

# CLASSICAL VOICE EXAM RECITAL



**Jeremy Boulton** *Baritone*  
**David Miller AM** *Piano*

Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> November | 2:50pm  
Recital Hall East, Sydney Conservatorium of Music

VERDI | MAHLER | STRAUSS | TCHAIKOVSKY



*Gustav Mahler and his wife, Alma. (The New York Philharmonic Archive)*

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"I am hitting my head against the walls, but the walls are giving way."

Gustav Mahler

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# ABOUT TODAY'S PROGRAM.

Today's program includes songs by a number of the musical giants of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Rossini, Verdi, Ravel, Strauss, Mahler and Tchaikovsky.

Repertoire of this era is what I hope to sing in the future, particularly *bel canto* and middle and late period Verdi opera. And so it is appropriate to sing song settings with piano by these composers at this early point in my career to gain a sense of style in the different genres. My personal growth over the last few years has also taken me to new emotional highs and lows which have allowed me to increasingly activate my affective memory (à la Stanislavski) in portraying moments of extreme vulnerability or outright confidence.

*Three Italian Songs* encompass three unique styles of song composition from two major composers, and an important conductor of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. **Giuseppe Verdi** in his *Il poveretto* provides a glimpse into his earlier commentary on war and its consequences: of human suffering and impoverishment. He achieves this through a soliloquy or 'scena' of a worn veteran who begs for a penny so he can eat for the day. Verdi would later be writing his grand operas under the watchful eyes [and ears] of censors during the '*Risorgimento*'<sup>1</sup> which would later lead to a unified Italy.

**Giaochino Rossini's Arietta all'Antica** is found in his *Péchés de vieillesse* ('Sins of Old Age') – a collection of 150 vocal, solo piano and chamber works. The brief 'arietta' is clearly influenced by the early opera style of the *da capo* aria with the ternary structure, however Rossini's modern vocabulary makes it hard to draw comparisons to 'the old style' [as he refers to it in the score], with clear doubling of the melody in the upper piano, likened to the arias of Giacomo Puccini!

A rarely performed and recorded piece is *Mattinata* by **Pietro Cimara**. The composer paints a dew-kissed morning scene of a gentle river in the woods. Flowing piano figures form the light accompaniment, until the young man's angst at forgetting his mother's song takes over, leading [again] to a quasi-Puccini outburst in the central section – a doubling of the melody in the right hand of the piano part.

Cimara studied composition with Respighi at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome<sup>2</sup> and although Cimara's compositional output amounts to a handful of songs and other small works, his contribution to lyric conducting was far greater. A regular assistant to Arturo Toscanini<sup>3</sup>, he became a leading conductor of operatic repertoire.

**Maurice Ravel's** last complete composition before his death was a set of songs for a film version of literary classic, '*Don Quixote*'. Though he had received the commission from film director G.W. Pabst<sup>4</sup>, unbeknownst to him so did four or five other composers. These songs never made it into that film by Pabst and exist both in orchestrated and piano versions. Their texts were written by Paul Morand specifically for the film. Don Quixote is brought to life in these three songs with the clear inclusion of a distinct Spanish dance in

<sup>1</sup> Gosset, Philip. "Giuseppe Verdi and the Italian Risorgimento." *Studia Musicologica* 2, no. 1 (December 2011). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43289762>.

<sup>2</sup> Rich, Melody Marie. "Pietro Cimara (1887-1967): His Life, His Work, and Selected Songs." Texas ScholarWorks. Accessed November 10, 2019. <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/884>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Bernarc, Pierre. *The Interpretation of French Song*. First Edition. US: W. W. Norton & Company, 1970.

each setting<sup>5</sup>. The cycle opens with a 'quajira'<sup>6</sup> which phrases with a bar of  $\frac{8}{8}$  followed by a bar of  $\frac{3}{4}$  in the *Chanson romanesque*. The *Chanson épique* is a solemn prayer in  $\frac{5}{4}$ , though even this hymn-like movement is guided by a Spanish dance – a 'Basque zortzico'<sup>7</sup>. In this piece, Don Quixote invokes St. Michael and St. George as witnesses to the purity and piety of his love, Dulcinea. Finally, *Chanson à boire*, the cycle's drinking song, shows Don Quixote in his drunken glory with a 'jota'<sup>8</sup> in  $\frac{3}{4}$ .



