

Faculty Recital Program Notes- January 30th, 2026

An die ferne Geliebte (To the distant beloved)¹ – Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Ludwig van Beethoven is often not our first thought when thinking of song. However, Beethoven wrote about seventy songs throughout his life, his first being published when he was thirteen. This cycle of six songs composed in 1816 represents the first great Romantic song cycle also referred to as *Liederkreis*. The cycle was composed during a less productive period for Beethoven. Beethoven had been employed and busy arranging Scottish folksongs for George Thompson, ultimately arranging 150. The cycle is meticulously organized and connected into one ‘mega song’ using transitions and interludes. The cycle begins in E flat major and satisfyingly returns to this key after a series of key changes and transitions. This work might be described as one of the most influential of all Beethoven’s works on his contemporaries. Robert Schumann, known for further developing the song cycle, quotes the sixth song of Beethoven’s cycle in his Fantasy in C major, paying homage to Beethoven.²

The poetic text of this cycle was written by the young medical student and amateur musician Aloys Jeitteles (1794 – 1858).³ Jeitteles and Beethoven were acquaintances and it is unclear if Jeitteles wrote these poems for Beethoven or if they were set to music by Beethoven.⁴ What is clear is Beethoven’s gratitude for Jeitteles poetry. The first edition of the cycle to be published carries the phrase printed below the title, a circle of songs for Aloys Jeittels.⁵ The cyclical nature of the this circle of songs is supported not only by the musical features mentioned above but also the circular nature of the text. The cycles first and last song ends with the following text:

Und ein liebend Herz erreicht
Was ein liebend Herz geweiht!

And a loving heart is reached
By what a loving heart has hallowed!

The poetry uses images of nature to highlight the separation of the singer from his beloved. Different aspects of nature are used to either bring messages of the singers love and pain to the beloved like brooks, clouds, and wind. Song five sees the return of spring where the singer sees a variety of life and love returning but realizes his love will have no springtime. The cycle ends resolutely with a desire for these songs to reach the beloved with a sense of longing.

¹ Translations by Richard Stokes, author of *The Book of Lieder* (Faber, 2005)

² “An die ferne Geliebte,” LA Philharmonic Program Notes, accessed January 12th, 2026, <https://www.laphil.com/musicdb/pieces/991/an-die-ferne-geliebte>

³ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2006), 48.

⁴ “An die ferne Geliebte,” LA Philharmonic

⁵ Kimball, *Song*, 48.

Auf dem Hügel sitz ich spähend

Auf dem Hügel sitz ich spähend
In das blaue Nebelland,
Nach den fernen Triften sehend,
Wo ich dich, Geliebte, fand.
Weit bin ich von dir geschieden,
Trennend liegen Berg und Tal
Zwischen uns und unserm Frieden,
Unserm Glück und unsrer Qual.
Ach, den Blick kannst du nicht sehen,
Der zu dir so glühend eilt,
Und die Seufzer, sie verwehen
In dem Raume, der uns teilt.
Will denn nichts mehr zu dir dringen,
Nichts der Liebe Bote sein?
Singen will ich, Lieder singen,
Die dir klagen meine Pein!
Denn vor Liebesklang entweicht
Jeder Raum und jede Zeit,
Und ein liebend Herz erreicht
Was ein liebend Herz geweiht!

I sit on the hill, gazing

I sit on the hill, gazing
Into the misty blue countryside,
Towards the distant meadows
Where, my love, I first found you.
Now I'm far away from you,
Mountain and valley intervene
Between us and our peace,
Our happiness and our pain.
Ah, you cannot see the fiery gaze
That wings its way towards you,
And my sighs are lost
In the space that comes between us.
Will nothing ever reach you again?
Will nothing be love's messenger?
I shall sing, sing songs
That speak to you of my distress!
For sounds of singing put to flight
All space and all time;
And a loving heart is reached
By what a loving heart has hallowed!

Wo die Berge so blau

Wo die Berge so blau
Aus dem nebligen Grau
Schauen herein,
Wo die Sonne verglüht,
Wo die Wolke umzieht,
Möchte ich sein!
Dort im ruhigen Tal
Schweigen Schmerzen und Qual.
Wo im Gestein
Still die Primel dort sinnt,
Weht so leise der Wind,
Möchte ich sein!
Hin zum sinnigen Wald
Drängt mich Liebesgewalt,
Innere Pein.
Ach, mich zög's nicht von hier,
Könnt ich, Traute, bei dir
Ewiglich sein!

