

THE SOLSTICE TRIO



CASTLETOWN
HOUSE
12 AUGUST 2012

THE SOLSTICE TRIO was founded in 2006 to explore the repertoire of art-songs in the English-language. The group performs works by composers of the 20th and 21st century, a genre often under-represented in the vocal repertoire. They have performed at events and festivals nationally, including Carrick-on-Shannon Water Music Festival, and are regular visitors to Castletown House, Celbridge, Co. Kildare. All members of the group are active professionals in music performance, research and education.

The Solstice Trio take its name from the Solstice Arts Centre, where they first performed together in 2006. The name also refers to the winter solstice event at Newgrange, Co. Meath. All members of the trio reside in County Meath.

The group consists of David Burke (piano), Ephrem Feeley (baritone) and Giovanna Feeley (soprano).

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TEXTS

Three Frost Songs

Words: Robert Frost

Music: Ephrem Feeley

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake,
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth.

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had really worn them about the same.

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Spring Pools

These pools that, though in forests, still reflect
The total sky almost without defect,
And like the flowers beside them, chill and shiver,
Will like the flowers beside them soon be gone,
And yet not out by any brook or river,
But up by roots to bring dark foliage on.
The trees that have it in their pent-up buds
To darken nature and be summer woods---
Let them think twice before they use their powers
To blot out and drink up and sweep away
These flowery waters and these watery flowers
From snow that melted only yesterday.

Three Tennyson Songs

Words: Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Music: Ephrem Feeley

The Throstle

"Summer is coming, summer is coming,
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again."
Yes, my wild little poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it so gladly.
"New, new, new, new!"
Is it then so new that you should carol so madly?

"Love again, song again,
nest again, young again."
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend!
See, there is hardly a daisy.

"Here again, here, here, here, happy year!"
O warble unbidden, unchidden,
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
And all the winters are hidden.

Miriam's Song

Mellow moon of heaven, bright in blue.
Moon of married hearts, hear me you.
Twelve times in the year, bring me bliss,
Globing honey moons, bright as this.
Moon you fade at times from the night.
Young again, you grow out of sight.
Silver crescent curve, coming soon,
Globe again, and make honey-moon.
Shall not my love last, moon with you,
For ten thousand years, old and new?

Sweet and Low

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea.
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea.
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon.
Rest, rest on mother's breast;
Father will come to thee soon.
Father will come to his babe in the nest.
Silver sails all out of the west,
Under the silver moon.
Sleep my little one, sleep my pretty one, sleep.

Six Songs by Gerald Finzi

Fear No More the Heat o' the Sun

Words: William Shakespeare

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke.
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak.
The sceptre, learning, physic must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone.
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan.
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have,
And renowned be thy grave.

O Mistress Mine

Words: William Shakespeare

O Mistress mine! Where are you roaming?
Oh, stay and hear your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting;
Every 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.

Ferry Me Across the Water

Words: Christina Rossetti

"Ferry me across the water, do boatman, do."
"If you've a penny in your purse, I'll ferry you."

"I have a penny in my purse, and my eyes are blue,
So ferry me across the water, do boatman, do."

"Step into my ferry boat, be they black or blue,
And for the penny in your purse, I'll ferry you."

~ INTERVAL ~

Rollicum-Rorum

Words: Thomas Hardy

When lawyers strive to heal a breach,
And parsons practice what they preach;
Then Boney he'll come pouncing down,
And march his men on London town!
Rollicum-rorum, tollolorum,
Rollicum-rorum, tollollay,
Rollicum-rorum, tollolorum,
Rollicum-rorum, tollollay.

When justices hold equal scales,
And rogues are only found in jails;
Then ...

When rich men find their wealth a curse,
And fill therewith the poor man's purse,
Then ...

When husbands with their wives agree,
And maids won't wed from modesty,
Then ...

To Lizbie Browne

Words: Thomas Hardy

Dear Lizbie Browne, where are you now?
In sun in rain?
Or is your brow past joy, past pain,
Dear Lizbie Browne?

Sweet Lizbie Browne, how you could smile,
How you could sing!
How archly wile in glance-giving,
Sweet Lizbie Browne!

And, Lizbie Browne, who else had hair
Bay-red as yours,
Or flesh so fair bred out of doors,
Sweet Lizbie Browne?

When, Lizbie Browne, you had just begun
To be endeared by stealth to one,
You disappeared,
My Lizbie Browne!

