



Western Music

Don Wright Faculty of Music

GUEST ARTIST RECITAL

Tuesday, October 16, 2018

8 p.m., von Kuster Hall

Jeremy Huw Williams, *baritone*

Paula Fan, *piano*

Sonetti di Michelangelo*

B Tommy Andersson

Five Lieder*

Friedrich Heinrich Kern

Tymhorau*

Alun Hoddinott

In Time of Daffodils*

John Metcalf

Les Chats de Baudelaire*

Andrew Paul MacDonald

**Canadian Premiere*

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THE ARTISTS

JEREMY HUW WILLIAMS

The Welsh baritone Jeremy Huw Williams studied at St John's College, Cambridge, at the National Opera Studio, and with April Cantelo. He made his debut with Welsh National Opera as Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) and has since appeared in more than sixty operatic roles. He has given performances at major venues in North and South America, Australia, China, India and most European countries.

In France he has sung the roles of Olivier (*Capriccio*), Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), George (*Of Mice and Men*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Shchekalov (*Boris Godunov*), Baritone (*Hydrogen Jukebox*) and title role *Till Eulenspiegel*/by Karetnikov for L'Opéra de Nantes, and Sebastian (*The Tempest*) for L'Opera du Rhin. In Italy he has sung the role of Nixon (*Nixon in China*) at the opera house in Verona and Ferryman (*Curlew River*) at the opera houses of Pisa and Trento. In Greece he has sung the role of Chou En-lai (*Nixon in China*) for Greek National Opera. In Belgium he has sung the role of Marcello (*La Bohème*) for Zomeropera. In Norway he has sung the role of Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*) for Vest Norges Opera and Serezha (*The Electrification of the Soviet Union*) for Opera Vest. In Austria he has sung the role of Dr Pangloss (*Candide*) in Vienna, a role that he repeated in Bremen, Munich, Leipzig, Suhl and London. In the USA he has sung the role of Lukash (*The Good Soldier Schweik*) for Long Beach Opera.

In Wales he has sung the roles of Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), Germont (*La Traviata*), Marcello (*La Bohème*) and Le Dancaïre (*Carmen*) for Welsh National Opera and the roles of Serezha (*The Electrification of the Soviet Union*), Tarquinius (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Choregos (*Punch and Judy*), Mangus (*The Knot Garden*) and Dr Simon Browne (*For You*) for Music Theatre Wales. In Ireland he has sung the role of Teddy (*The Silver Tassie*) for Opera Ireland. In Scotland he has sung the roles of Andrew (*74 Degrees North*), Father (*Zen Story*), Epstein (*The Letter*) and Kommerzienrat (*Intermezzo*) for Scottish Opera.

He has given recitals at the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room, and at many major music festivals. He has appeared with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in Tippett's *King Priam* at the Royal Festival Hall, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in Lambert's *Summer's Last Will and Testament* at Symphony Hall, the Hallé in Handel's *Messiah* at the Bridgewater Hall, the Philharmonia in Mozart's *Requiem* at St David's Hall, the BBC Symphony Orchestra in Nielsen's *Third Symphony* at the Royal Albert Hall during the BBC Proms, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in Rawsthorne's *Medieval Diptych*, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in Adams's *The Wound Dresser* at City Halls, the BBC Philharmonic in Schubert's *Mass in Ab*, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, the London Philharmonic Orchestra in Watson's *O! Captain*, the Ulster Orchestra in McDowall's *Theatre of Tango*, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in Mathias's *This Worlde's Joie* at the Three Choirs Festival, and the BBC Concert Orchestra in Stainer's *Crucifixion* at Southwark Cathedral for BBC Radio 2.

He has also appeared with the RTE Concert Orchestra in Dvořák's *Requiem* at the National Concert Hall in Dublin, the Orchestre National de Lyon in Benjamin's *Sometime Voices* at the Auditorium de Lyon, l'Orchestre Léonard de Vinci in Brahms's *Requiem* at the opera house in Rouen, the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya in Orff's *Carmina Burana* at the Auditori in Barcelona, and the Sønderjyllands Symfoniorkester in Bach's *Weihnachts-Oratorium*.

He is renowned as a fine exponent of contemporary music, having commissioned much new music and given premieres of works by Alun Hoddinott, William Mathias, John Tavener, Michael Berkeley, Paul Mealar, Julian Phillips, Richard Causton, Mark Bowden, and Huw Watkins. He frequently records for BBC Radio 3 (in recital, and with the BBC NOW, CBSO, BBC SO, BBC SSO, BBC Philharmonic and BBC CO), and has made many commercial recordings, including more than ten solo discs of songs.