*Gerard Souzay performing the orchestrated version of the Don Quichotte à Dulcinée in the studio.*

Both **Richard Strauss** and **Gustav Mahler** turned to *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (From the Youth's Magic Horn) for their song texts. The two-volume collection of German folk poems, edited by poet Clemens Brentano and antiquarian Achim von Arnim, published in 1805 and 1808, respectively<sup>9</sup>, hold a significant place in popular literature of 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany.

*Himmelsboten* by **Strauss** is the last of a set of five songs published in 1888. Notably, Strauss' setting opens with repeated F# quavers doubled at the octave, establishing the mood of curiosity that inhabits this piece. This figure alludes to his earlier setting of *Die Nacht*, in which a similar figure is used in the introduction. A fusion of secco and arioso recitative follows with a variety of colours in the polyphonic accompaniment depicting Apollo (Phoebus) on his chariot creating a sunrise. A clear break heralds an aria-style section after a brief pause at 'Oh fahrt vor ihr', where the Gods are invoked to gaze at his love's yellow hair and kiss her red lips.

The second of the Lieder offers a typically Mahlerian setting of another text from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* in a simple C major tonality. *Ich ging mit lust* comes from the era of **Mahler**'s first four symphonies, particularly recalling the final movement of the Fourth Symphony, *Das himmlische Leben*. We meet a young man recalling a story of having walked through a green wood, hearing a nightingale sing and pondering his beloved, and in German Romantic style, from an unreachable distance.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Schwarm, Betsy. "Des Knaben Wunderhorn." Encyclopaedia Britannica. Accessed November 10, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Des-Knaben-Wunderhorn-by-Mahler>.

Conveniently placed alongside these two *Wunderhorn* is **Strauss'** setting of a 'Wunderhorn-style' poem by Felix Dahn in **All' mein gedanken**. A young man yearns for his beloved, and defies all logic in whimsical metaphors about how he'll reach her even if it be through little birds chirping at her window. The piano in the coda suggests an acceptance of his love by his lover, cadencing perfectly as he is let into her heart (and her house!).

We close today's program with **Tchaikovsky**. Surprisingly, various parallels in this repertoire can be drawn to the song output of Schubert, Schumann and even Mendelssohn<sup>10</sup>. Tchaikovsky studied with Anton Rubinstein who studied in Berlin with the likes of Felix Mendelssohn and Giacomo Meyerbeer. Clear similarities to the Lieder style are evident in **Amid the din of the ball** (Средь шумного бала, случайно). Tchaikovsky exploits the strophic form to add subtle, yet extremely effective layers and alterations to his accompaniment through the verses. Tchaikovsky restates the opening theme of the piece in the closing bars, exactly as he penned it earlier (save a final chord after this re-statement). Tchaikovsky also includes his iconic thematic imitations throughout in figures in the right hand and leaves brief moments of the final section with only two polyphonic voices present in the accompaniment. The constant crescendo / diminuendo phrasing sets an introspective mood within the phrases as the text's deep reflection and longing is conveyed in the melody.