Ay, Lizbie Browne, so swift your life,
And mine so slow,
You were a wife ere I could show love,
Lizbie Browne.

Still, Lizbie Browne, you won, they said
The best of men
When you were wed, where went you then,
O Lizbie Browne?

Dear Lizbie Browne, I should have thought,
“Girls ripen fast,”
And coaxed and caught you ere you passed,
Dear Lizbie Browne!

But, Lizbie Browne, I let you slip,
Shaped not a sign,
Touched never your lip with lip of mine,
Lost Lizbie Browne!

So, Lizbie Browne, when on a day
Men speak of me as not,
You’ll say, “And who was he?”
Yes, Lizbie Browne!

Boy Johnny

Words: Christina Rossetti

“If you’ll busk you as a bride, and make ready,
It’s I will wed you with a ring, O fair lady.”
“Shall I busk me as bride, I so bonny,
For you to wed me with a ring, O boy Johnny?”

“When you’ve busked you as a bride and made ready,
Who else is there to marry you, O fair lady?”
“I will find my lover out, I so bonny,
And you shall bear my wedding train, O boy Johnny?”

Five Songs by John Ireland

When I am Dead, my Dearest

Words: Christina Rossetti

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me,
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree.
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dew-drops wet,
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise, nor set,
Haply I may remember, and haply may forget.

Sea Fever

Words: John Masefield

I must go down to the seas again,
To the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship, and a star to steer her by.,
And the wheel’s kick and the wind’s song
And the white sail’s shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea’s face,
And a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again,
For the call of the running tide
Is a wild call, and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day
With the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume,
And the seagulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again,
To the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull’s way and the whale’s way,
Where the wind’s like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn
From a laughing fellow rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream
When the long trick’s over.

What art Thou Thinking Of

Words: Christina Rossetti

“What art thou thinking of,” said the mother,
“What art thou thinking of, my child?”
“I am thinking of heav’n,” he answered her,
And looked up in her face and smiled.

“And what didst thou think of heav’n?”
She said: “Tell me, my little one.”
“Oh, I thought that there the flowers never fade,
That there never sets the sun.”

“And wouldst thou love to go thither,
My child, thither wouldst thou love to go,
And leave the pretty flowers that wither,
And the sun that sets below?”

Santa Chiara, Palm Sunday; Naples

Words: Arthur Symons

Because it is the day of Palms, carry a palm for me.
Carry a palm in Santa Chiara, and I will watch the sea;
There are no palms in Santa Chiara,
Today or any day for me.

I sit and watch the little sail lean sideways on the sea.
The sea is blue from here to Sorrento
And the seawind comes to me,
And I see the white clouds lift from Sorrento
And the dark sail lean upon the sea.

I have grown tired of all these things,
And what is left for me?
I have no place in Santa Chiara,
There is no peace upon the sea;
But carry a palm in Santa Chiara, carry a palm for me.

In Praise of May

Words: Thomas Morley

Now is the month of Maying,
When merry lads are playing,
Each with his bonny lass
Upon the greeny, greeny grass. Fa la la...

The Spring, clad all in gladness,
Doth laugh at winter's sadness,
And to the bagpipe's sound
The nymph's tread out their ground. Fa la la...

Fie then, why sit we musing,
Youth's sweet delight refusing?
Say, dainty nymphs and speak,
Shall we play barley-break? Fa la la...

~ INTERVAL ~

Three Songs from “Songs of Love and Loss”

Music: Ephrem Feeley

The First Day

Words: Christina Rossetti

I wish I could remember the first day,
First hour, first moment of your meeting me,
If bright or dim the season it might be,
Summer or winter for aught I can say.
So unrecorded did it slip away,
So blind was I to see and to foresee,
So dull to mark the budding of my tree
That would not blossom yet, for many a May.

If only I could recollect it,
Such a day, a day of days!
I let it come and go,
As traceless as a thaw of bygone snow.
It seemed to mean so little, meant so much.
If only now I could recall that touch.
First touch of hand in hand,
Did one but know!

Because She Would Ask Me Why I Love Her

Words: Christopher John Brennan

If questioning would make us wise,
No eyes would ever gaze in eyes;
If all our tale was told in speech,
No mouths would wander each to each.

Were spirits free from mortal mesh,
And love not bound in hearts of flesh,
No aching breasts would yearn to meet,
And find their ecstasy complete?

For who is there that lives and knows
The secret power by which he grows?
Were knowledge all, what were our need
To thrill and faint and sweetly bleed?