As a principal singer with Welsh National Opera he appeared at the opening night of the Wales Millennium Centre, and received the inaugural Sir Geraint Evans Award from the Welsh Music Guild, given annually to a person or persons who have made a significant contribution to Welsh music in any one year or recent years: 'there has been an unanimous decision that the first award should be made to baritone Jeremy Huw Williams in recognition of not only his performing ability but also for the tremendous support that he has given to Welsh composers and their music in recent years'.

He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by Glyndwr University in 2009 for services to music in Wales, and received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music from the University of Aberdeen in 2011.

PAULA FAN

Pianist Paula Fan has performed on five continents, recorded more than twenty five commercial albums, and has broadcast for the BBC, NPR, Radio Television China, and international stations from Bosnia to Australia. As one of the first recipients of the doctorate in Collaborative Piano, she has lectured on the subject worldwide. She performed and taught at the University of Arizona Fred Fox School of Music as its only Regents' Professor, and was Principal Keyboardist and soloist with the Tucson Symphony for many seasons. She has also served as Visiting Professor at the Eastman School of Music, and at numerous conservatories in the People's Republic of China, where she was the first ever accompanist-coach invited by the Chinese Ministry of Culture. As both performer and teacher, one of her greatest interests has been building bridges between classical music and audiences of all ages and backgrounds, as well as between disciplines.

The daughter of highly indulgent non-traditional Chinese parents, Paula Fan started her career in higher education by writing a show, "Opera is..." which introduced countless Arizona children to opera, using paper hats, hammy melodrama, and original English lyrics to traditional arias. Throughout her academic career, she has explored the world of classical music in different ways with her series of "Time Traveler's Concerts" in which musicians from history speak as well as perform, "Accompanist's Lib" concerts highlighting the role of the under-appreciated collaborative pianist, and in performances co-produced with other academic entities, most notably the Arizona Research Institute for Solar Energy, AzRISE. She was a founder of the Solar Storytellers--a piano trio playing electric instruments powered by a golf cart with a solar panel for a roof--and with her brother Michael, produced the Dr. Solara Trilogy of children's solar energy shows performed on the National Mall in Washington DC, at the Aspen Science Center, and in Tucson.

Dr. Fan was part of the team that founded the University of Arizona's Confluentcenter for Creative Inquiry, which not only brings together traditionally complementary disciplines within the Humanities and Fine Arts, but also, recognizing that creativity exists within a context, is unique in its inclusion of the Social and Behavioral Sciences. With Confluentcenter's encouragement, her Creative Collaborations series married disciplines from Hospice Care to Cookery with art song, based on her belief that there is classical music for everything. She is now Confluentcenter's first Senior Fellow. She is an alumna of the University of Arizona, where she studied with the virtuoso pianist Ozan Marsh, and of the University of Southern California, where she was mentored by the legendary teachers of Collaborative Piano, Gwendolyn Koldofsky and Brooks Smith.

PROGRAM NOTES AND TEXTS

B Tommy Andersson, Sonetti di Michelangelo

Text: Michelangelo Buonarroti (Italian)

1. Se 'l foco fusse alla bellezza equale (Rime no. 77)
2. Tu sa' ch'i'so, signor mie, che tu sai (Rime no. 60)
3. I' mi credetti, il primo giorno ch'io (Rime no. 80)
4. Veggio co' be' vostr'occhi un dolce lume (Rime no. 89)
5. Veggio nel tuo bel viso, signor mio (Rime no. 83)

First performance: 10 October 2016, Dixon Recital Hall, New Orleans, USA. Jeremy Huw Williams (baritone), Paula Fan (piano).

About the piece: Everyone knows that Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) was one of the most famous sculptors and painters during the Italian renaissance. It is not as familiar that he also wrote poems.These songs are based on five of his Rime from the 1530's. The chosen poems are all written in the formal rhyme scheme of a sonnet, and they are all inspired by a young nobleman, Tommaso dei Cavalieri, whom Michelangelo met in 1532, when Cavalieri was 23 years old. This young man was exceptionally handsome in a way that met Michelangelo's ideal for male beauty and it led to a very close, lifelong friendship. Cavalieri was present when the artist died. Around 30 of Michelangelo's 302 poems are dedicated to him.

....The language is an old and elevated Italian, filled with references to Petrarca's sonnets, but it still makes sense to modern Italians. These songs should be sung in the original language, not in a translation into any other language, but for the benefit of making it easier to understand the content of the poems, I submit English

interpretations by John Addington Symonds, published in 1878. They do not always follow the original poems very closely, but they still give some indication of the meaning of the words.

....For a poetic version in Swedish, I would like to refer to *Kärleksdikter*, a translation by Sverker Åström, published by Lind & Co in 2005. These interpretations are quite close to the intentions of the original text. All five poems in this song cycle can be found in this book.

