



International
Presentations of
Music & Dance

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The Songmakers' Almanac

GRAHAM JOHNSON, *Director and Pianist*

JENNIFER SMITH, *Soprano* PENELOPE WALKER, *Mezzo-soprano*

RICHARD JACKSON, *Baritone*

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, FEBRUARY 9, 1986, AT 4:00
RACKHAM AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

A Tale of Two Cities: A Song Portrait of Paris and London

Prologue to Paris

Sous le ciel de Paris HUBERT GIRAUD

The Geography of Paris

Voyage à Paris
Montparnasse
La Grenouillère
Avant le cinéma
Hôtel
Vous n'écrivez plus? } FRANCIS POULENC

The Paris Underworld

L'Anguille POULENC
Allons plus vite POULENC
Ballade des femmes de Paris CLAUDE DEBUSSY
Complainte de la Seine KURT WEILL

Americans in Paris

Paris in New York VERNON DUKE
How 'ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm? WALTER DONALDSON

INTERMISSION

Prologue to London

A Transport of Delight MICHAEL FLANDERS and DONALD SWANN

The Geography of London

Rural Beauty of Vauxhall Gardens WILLIAM BOYCE
Down at the Old Bull and Bush HARRY VON TILZER
Covent Garden C. ARMSTRONG GIBBS
Let's all go down the Strand CASTLING and MURRAY
Rhyme WILLIAM WALTON

The London Underworld

Il pleure dans mon coeur FREDERICK DELIUS
Hyde Park POULENC
West London CHARLES IVES
Underneath the Arches BUD FLANAGAN
You've got to pick a pocket or two LIONEL BART

London Pride

Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner HUBERT GREGG
London Pride NOEL COWARD

TRANSLATIONS AND TEXTS

Prologue to Paris

Sous le ciel de Paris (Jean Drejac), Girard — Under the Parisian sky, a song takes flight; it was born today in the heart of a boy. Under the Parisian sky, lovers walk; their happiness is built on air made for them. Under the bridge of Bercy, a philosopher is sitting, two musicians, a few idlers, then millions of people. Under the Parisian sky, the people in love with their ancient city shall sing their hymn until the evening.

Near Notre Dame a drama brews up at times, yes, but at Paname everything can be settled. Some rays of light from the summer sky, the accordion of a bargeman, hope flourishes in the Parisian sky. But the Parisian sky is not cruel for long; to absolve itself it offers a rainbow.

The Geography of Paris — music by Poulenc

Voyage à Paris (Guillaume Apollinaire), No. 4 of *Banalités* — Ah! how charming to leave a dreary place for Paris, delightful Paris, that once upon a time love must have created.

Montparnasse (Apollinaire). This poem is an autobiographical sketch of the poet's arrival in Paris from the Rhineland in 1912:

O door of the hotel with two green plants, green which will never bear any flowers, where are my fruits? Where do I plant myself? O door of the hotel an angel stands in front of you distributing prospectuses, virtue has never been so well defended, give me for ever a room by the week; bearded angel you are really a lyric poet from Germany who wants to know Paris, you know on its pavement these lines on which one must not step and you dream of going to pass your Sunday at Garches.

It is rather sultry and your hair is long, O good little poet a bit stupid and too blond, your eyes so much resemble these two big balloons that float away in the pure air at random.

La Grenouillère (Apollinaire). "La Grenouillère" was the name of a small island in the Seine on the outskirts of Paris, a favorite haunt of writers and painters during the time of Maupassant and Renoir.

By the shore of the isle one sees the empty boats that bump against each other, and now, neither on Sunday nor on weekdays neither the painters nor Maupassant set out with bare arms in their boats with their women friends full-bosomed and stupid as a cabbage; little boats you make me very sad by the shore of the isle.

Avant le cinéma (Apollinaire), No. 3 of *Quatre Poèmes* — And then this evening we'll go to the cinema. What kind of artists are they, they are no longer those who cultivate the Fine Arts, not those who go in for Art, poetic art or even music; the Artists are actors and actresses.