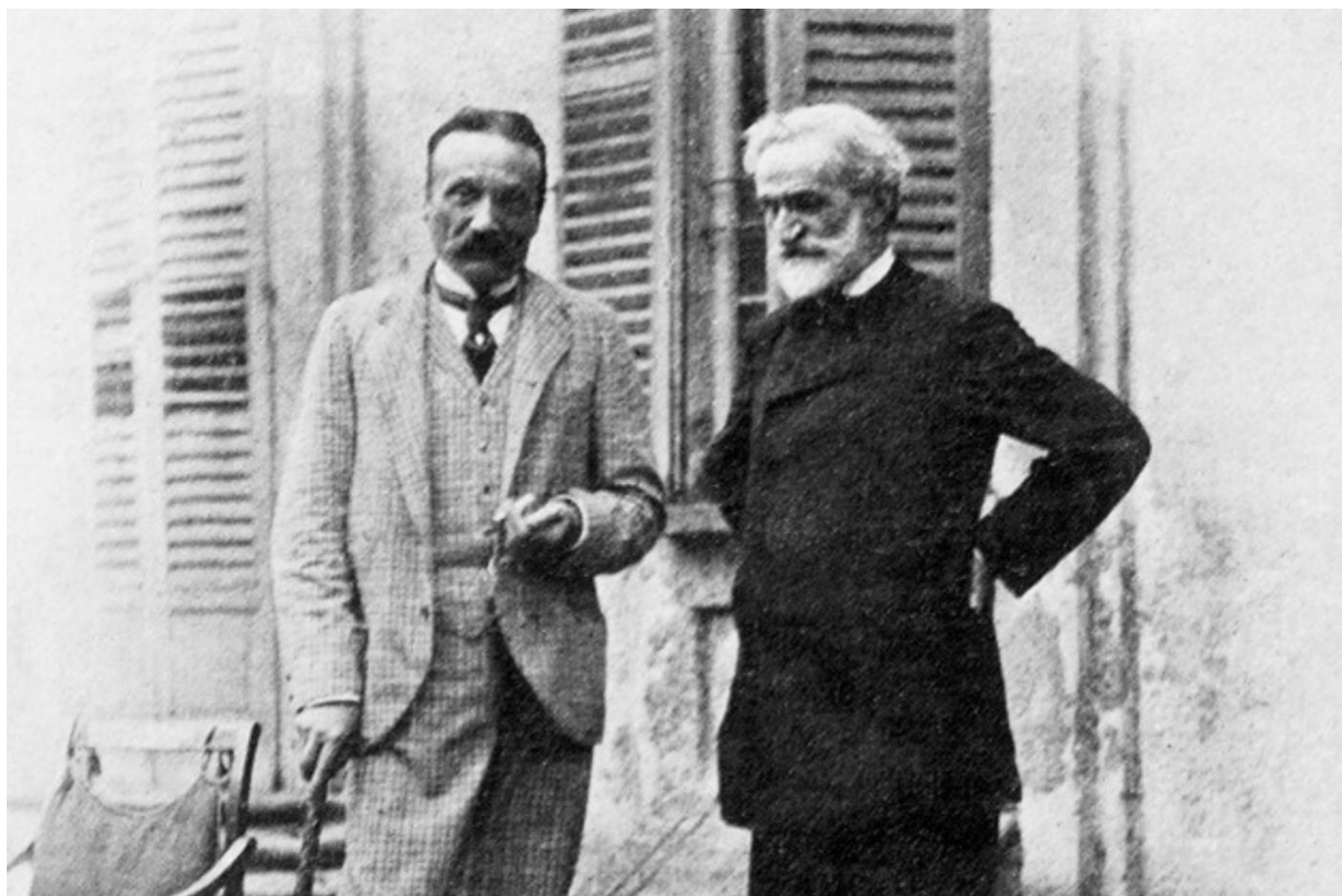
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's 'Mignon' has been the subject of songs by Schumann (*Kennst du das Land*) and Schubert, Louis Spohr and an opera by Ambroise Thomas. With a poetic Russian translation by Lei, set by Tchaikovsky, **None but the lonely heart** (Нет, только тот, кто знал) has become one of the most famous songs in the Russian song repertoire. An unsteady syncopated quaver pulse depicts the weeping of young Mignon in her distressed isolation, and her beating heart that is overcome with grief. To further set the mood, Tchaikovsky includes chromatic figures of imitation in the accompaniment, buried in the alto and tenor voices. In the penultimate section, a soaring piano countermelody occurs in octaves separate to both accompaniment and melodic motifs, bringing the piece to its most intense passage. After the climax, 'fsya grudga rit' (My heart is burning...) is left unaccompanied for a bar, with the piano re-entering in the setting of the word 'rit' (burning) at the major seventh. Mignon's soliloquy is brought to a close with the same pulsing quavers sounding until the final chord.

