

**KARINA LUCAS, mezzo soprano
and SIMON LANE, piano
with NICHOLAS EVANS-PUGHE, viola**

7.30pm Arthur Marshall Room, Oundle School Great Hall

Sechs Lieder, Op.48

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

These songs were published in 1889. *Gruß* (Heine), familiar to us from Mendelssohn's setting, is a far more exuberant song in Grieg's version. *Dereinst, Gedanke mein* (Geibel), comes close to recitative, something that is rare in Grieg's songs. The vocal range is tiny – less than an octave – and there is something numbing about the melodic line, constantly interrupted by rests. Next *Lauf der Welt*, a charming folksong-like setting, marked *allegretto leggiero*, of an Uhland poem that had already attracted some twenty composers before Grieg tackled it in 1889. It is followed by *Die verschwiegene Nachtigall*, in which the composer instructs the singer to sing throughout 'con mezza voce', which suits the complexity of the text. *Zur Rosenzeit* is not the happy song that the title suggests, for Goethe's poem tells how the roses, picked by the suitor, were not worn by his beloved. Grieg expresses the emotional turbulence of the verse in the syncopated chords of the right hand accompaniment and the frequent discords; he further stresses the anguished mood by having the singer begin every phrase on the second beat of the bar. All such gloom is banished in the final number of the set, *Ein Traum*, which is nothing less than one ecstatic crescendo as the song moves from fond dream to rapturous reality, and ends in an unforgettable climax.

Two songs for Alto, Viola and Piano, Op.91

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

These songs were composed for the violinist Joseph Joachim and his wife, the singer Amelie Weiss. They contain an unusual element: the mezzo-soprano voice and piano are joined by a viola, a reflection of Brahms's preference for dark string tone. The viola is used like an obbligato instrument in a Baroque aria or cantata. In *Gestillte Sehnsucht* the viola creates the atmosphere of evening and then engages in a duet with the voice; in *Geistliches Wiegenlied* the viola plays as a counter-melody the old song for the Virgin Mary, 'Joseph, lieber, Joseph mein'.

Allerseelen; Ruhe, meine Seele!; Das Rosenband; Befreit; Zueignung

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Allerseelen is dedicated to All Souls Day. The tranquillo marking of the piano part belies the commotion in the text: the woman tries

throughout to relive the joyous moments she used to spend with her now departed lover, and almost succeeds in convincing herself that he is still with her. Then the heartbreaking realisation comes that he is indeed dead and she is alone. *Ruhe, meine Seele!* is perhaps the most impressive of the four songs, which Strauss wrote as a wedding present for his wife, the soprano Pauline de Ahna. *Das Rosenband* was originally conceived for orchestra, and depicts a lover chaining his beloved with roses while she sleeps. 'Befreit' is the words of a man speaking to his dying wife, the title referring to the devotion of the loving couple, which has 'freed' them from suffering. There is a whiff of salon music about *Zueignung*, written when Strauss was twenty, and an unmistakable Straussian *Schwung*. Note how the refrain 'Habe Dank' is handled differently in each verse.

Interval

Kinderszenen (Scenes from Childhood), Op.15

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

These works for piano, composed in 1838, are playful and childlike, and in a wonderfully fresh way capture the innocence of childhood. 'Träumerei', one of the most famous piano pieces ever written, exists in myriad forms and transcriptions and has been the favourite encore of a number of renowned pianists.

Four Last Songs

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

It has been suggested that these songs, composed between 1954 and 1958, were originally intended to be two separate song cycles, but the composer's death in 1958 left both cycles unfinished. In 1960 they were assembled by the composer's widow, Ursula Vaughan Williams, who also wrote the poems. 'Procris' is about a woman who sneaks up on her husband as he hunts in the woods, for she suspects he has a secret lover. Startled by noises behind him, he turns and shoots Procris with his bow. The song contains many shifts in tonality, similar to the last song in the cycle, 'Menelaus', where Menelaus describes the things Odysseus must do in order to return home from war. The descending and ascending scales at the beginning suggest the playing of a lyre, which evokes an image of ancient storytelling and music-making. 'Tired' and 'Hands, Eyes, and Heart' are textually and musically the most closely related of the set. Both describe a state of self-abandonment in favour of a life devoted to another.

Siete Canciones Populares Espanolas

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

This cycle of seven songs incorporates popular dance and song styles from various regions of Spain. 'Paño moruno', from the

region of Murcia, tells the story of a dark cloth in a store window, which will be sold at a discount because it is stained, the cloth being a metaphor for a woman's soiled honour. 'Seguidilla murciana' is a characteristic dance form, also from the Murcia region. The song elaborates on the saying that people who live in glass houses should not throw stones. The melismas give the song a mocking tone, and de Falla heightens the intensity of the song through his use of the unrelenting triplets in the piano. 'Asturiana', originating from Asturias, is a languid, melancholy piece with a mesmerising accompaniment. The centrepiece of the song cycle is 'Jota', based on a dance form from Aragon. 'Nana', a lullaby, uses rhythmic alternation between the voice and piano to create a rocking rhythm designed to soothe a baby to sleep. 'Canción' is a song of anger. The character lashes out after being betrayed. Through his use of contrasting dynamics, de Falla conveys rage and violence as well as intense and painful emotions. 'Polo' is a song of pain, derived from the 'cante jondo', a kind of gypsy song. Sequences of melismas express the character's moans of anguish, which ride on the edge of being out of control.



Karina Lucas is from London and is of Spanish and English parentage. She trained at the Royal Northern College of Music and the National Opera Studio. Karina's most recent opera roles include: Third Lady *Die Zauberflöte* and Pinocchio *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Opera North); Witch *Macbeth*, Rosina (cover) *Il Barbiere*

di Siviglia and Zerlina (cover) *Don Giovanni* (Scottish Opera); Sara in Jonathan Dove's *Tobias and the Angel* at the Young Vic and at Oundle Festival. She was chosen to be a young artiste at the Aix-en-Provence Summer Festival in 2006 and as a Park Lane Group Young Artist made her debut at the Purcell Room in January 2007 with Simon Lane. This season Karina returns to Grange Park Opera to sing Nymph in *Rusalka* and Wowkle in *La Fanciulla del West*.



Simon Lane is in great demand as a chamber musician, performing regularly at major venues and festivals across the UK. In January 2007 Simon was invited to take part in the Park Lane Group New Year Series, giving recitals with both Karina Lucas and violinist Katie Stillman. Simon has a keen interest

in working with singers and has recently set up a series of song concerts at St Mary-le-Bow Church, London. Forthcoming engagements also include performances with cellists Nathaniel Boyd, Guy Johnston, Reinoud Ford and Rowena Calvert, violinist Naoko Miyamoto and the Navarra Quartet. Simon is currently studying at the Royal Academy with Michael Dussek and Julius Drake on a Leverhulme Trust scholarship.



Nicholas Evans-Pughe studied violin at the Royal Academy of Music, graduating in 1987. Nicholas has taught for many years, including posts as Head of Strings at The Latymer School, Edmonton, and Director of Strings of Hitchin, and now teaches for the Luton and Hertfordshire Music Services. He has a busy freelance orchestral and chamber playing career as both

violinist and violist and is currently principal viola with the Amersham Festival Orchestra and New English Orchestra.

Refreshments available before the concert and during the interval.

Concert ends at approximately 9.45pm.