty;
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind

Blow, blow thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen
Although thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho!
Unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning,
Most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho!
unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning,
most loving mere folly
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Neapolitan Songs

Tu ca nun chiagne (You who don't cry)

By E. De Curtis

Text by Libero Bovio

How beautiful the mountain is tonight!
so beautiful I have never seen it.
It seems a resigned and weary soul
under the cover of this white moon.

You who don't cry, but make me cry,
you tonight, where are you?

I want you!

I want you!

These eyes want to
see you one more time.

How peaceful the mountain is tonight,
more peaceful than I have ever seen it,
and everything is sleeping, z
everything is sleeping or dying
and I just keep watch, because love keeps watch.

You who don't cry, but make me cry,

You tonight, where are you?

I want you!

I want you!

These eyes want to
see you one more time.

Core 'ngrato (Ungrateful Heart)

By S. Cardillo

Text by Riccardo Cordiferro

Catari, Catari
Why do you say these bitter words to me?
Why do you speak and my heart
torments me, Catari?
Don't forget that I've given you my heart, Catari
Don't forget it!

Catari, Catari, what do you mean by
these words, that upset me?
You don't think about my pain
You don't think!
You don't care Heart, ungrateful heart
You've stolen my life
Everything's over
And you don't think about it anymore!

'O Surdato 'nnamurato

(The Enamoured Soldier)

By E. Cannio

Text by Aniello Califano

You are far away from this heart
I fly to you in my mind
I hope and want nothing more
than always keeping you by my side!
Are you sure about this love
As I am sure that I love you?

Oh life, oh my life...
Oh heart of this heart...
You were the first love...
and the first and last you will be for me!

How many nights have I not seen you
not felt you in my arms,
not kissed your face,
not held you tight in my arms?!
But, waking from these dreams,
you make me cry for you...

Oh life, oh my life...
Oh heart of this heart...
You were the first love...
and the first and last you will be for me!