If we were the Artists we would not say the cinema, we would say the ciné. But if we were old professors from the provinces, we would say neither ciné nor cinema, but cinématographe! Dear me, we must have good taste.

Hôtel (Apollinaire) from *Banalités* — My room is shaped like a cage, the sun puts its arms through the window. But I want to smoke to make smoke pictures I light at the fire of the day my cigarette; I do not want to work, I want to smoke.

Vous n'écrivez plus? (Max Jacob), No. 2 of *Parisiana* — Did you know me newspaper-seller at Barbes and under the metro, to persist concerning the Institute I would have needed courage, my novels have neither top nor tale and I have no character.

Did you know me chestnut-seller at the corner of the rue Coquillière, I gave my apron back (I left the job), the other is green. Did you know me ticket-seller, latrine-cleaner. I say it without bitterness or spite, assistant at the ginger bread fair, defender at the police court, officer, as it is called office at Le Richelieu and La Paix. (The kitchen pantry in those famous Parisian restaurants where the washing-up is done.)

The Paris Underworld

L'Anguille (Apollinaire), No. 1 of *Quatre Poèmes*, Poulenc — Jeanne Houhou the nice creature is dead between very white sheets, not only Bebert known as the Eel, Narcisse and Hubert the whitening close to her played their card game. And the swanker of Clichy with the red eyes of the spewer repeats My Vichy water goes in the prison van without making a fuss.

Eyes dancing like angels she laughed, she laughed, her eyes very blue, her teeth very white, if you knew, if you knew all that we shall do on Sunday.

Allons plus vite (Apollinaire), No. 2 of *Deux Poèmes*, Poulenc — And the evening comes and the lilies die, beautiful sky see my suffering which you send to me, a night of melancholy. Smile child, O sister listen, poor folk walk on the high road, O deceptive forest risen at my voice, the flames which burn souls. On the Boulevard de Grenelle the workers and the employers, trees of maytime this lace, do not flaunt it so much, come along make haste for God's sake, come along make haste.

All the telegraph poles reach yonder along the quay on the breast of our Republic they have put this bouquet of lilies of the valley which grew densely along the quay; come along, make haste for God's sake. Simpering bashful Pauline the workers and the employers. O yes, beautiful humbug your brother, come along, make haste for God's sake.

Ballade des femmes de Paris (François Villon), No. 3 of *Trois Ballades de François Villon*, Debussy — Though we reckon that Florentine and Venetian women are good talkers, good enough to be town-criers, even the older ones; but not forgetting Lombards, Romans, Genoese, God save me, women from Piedmont or Savoy; only in Paris can they really talk!

They say that the Neapolitans have Professors of talking, that Germans and Prussians are real gossips, but, not forgetting the Greeks, Egyptians, Hungarians, women from Spain or Castille, only in Paris can they really talk!

Bretons, Swiss, they know nothing, nor do the women of Gascony or Toulouse: two Petit-Pont orators would see them off, and the women of Lorraine, England and Calais (have I mentioned enough places?) Picardy, Valencia as well . . . only in Paris can they really talk!

Prince, let the Parisian ladies have the prize for speaking; you might favour the Italians, but only in Paris can they really talk!

Complainte de la Seine (Maurice Magre), Weill — At the bottom of the Seine there is gold, and rusty boats, jewels, and weapons . . . In the depths of the Seine are the dead . . . There are tears, there are flowers nourished by slime and mud. At the bottom of the Seine there are hearts which suffered too well to live, and pebbles and grey creatures, the soul of the sewer exhaling poisons from its mouth. There are rings tossed in by the misunderstood, and the feet of a cadaver sliced by a propeller. And the accursed fruits of a sterile womb, the unloved and aborted, the city's vomit. All this rests at the bottom of the Seine.