**Does the day reign?** (Пётр Ильич Чайковский) brings a heart-wrenching Russian set to a thrilling and decisive conclusion. The piano accompaniment offers a virtuosic display including an abundance of densely arpeggiated chords, with passionate countermelodies decorating the long notes in the vocal part. When the final declaration is made and nothing is left for the grieving man to say, the piano takes over in a turbulent whirlwind of expression.

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<sup>10</sup> Weiler, Sherri. "From Russia with Love, Part 2." *Journal of Singing* 71, no. 2 (2014): 237 – 41.

<http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=b384f3bc-506c-4ccc-b96d-3ff1c6145cfe@sd-c-v-sessmgr01>



*Arrigo Boito and Giuseppe Verdi, 1892. Photograph by Achille Ferrario.*

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‘Verdi is dead. He has taken away with him an enormous quantity of light and of vital warmth; we were all brightened by the sunshine of that Olympian old age’.

Arrigo Boito

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# THE ARTISTS.

## **Jeremy Boulton** | *Baritone*

A former recipient of the Opera Australia Student Scholarship and graduate of the Talent Development Project, Jeremy has starred in the lead roles for productions of *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The King & I*. He was also a featured artist in the *Schools Spectacular* and *Southern Stars*.

Jeremy has featured as a solo recitalist and concert soloist for the Opera Australia Benevolent Fund, Sydney Conservatorium of Music (Early Music Ensemble) in Händel's *Dixit Dominus*, Argyle Orchestra (Hobart, Australia) in Charpentier's *Messe di Minuit* & Händel's *Messiah*, Opera Projects Sydney, Con Voci (Wollongong), Opus Collective (Wollongong) in J.S. Bach's *Ich habe genug*, and Fiori Musicali (Armidale, NSW) for Händel's *Messiah* and J.S. Bach's *St. John Passion*. He has also featured in the ensembles of *Don Giovanni* and *I Pagliacci* for the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Jeremy is currently reading for a Bachelor of Music (Performance) at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Masterclasses include that by Jessica Pratt.

In his spare time, Jeremy enjoys attending the symphony, opera, chamber music recitals, jazz and straight theatre. He also takes a keen interest in Australian politics and the work of Australian cartoonist, Michael Leunig.

Jeremy studies with Maree Ryan AM.

## **David Miller AM** | *Piano*

David Miller is widely recognized as one of Australia's leading pianists, chamber musicians and vocal accompanists. He is also highly regarded as a mentor for young ensemble pianists and répétiteurs. He has been appointed as a member of the Order of Australia for his service to music.

David's distinguished career has included partnerships with many internationally renowned singers and instrumentalists, and he has been a member of a number of Australian chamber music ensembles. He is a founding member of the acclaimed Grevillea Ensemble and pianist in the innovative Charisma Trio. He also performed with the legendary contemporary music group Flederman and the Huntington Piano Trio, and has toured and recorded regularly for the ABC and 2MBS-FM and also served for several years on the Artistic Review Panel for Musica Viva Australia, touring for them with the original Song Company.

In his role as chair of the Piano Accompaniment Unit, David introduced a uniquely innovative and comprehensive program of study at both graduate and undergraduate levels. David's studio has produced many of Australia's finest young piano accompanists, and he was instrumental in setting up the Geoffrey Parsons Australian Scholarship and other awards to assist young accompanists and répétiteurs.