I. (No. 77)

Se 'l foco fusse alla bellezza equale
degli occhi vostri, che da que' si parte,
non avrie 'l mondo sì gelata parte
che non ardessi com'acceso strale.

Ma 'l ciel, pietoso d'ogni nostro male,
a noi d'ogni beltà, che 'n voi comparte,
la visiva virtù toglie e diparte
per tranquillar la vita aspr'e mortale.

Non è par dunche il foco alla beltate,
ché sol di quel s'infiamma e s'innamora
altri del bel del ciel, ch'è da lui inteso.

Così n'avvien, signore, in questa etate:
se non vi par per voi ch'i' arda e mora,
poca capacità m'ha poco acceso.

II. (No. 60)

Tu sa, ch'io so, signor mie, che tu sai
Ch'i veni per goderti più da presso;
E sai ch'i' so, che tu sa' c'i' son desso:
A che più indugio a salutarci omai?

Se vera è la speranza che mi dai,
Se vero è 'l buon desio che m'è concesso,
Rompasi il mur fra l'uno e l'altro messo;
Chè doppia forza hann' i celati guai.

S'i' amo sol di te, signor mie caro,
Quel che di te più ami, non ti sdegni;
Che l'un dell'altro spirto s'innamora,
Quel che nel tuo bel volto bramo e 'mparo,
E mal compres' è degli umani ingegni,
Chi 'l vuol veder, convien che prima mora.

III. (No. 80)

I' mi credetti, il primo giorno ch'io
mira' tante bellezze uniche e sole,
fermar gli occhi com'aquila nel sole
nella minor di tante ch'i' desio.

Po' conosciut'ho il fallo e l'erro mio:
ché chi senz'ale un angel seguir vole,

il seme a' sassi, al vento le parole
indarno isparge, e l'intelletto a Dio.

Dunche, s'appresso il cor non mi sopporta
l'infinita beltà che gli occhi abbaglia,
né di lontan par m'assicuri o fidi,

Che fie di me? qual guida o qual scorta
fie che con teo ma' mi giovì o vaglia,
s'appresso m'ardi e nel partir m'uccidi?

IV. (No. 89)

Veggio co' be' [vostr'occhi]¹ un dolce lume
che co' mie ciechi già veder non posso;
porto co' vostri piedi un pondo addosso,
che de' mie zoppi non è già costume.

Volo con le vostr'ale senza piume;
col [vostro ingegno]² al ciel sempre son mosso;
dal [vostro arbitrio]³ son pallido e rosso,
freddo al sol, caldo alle più fredde brume.

Nel voler vostro è sol la voglia mia,
i miei pensier nel vostro cor si fanno,
nel vostro fiato son le mie parole.

Come luna da sé sol par ch'io sia,
ché gli occhi nostri in ciel veder non sanno
se non quel tanto che n'accende il sole.

V. (No. 83)

Veggio nel tuo bel viso, signor mio,
quel che narrar mal puossi in questa vita:
l'anima, della carne ancor vestita,
con esso è già più volte ascesa a Dio.

E se 'l vulgo malvagio, isciocco e rio,
di quel che sente, altrui segna e addita,
non è l'intensa voglia men gradita,
l'amor, la fede e l'onesto desio.

A quel pietoso fonte, onde siàn tutti,
s'assembra ogni beltà che qua si vede
più c'altra cosa alle persone accorte;

né altro saggio abbiàn né altri frutti
del cielo in terra; e chi v'ama con fede
trascende a Dio e fa dolce la morte.

Friedrich Heinrich Kern, 5 Lieder after poems by Joerg Martin Hartmann

Beginning in 2001, '5 Lieder' started a collaboration between two young artists - a poet and a musician - at the beginning of their careers. Each text constitutes a microorganism of storylines, triggering their corresponding musical structure. At the same time, the musical ideas expand their textural confinement and develop its color palette, buffering a bizarre, grotesque, and distorted reality.

I. Der Schlüsselmacher

Selbst die goldensten Schlüssel drück ich Dir
in die Hand

I. The Keymaker

I give you even the most golden keys
Into your hand

Die weiten Ländereien
Sie sind nun alle auch Dein

The vast land
They are also yours

II. Verschwommen

II. Blurred

Sterngefüllte Augen – aufgehen
Blicken auf den Rolltreppenboden
Und laufen auf den
Metallenen Platten
Zum Meeresboden
Wo Atlantis beginnt im Schatten
Blinkt gold verschwommen die Stadt
Für den der ein Auge dafür hat

Star-filled eyes - rising
Looking on the ground of the escalator
Running on the
Metal plates
to the bottom of the sea
Atlantis begins in the shadow
the city blinks golden and blurry
for the one who has an eye for it