Then seek not, sweet, the “If” and “Why?”;
I love you now until I die.
For I must love because I live,
And life in me is what you give.

At Rest

Words: Sara Teasdale

I have remembered beauty in the night,
Against black silences I waked to see
A shower of sunlight over Italy,
And green Ravello dreaming on her height.

I have remembered music in the dark,
The clean swift brightness of a fugue of Bach's.
And running water singing on the rocks,
When once in English woods I heard a lark.

But all remembered beauty is no more
Than a vague prelude to the thought of you.
You are the rarest soul I ever knew,
Lover of beauty, knightliest and best.

My thoughts seek you as waves that seek the shore,
And when I think of you, I am at rest.

Two Tennyson Songs

Words: Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Music: Ephrem Feeley

And Kiss Again with Tears

As through the land at eve we went,
And plucked the ripened ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out, I know not why,
And kissed again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears
When we fall out with those we love,
And kiss again with tears.
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kissed again with tears.

The Kraken

Below the thunders of the upper deep,
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep,
The Kraken sleepeth.
Faintest sunlights flee about his shadowy sides;
Above him swell huge sponges of
Millennial growth and height;
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Unnumbered and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.

There hath he lain for ages and will lie,
Battening upon huge seaworms in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
Then roaring he will rise,
And on the surface die.

Three Songs by Lee Hoiby

Lady of the Harbor

Words: Emma Lazarus

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless,
Tempest-tossed to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

Jabberwocky

Words: Lewis Carroll

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought.
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One! Two! One! Two!
And through and through
The vorpal blade went snickersnack! Snickersnack!
He left it dead, and with its head,
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Calooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves ...

The Lamb

Words: William Blake

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice:

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee.
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek and He is mild, He became a little
child:
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee.

~ INTERVAL ~

To One Weeping

Words: Francis Ledwidge

Music: Ephrem Feeley

Maiden, these are sacred tears,
Let me not disturb your grief,
Had I but your bosom's tears,
I should weep, nor seek relief.

My woe is a silent woe
Till I give it measured rhyme,
When the blackbird's flute is low
In my heart at singing time.

Dusk

Words: Anonymous

Music: Cecil Armstrong Gibbs

Velvet the sky, ghostly the roses glow,
Sunset still burns out in the bay.
High overhead glimmers the evening star,
Dusk dreams o'er the dying day.

Ah! Now my sad heart with loneliness aches.
Why must my true heart so long be away?

Breathless the air, heavy the scent of flowers,
Red in the west ceases to burn.
Only the star, shining more brightly now,
Fills me with hope that my love will return.

O Waly, Waly

Words: Anonymous

Music: Benjamin Britten

The water is wide, I cannot get o'er,
And neither have I wings to fly.
Give me a boat that will carry two,
And both shall row, my love and I.

O down in the meadows the other day,
A-gathering flowers both fine and gay,
A-gathering flowers both red and blue,
I little thought what love can do.

I leaned my back against some oak
Thinking that he was a trusty tree,
But first he bended, and then he broke;
And so did my false love to me.

A ship there is, and she sails the sea,
She's loaded deep as deep can be,
But not so deep as the love I'm in:
I know not if I sink or swim.

O love is handsome and love is fine,
And love's a jewel while it is new,
But when it is old, it groweth cold,
And fades away like morning dew.

Three Yeats Songs

Words: William Butler Yeats

Down by the Salley Gardens

Music: Rebecca Clarke

Down by the salley gardens
My love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens
With little snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy
As the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish,
With her would not agree.

In a field by the river
My love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder
She laid her snow-white hand.
She bid me take life easy
As the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish,
And now am full of tears.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

Music: Ephrem Feeley

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there,
Of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there,
A hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there,
For peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning
To where the cricket sings.
There midnight's all a glimmer,
And noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping
With low sounds by the shore:
While I stand on the roadway,
Or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

Down by the Salley Gardens

Melody: Irish Traditional

Arrangement Benjamin Britten

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet.
She passed the salley gardens
With little snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy
As the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish,
With her would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder
She laid her snow-white hand.
She bid me take life easy
As the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish,
And now am full of tears.

Hope is the Thing with Feathers

Words: Emily Dickinson.

Music: Ephrem Feeley

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops all.

And sweetest in the gale is heard,
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chillest land,
And on the strangest sea,
Yet never in extremity
It asked a thing of me.