Where the blue mountains

Where the blue mountains
From the misty grey
Look out towards me,
Where the sun's glow fades,
Where the clouds scud by –
There would I be!
There, in the peaceful valley,
Pain and torment cease.
Where among the rocks
The primrose meditates in silence,
And the wind blows so softly –
There would I be!
I am driven to the musing wood
By the power of love,
Inner pain.
Ah, nothing could tempt me from here,
If I were able, my love,
To be with you eternally!

Leichte Segler in den Höhen

Leichte Segler in den Höhen,
Und du, Bächlein klein und schmal,
Könnt mein Liebchen ihr erspähen,
Grüßt sie mir viel tausendmal.
Seht ihr, Wolken, sie dann gehen
Sinnend in dem stillen Tal,
Laßt mein Bild vor ihr entstehen
In dem luft'gen Himmelssaal.
Wird sie an den Büschen stehen,
Die nun herbstlich falb und kahl.
Klagt ihr, wie mir ist geschehen,
Klagt ihr, Vöglein, meine Qual.
Stille Weste, bringt im Wehen
Hin zu meiner Herzenswahl
Meine Seufzer, die vergehen
Wie der Sonne letzter Strahl.
Flüstr' ihr zu mein Liebesflehen,
Laß sie, Bächlein klein und schmal,
Treu in deinen Wogen sehen
Meine Tränen ohne Zahl!

Diese Wolken in den Höhen

Diese Wolken in den Höhen,
Dieser Vöglein muntre Zug,
Werden dich, o Huldin, sehen.
Nehmt mich mit im leichten Flug!
Diese Weste werden spielen
Scherzend dir um Wang' und Brust,
In den seidnen Locken wühlen. –
Teilt ich mit euch diese Lust!
Hin zu dir von jenen Hügeln
Emsig dieses Bächlein eilt.
Wird ihr Bild sich in dir spiegeln,
Fließ zurück dann unverweilt!

Light clouds sailing on high

Light clouds sailing on high,
And you, narrow little brook,
If you catch sight of my love,
Greet her a thousand times.
If, clouds, you see her walking
Thoughtful in the silent valley,
Let my image loom before her
In the airy vaults of heaven.
If she be standing by the bushes
Autumn has turned fallow and bare,
Pour out to her my fate,
Pour out, you birds, my torment.
Soft west winds, waft my sighs
To her my heart has chosen –
Sighs that fade away
Like the sun's last ray.
Whisper to her my entreaties,
Let her, narrow little brook,
Truly see in your ripples
My never-ending tears!

These clouds on high

These clouds on high,
This cheerful flight of birds
Will see you, O gracious one.
Take me lightly winging too!
These west winds will playfully
Blow about your cheeks and breast,
Will ruffle your silken tresses. –
Would I might share that joy!
This brooklet hastens eagerly
To you from those hills.
If she's reflected in you,
Flows directly back to me!

Es kehret der Maien, es blühet die Au

Es kehret der Maien,
Es blühet die Au,
Die Lüfte, sie wehen
So milde, so lau,
Geschwätzig die Bäche nun rinnen.
Die Schwalbe, die kehret
Zum wirtlichen Dach,
Sie baut sich so emsig
Ihr bräutlich Gemach,
Die Liebe soll wohnen da drinnen.
Sie bringt sich geschäftig
Von kreuz und von Quer
Manch weicheres Stück
Zu dem Brautbett hieher,
Manch wärmendes Stück
für die Kleinen.
Nun wohnen die Gatten
Beisammen so treu,
Was Winter geschieden,
Verband nun der Mai,
Was liebet, das weiß er zu einen.
Es kehret der Maien,
Es blühet die Au.
Die Lüfte, sie wehen
So milde, so lau;
Nur ich kann nicht ziehen von hinnen.
Wenn alles, was liebet,
Der Frühling vereint,
Nur unserer Liebe
Kein Frühling erscheint,
Und Tränen sind all ihr Gewinnen.

May returns, the meadow blooms.

May returns,
The meadow blooms.
The breezes blow
So gentle, so mild,
The babbling brooks flow again,
The swallow returns
To its rooftop home,
And eagerly builds
Her bridal chamber,
Where love shall dwell.
She busily brings
From every direction
Many soft scraps
For the bridal bed,
Many warm scraps
for her young.
Now the pair lives
Faithfully together,
What winter parted,
May has joined,
For May can unite all who love.
May returns,
The meadow blooms.
The breezes blow
So gentle, so mild;
I alone cannot move on.
When spring unites
All lovers,
Our love alone
Knows no spring,
And tears are its only gain.

Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder

Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder,
Die ich dir, Geliebte, sang,
Singe sie dann abends wieder
Zu der Laute süßem Klang!
Wenn das Dämmerungsrot dann zieht
Nach dem stillen blauen See,
Und sein letzter Strahl verglühet
Hinter jener Bergeshöh;

Und du singst, was ich gesungen,
Was mir aus der vollen Brust
Ohne Kunstgepräng erklungen,
Nur der Sehnsucht sich bewußt:
Dann vor diesen Liedern weicht
Was geschieden uns so weit,
Und ein liebend Herz erreicht
Was ein liebend Herz geweiht!

Accept, then, these songs

Accept, then, these songs
I sang for you, beloved;
Sing them again at evening
To the lute's sweet sound!
As the red light of evening draws
Towards the calm blue lake,
And its last rays fade
Behind those mountain heights;

And you sing what I sang
From a full heart
With no display of art,
Aware only of longing:
Then, at these songs,
The distance that parted us shall recede,
And a loving heart be reached
By what a loving heart has hallowed!

Four Scottish Songs – Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Ottorino Respighi was an Italian composer known mostly for his orchestral works. Respighi studied with Rimsky-Korsakov while playing principal viola in the Imperial Opera Orchestra in St. Petersburg. Korsakov's influence can be seen on his orchestral scores. Respighi also composed more than sixty songs.⁶ An avid researcher and lover of poetry drew Respighi not only to Italian texts but texts from Armenia, France, and Scotland.⁷ His works for voice and piano treat the voice as an instrument, mingling it with the piano accompaniments which are often orchestral in style.⁸

The Four Scottish Songs make use of the Scottish dialect and make mention of long-forgotten Jacobite leaders, and Amulrie, a village in Perthshire. These songs were dedicated to Felix Lamond who was the founder of the music department at the American Academy in Rome. Respighi, much like Benjamin Britten, harmonized these four folk melodies transforming them into art songs.⁹

⁶ Kimball, *Song*, 437.

⁷ Reinild Mees, liner notes to Ottorino Respighi, *Four Scottish Songs*, performed by Leonardo de Lisi, tenor and Reinild Mees, piano, Channel Classics, 3.

⁸ Kimball, *Song*, 437.

⁹ Mees, liner notes, 5.

Who are these children? – Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Who are these children? Is Benjamin Britten's last song cycle and sets the words of William Soutar. Soutar wrote his longer, more serious poems, in English while writing poems for children in Scots. The juxtaposition of these poems highlights different perspectives of the outside warring world especially from the perspective of children. The English poems are darker and anguished while the Scottish poems are innocent and preoccupied with domestic issues. The English poems are musically set effectively. Britten creates dream like landscapes, pictures of the English countryside during war, and includes what sounds like air raid sirens in the piano accompaniment in song eleven, "The Children."

The use of the Scots dialect places these songs in specific locations. The riddle songs resemble children playing and singing riddles in the playground. The natural beauty of the Scottish countryside during summer is featured in 'A Laddie's Sang' while an unfortunate boy is clouted by teacher, mother, father, and brother all in the same day in 'A Black Day.' One child is employed as a pantry-laddie by the local gentry in 'The Larky Lad.' One child cuddles up to sleep in 'Bed-Time,' while a whole family in 'Supper' meets for a meal during difficult times.¹⁰ Some interesting words appear and are featured in these Scottish poems. A key for these terms is below.¹¹

II. A Laddie's Sang

- Gowdan = Golden
- Whin = Furze
- Gowk = Cuckoo
- Birken-schaw = Birch copse
- Peesies = Peewits
- Linn = Waterfall
- Lowps = Leaps

IV. Black Day

- Skelp = Smack
- Copin owre the kail = Spilling the Broth
- Clourin = Bashing

V. Bed-Time

- Dargie day – Working Day

- Wabster body = Spider

VIII. The Larky Lad

- Muckle = Great
- Plisky = Cheeky
- Royd = Mischievous

X. Supper

- Steepies = curds
- Moolie = crumbly
- Stovies = Potatoes
- Steers the pat = Stirs the pot
- Yett = Gate

XII. The Auld Aik

- Aik = Oak

¹⁰ Graham Johnson, "Voice and Piano," in *The Britten Companion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 304-306.