Oh merciful Seine, the cadavers' home; oh bed with linen of slime, river of garbage with neither beacon nor harbour; singer who lulls the morgue and the bridges; welcome the poor, the woman, the drunkards, the demented. Mingle their sobs with the sound of your waves, and carry their hearts among the pebbles.

Americans in Paris

Paris in New York, Words and music by Vernon Duke — Walking down Fifth Avenue, let's pretend, voulez-vous? That we found our Paris, our private Paris in New York . . .

How 'ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm after they've seen Patee, Walter Donaldson — They'll never want to see a rake or plow, and who the deuce can parley-vous a cow?

Prologue to London

A Transport of Delight, Michael Flanders and Donald Swann — Some talk of a Lagonda, some like a smart MG . . . such means of locomotion seems rather dull to us, the Driver and Conductor of a London Omnibus . . .

The Geography of London

Rural Beauty of Vauxhall Gardens, William Boyce — With his blissful spot delighted, here the Queen of May retreats; belles and beaux are all invited to partake of varied sweets . . .

Down at the Old Bull and Bush, Harry von Tilzer — Come, come, come and make eyes at me; Come, come, drink some port wine with me, down at the old Bull and Bush . . .

Covent Garden (Eileen Carfrae), C. Armstrong Gibbs — I know a place in London where the country comes to town. Any morning up till nine you may share the joy that's mine, and the spoils of Surrey meadow and of lonely Sussex down you may buy at Covent Garden in the morning.

Should it happen with young April that you tread the primrose way, you may even come across green and golden-fronded moss; Oh, the loveliest things in England may be picked up any day for a song at Covent Garden in the morning!

Let's all go down the Strand, Castling and Murray — Let's all go down the Strand! I'll be leader, you can march behind; come with me, and see what we can find. Let's all go down the Strand!

Rhyme (18th-century anon.), No. 6 of *A Song for the Lord Mayor's Table*, William Walton — Kettles and pans, say the bells of St. Ann's. Old father baldpate, say the slow bells of Aldgate. You owe me ten shillings, say the bells of St. Helen's. When will you pay me? say the bells of Old Bailey. When I grow rich, say the bells of Shoreditch. Pray when will that be? say the bells of Stepney. I do not know, says the great bell of Bow. Gay go up and gay go down, to ring the bells of London Town.

The London Underworld

Il Pleure dans mon coeur (Paul Verlaine), Delius — Tears fall in my heart like rain upon the town; what is this languor that pervades my heart? O gentle sound of the rain on the ground and on the roofs! For a listless heart O the sound of the rain! Tears fall without reason in this sickened heart. What! No perfidy? This sorrow has no cause. Indeed it is the worst pain not to know why, without love and without hate, my heart feels so much pain!

Hyde Park (Apollinaire), Poulenc (published with *Montparnasse* as a two-song set) — The promoters of religions were preaching in the fog, the shadowy figures near us as we passed, played blind man's buff; at seventy years old fresh cheeks of small children come along Eléonore and what more besides; look at the Cyclops coming, the pipes were flying past, but be off obdurate staring and Europe, Europe; worshipping looks, hands in love, and the lovers made love as long as the preachers preached.

West London (Matthew Arnold), Ives — Crouch'd on the pavement close by Belgrave Square, a tramp I saw, ill, moody, and tongue-tied; a babe was in her arms, and at her side a girl; their clothes were rags, their feet were bare.

Some labouring men, whose work lay somewhere there, pass'd opposite; she touch'd her girl, who hied across, and begg'd, and came back satisfied. The rich she had let pass with frozen stare.

Thought I, above her state this spirit towers; she will not ask of aliens, but of friends, of sharers in a common human fate.

She turns from that cold succor, which attends the unknown little from the unknowing great, and points us to a better time than ours.

Underneath the Arches, Bud Flanagan — The Ritz I never sigh for, the Carlton they can keep, there's only one place that I know, and that is where I sleep — Underneath the Arches . . .

You've got to pick a pocket or two, Lionel Bart. A depiction of perhaps the most celebrated of London's underworld characters — Fagin — from Dickens' *Oliver Twist*.