David has conducted masterclasses and lectures for schools, universities, conservatoriums, music organizations and music conferences in many parts of Australia and Asia. In 2006 he was the artist-in-residence at a highly successful Festival of Accompanists in Adelaide. On several occasions, he has been a panel member for the Mietta Song Recital Awards and a guest artist on the staff of the Australian National Academy of Music. He has also been the official pianist for the finals of the prestigious McDonald's Operatic Aria and early in 2009 coordinated an innovative and highly successful Collaborative Pianist Program at the prestigious Australian String Academy's Summer School in Sydney. He has given a number of illustrated lectures on the art of accompaniment to organizations such as the Music Teachers' Association and the Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing.

David was the inaugural president of the Accompanists' Guild of NSW and is very active in the promotion of piano accompaniment as an independent art form worthy of professional recognition and academic research.

# TRANSLATIONS.

## Giuseppe Verdi – *Il poveretto*<sup>11</sup>

Passerby with the sweet appearance,  
I think you have a kind heart,  
Give a penny to the poor one,  
Who nearest you is hungry.

Since the time of my boyhood  
I was a soldier  
And was fighting for my homeland  
I traversed both the land and sea!;

But now that I am old  
Now that I no longer have my strength,  
In the end, after I have defended this soil,  
My country forgets me.

## Giaocchino Rossini – *Arietta All'Antica*<sup>12</sup>

In silence I will complain  
About my bitter fate  
But I will not love you, dear,  
do not hope to obtain that from me.

Cruel one, why do you still  
Let me suffer like this?

## Pietro Cimara – *Mattinata*<sup>13</sup>

Mother, in the dawn with pious sweetness  
I caught a pure clarification of brine  
I sat in the water  
And for you I composed an elegy.

And I dropped snowfall all over it  
And a sigh of a sparrow in love  
But in bringing it to you, closed in my heart  
Oh good mother, I forgot it.

Mother, at dawn I came to search  
I played my song but I couldn't find it  
Brine sputtered slowly from the roses  
So they no longer had the waters of the sea

But if you come with me, tomorrow we will go  
To find out where the forest is most deserted;  
Perhaps in a flower that hasn't yet opened  
Oh good mother, we will find him again.

<sup>11</sup> Suverkrop, Bard. "Il Poveretto," n.d. <https://www-ipasource-com.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/il-poveretto-8112.html>

<sup>12</sup> Rossini, Péchés de vieillesse (Sins of Old Age), Chamber Music and Rarities, Maragonia, Alessandro, Giordano, Laura, Luciano, Alessandro, Taddia, Bruno. Naxos. CD Sleeve. Sue Baxter (All translations).

<sup>13</sup> Ezust, Emily. "Mattinata." Lieder Net Archive. Accessed November 10, 2019.

[https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=120241](https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=120241)

**Maurice Ravel** – “Don Quichotte à Dulcinée” (*Don Quixote to Dulcinea*)<sup>14</sup>

I. Chanson romanesque

Were you to tell that the earth  
Offended you with so much turning,  
I'd dispatch Panza to deal with it:  
You'd see it still and silenced.  
Were you to tell me that you are wearied  
By a sky too studded with stars -  
Tearing the divine order asunder,  
I'd scythe the night with a single blow.  
Were you to tell me that space itself,  
Thus denuded was not to your taste -  
As a god-like knight, with lance in hand,  
I'd sow the fleeting wind with stars.  
But were you to tell me that my blood  
Is more mine, my Lady, than your own,  
I'd pale at the admonishment  
And, blessing you, would die.  
O Dulcinea.

II. Chanson épique

Good Saint Michael who gives me leave  
To behold and hear my Lady,  
Good Saint Michael who deigns to elect me  
To please her and defend her,  
Good Saint Michael, descend, I pray,  
With Saint George onto the altar  
Of the Madonna robed in blue.  
With a heavenly beam bless my blade  
And its equal in purity  
And its equal in piety  
As in modesty and chastity:  
My Lady.  
(O great Saint George and great Saint Michael)  
Bless the angel watching over my vigil,  
My sweet Lady, so like unto Thee,  
O Madonna robed in blue!  
Amen.

III. Chanson à boire

A fig for the bastard, illustrious Lady,  
Who to discredit me in your sweet eyes,  
Says that love and old wine  
Are saddening my heart and soul!

I drink  
To joy!  
Joy is the only goal  
To which I go straight... when I'm... drunk!

A fig for the jealous wretch, O dusky mistress,  
Who whines and weeps and vows  
Always to be this lily-livered lover  
Who dilutes his drunkenness!

**Richard Strauss – Himmelsboten<sup>15</sup>**

The moonlight has already faded,  
Dark night has crept up on us;  
O noble dawn, arise,  
I place all my trust in you.

Phoebus, you beautiful herald,  
Have already harnessed his chariot,  
The sun's seeds are between the shafts,  
And you hold the reins.

You herald, Lord Lucifer,  
Are already hovering up in heaven,  
You have opened up the clouds  
And sprinkled the earth with your dew.

Oh pass right by her little bedchamber,  
Gently wake my sweetest love;  
Deliver her this message from me:  
My homage, my greeting and a good day.

Yet you must wake her most chastely,  
And so reveal my secret love;  
You must tell her how her servant watches  
So full of grief the whole night through.

Look at her flaxen hair for me,  
Her bare little neck, her bright little eyes,  
Kiss for me her red lips,  
And, if she permits, her round little breasts.

**Gustav Mahler – Ich ging mit lust<sup>16</sup>**

I walked with joy through a green wood;  
I heard the birds singing.  
they sang so youthfully, they sang so maturely,  
those small birds in the green wood!  
How gladly I listened to their singing!

Now sing, now sing, Lady Nightingale!  
sing by my sweetheart's house:  
just come when it's dark,  
when no one is on the street -  
then come to me!  
I will let you in.

The day was gone, night fell;  
he went to his sweetheart.  
He knocks so softly on the ring:  
"Eh, are you sleeping or are you awake, my dear?  
I have been standing here so long!"

"Even if you've been standing there so long,  
I haven't been sleeping;  
I let my thoughts wander:  
where is my beloved,  
where has he been for such a long time?"

<sup>15</sup> Suverkrop, Bard. "Himmelsboten," n.d. <https://www-ipasource-com.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/himmelsboten-8027.html>

<sup>16</sup> Phillips, Lois. Lieder Line By Line: and Word for Word. Revised. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996.

The moon gazes through the little window,  
at this tender, sweet love;  
the nightingale sang the whole night.  
You sleepily maiden, stay alert!  
Where did your beloved remain?

**Richard Strauss – All' mein gedanken**<sup>17</sup>

All my thoughts, my heart and my mind,  
Wander to where my beloved is.  
They go on their way despite wall and gate,  
No bolt, no ditch can stop them,  
Go high in the air like little birds,  
Needing no bridge over water or chasm,  
They find the town and they find the house,  
Find her window among all the others,  
And knock and call: 'Open up, let us in,  
We come from your sweetheart who sends his love.'

**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**<sup>18</sup>

I. Amid the Din of the Ball

Amid the din of the ball, suddenly,  
In the restless worldly bustle  
I caught a glimpse of you  
And your face was veiled by mystery;

Your betrayed your sadness.  
Your voice had an exquisite ring,  
Like the sound of a distant flute –  
Like the playful waves of the sea.

I was enraptured by your slender figure  
And by your pensive air;  
Your laughter, sad yet ringing,  
Still echoes in my heart.

During the lonely hours of night  
I love, weary, to lie down  
And imagine your sorrowful eyes  
And hear your cheerful voice.

In my sorrow, sleep enthrals me  
And carries me off into strange dreams...  
Do I love you then? I do not know –  
But it seems that I do!

<sup>17</sup> Phillips, Lois. op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> Tchaikovsky Songs, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Rodgers, Joan, Vignoles, Roger. Hyperion UK. CD Sleeve. ASIN: B000002ZRV. (All translations).