London Pride

Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner, Words and music by Hubert Gregg — London isn't everybody's cup of tea, often you hear visitors complain . . . noisy, smoky city, but it seems to me there's a magic in the fog and rain . . .

London Pride, Words and music by Noel Coward — London Pride has been handed down to us, London Pride is a flower that's free. London Pride means our own dear town to us, and our Pride it forever will be . . .

About the Artists

The Songmakers' Almanac is a group of solo singers founded ten years ago by pianist-accompanist Graham Johnson, widely considered a leading authority on the song repertoire. The name Songmakers' Almanac was chosen because it symbolizes the aims of its founder — encompassing in the first word the composers, poets, and performers who make the songs, and in the second, the anthology or theme-principle around which the programs are built. The ensemble celebrates anniversaries, outstanding events, and special subjects in arrangements which depart from the established song recital format. Programs may also be devoted to certain composers, poets, or historical periods which are relevant to the development of song. In the last decade over 70 programs have been devised, and the ensemble's popular London concerts have been augmented by tours of the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and the Far East, as well as appearances in the festivals of Bergen, Aldeburgh, Hong Kong, and Edinburgh. Though its membership is small, The Songmakers' Almanac draws upon different guest artists as the material dictates, and over the years nearly one hundred distinguished singers, instrumentalists, and actors have taken part in Almanac events.

Graham Johnson's association with two of Britain's leading musical figures, composer Benjamin Britten and tenor Peter Pears, and his interest in researching every aspect of the song repertoire has led to a career as concert accompanist, coach, lecturer, and teacher. Mr. Johnson played at Pears' first song master classes at the Maltings in the summer of 1972 and returned as official accompanist to assist in subsequent singing courses. More recently he has participated in the Aldeburgh Festival as a performer and also gives lectures and master classes for the Britten-Pears School. In addition, he has written and presented series for both BBC radio and television. As a concert accompanist, Mr. Johnson has collaborated with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Janet Baker, Håkan Hagegård, Jessye Norman, Margaret Price, John Shirley-Quirk, and Peter Pears, as well as many of Britain's younger generation of singers. He has made a number of recordings on the Hyperion label with individual artists and with The Songmakers' Almanac.

Jennifer Smith, born and trained in Portugal, arrived in Britain in the early 1970s. Now living in London, she works frequently in Britain and performs regularly in all the major cities of Europe, working with such conductors as the late Rudolf Kempe, Boulez, Rozhdestvensky, Leppard, Andrew Davis, and David Willcocks. In addition to her work with The Songmakers' Almanac, Miss Smith has sung throughout Great Britain in opera productions and festival concert performances. She recently completed a BBC documentary on the life and works of Gesualdo, and her many recordings are available on the EMI label.

Penelope Walker, winner of the Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Scholarship in 1980, appears extensively throughout the United Kingdom with leading orchestras and in major music festivals. On the opera stage she has sung with the English National Opera and Paris Opera. A native of Manchester, England, Miss Walker broadcasts regularly for the BBC, has broadcast for Austrian and German radio, and has made concert appearances in Germany, France, Belgium, Greece, Italy, and Austria. She has also sung with the English Bach Festival and took part in Handel's *Messiah* with the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Zubin Mehta.

In recent years, **Richard Jackson** has become particularly known as a concert singer, both in song and oratorio. The Cornish-born baritone still maintains a connection with opera, however, appearing at Glyndebourne and Aldeburgh, Covent Garden, and with the New Sadler's Wells Opera, Handel Opera Society, and the English National and Kent Opera companies. At the BBC he has taken part in opera recordings, a Bach cantata series, and performed Schubert songs with Graham Johnson. Mr. Jackson is a founder-member of The Songmakers' Almanac and sings regularly with the group at Wigmore Hall. His other concert appearances include performances under Willcocks, Marriner, Comissiona, and Rostropovich. He can be heard on the Erato record label and on the Hyperion label with The Songmakers' Almanac.