II. None but the lonely heart

Only one who knows loneliness  
Can understand my suffering and how I am tormented.  
I look into the distance... I have no strength, my eyes grow dim...  
He who knew and loved me is far away!  
Oh, only one who knows loneliness  
Can understand how I have suffered and how I am tormented.  
My heart is burning...  
One who knows loneliness  
Can understand how I have suffered and how I am tormented.

III. Does the day reign?

Does the day reign, or is it the darkness of night,  
In troubled dreams, in life's battle –  
The same fateful thought  
Pursues me everywhere and fills my life –  
Always of you! Always of you!  
Always, always, always of you!

With this thought ghosts of the past do not frighten me  
My heart is cheered once more with living...  
Faith, dreams and inspired words,  
All that is precious and holy in the heart –  
All is from you, all is from you,  
All is from you.

Whether my days be bright or cheerless,  
Whether I die soon, departing from life,  
I will know to the edge of my grave  
That my thoughts, feelings, songs and strength  
Are all for you, all for you  
My thoughts, feelings, songs and strength  
Are all for you, all for you.

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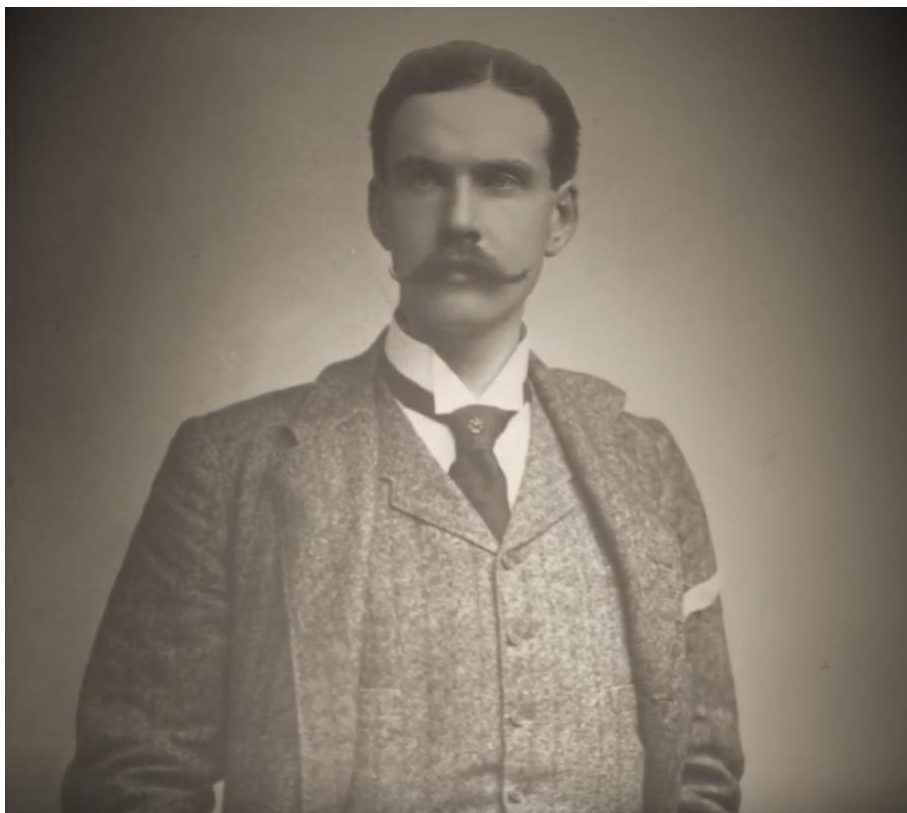
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Anonymous

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“The baritone has much to be thankful for.  
Nature has allowed him to be born without any inherent  
predilection for long hair or butterfly ties, and has endowed him  
with more actual gifts of tone colour, broadmindedness and sense of  
words than his fellows.”