III. Etwas mehr

III. A bit More

Die lautesten Wolken
Könnten mich retten
Doch die Blasen im Moor
Ploppen dumpf
Wohin ich geh?
Ich weiß es nicht
Das Trockeneis
Du weißt
Woher ich kam?
Aus dem Garten
Dort wo die Fee mich traf
Mich beschenkte mit goldenem Glück

The loudest clouds
could save me
but the bubbles in the swamp
plopping dull
Where am I going?
I don't know
The dry ice
You know
Where did I come from?
From the garden
where I met the fairy
She presented me with golden luck

IV. Blicke hinter den Vorhang

IV. Looks Behind the Curtain

Schritt durch die Wand
Griff ins Fleisch
Sprung auf den Stern
Schrei über Jahre
Nachthimmel spült
Salzige Tränen ans Meer
Türen öffnen
Räume in kühle klare Luft
Dieser Wind weht
Die Flocken vom Berg

Steps through the wall
Grip into the flesh
Leap onto the star
Scream over years
The nightly sky washes up
salty tears to the seas
Doors open
rooms in cool clear air
This wind blows
the flakes from the mountain

V. Im Malstrom

V. Into the Maelström

Die Bäume im weiten Land
Sie blühten gelb wie Raps
Gottes Finger berührte
Eine Ente am fernen Horizont
Die Vignetten der Flaschen
Riefen Verwunderung hervor
Doch die meisten waren sich einig
Luft sei die innere Sonne.

The trees in the wide land
they bloomed yellow like rape
God's finger touched
a duck on the distant horizon
The vignettes of the bottles
caused amazement
But most of them agreed
Air be the inner sun

Text: Joerg Martin Hartmann
Translation: Friedrich Heinrich Kern

Alun Hoddinott, *Tymhorau*

Having set several choral works in Welsh, Hoddinott was aware of the challenges posed by the language, as he outlined in a 1977 interview:

Welsh is extraordinarily difficult to set because it is so guttural: 'll' and 'ch' make it difficult. I think one can use it in a sort of lieder [*sic.*] form (not where you are writing a 'song' – but an art form – the Schubert type of song) which is a narrative type of song, where the actual words are more important than the vocal line.¹

Whilst recognising the benefits of setting Welsh texts for choirs to sing, he was sceptical about composing for the solo voice in Welsh, commenting that 'very few professional singers can sing in Welsh'.²

By 1995, however, Hoddinott was reconciled to writing Welsh-language art song, setting Gwyn Thomas's poetry in *Tymhorau*, Op. 155, commissioned by Jeremy Huw Williams with the assistance of the Arts Council of Wales.

He became aware that contemporary Welsh singers were quite adept at singing the pure vowels of the language (which are almost identical to those of the supreme language for singing, Italian), and able to achieve a *bel canto* line with rapid insertion of the guttural consonants of the Welsh language. He relished the challenge, acknowledging that composers 'set a language and the language forms its own curve in the music'.³ In his song cycle, *Tymhorau*, Op. 155 (1995), Hoddinott set the Welsh language with natural ease, the melodies closely following speech patterns.

Born in Tanygrisiau in 1936, Thomas was Emeritus Professor of Welsh at Bangor University, and the National Poet of Wales between 2005 and 2007, writing in English and in Welsh; he died this year. Hoddinott selected four of Thomas's poems that represent the four seasons (although not classed as such by the poet). The four poems represent spring at the site of an ancient settlement on Anglesey, movements of a lizard in the summer of Provence, the colourful depiction of a falling autumnal leaf, and the snow of a bitter Russian winter, in a translation from Boris Pasternak's *Dr Zhivago*. The original version is for baritone and piano; Hoddinott orchestrated the songs the following year.

Translation by Gwyn Thomas of his poetry for *Tymhorau*, Op. 155 (1995)

Seasons

1. 'Din Lligwy'

(*At the beginning of March*)

Far away is the sea,
Far away is the blue that drifts,
Drifts far away, on the edge of the world.

These stones,
Here among these stones
There once was habitation,
And smoke rising, binding the heavens
To the world of men.

Ruins of a life,
 ruins.
Centuries, stones and grass.
And the branches like fears against the sky
moving,

The ash clashing.

Pool of yellow,
Daffodils arousing,
And the wind's whirling creates passion in the
field.
Petals of feeling shining
And their colours swishing in the air.
Lambs, and signs of birth.

And the sea on the edge of the world,
The blue drifts far away,
The sea far away is drifting.

Din Lligwy is the remains of an ancient British settlement in Anglesey

2. 'Lizard'

A wall in Provence,
And the warm sun of centuries
Yellow within it.

A smick of movement,
Sudden stillness:

¹ A. Hoddinott. Interview. 20 June 1977. Quoted in E. Warkov, 'Modern Composers' use of Welsh texts: some points of view', *Welsh Music*, 5:10 (Winter 1978/79), p. 36.

² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

A spot
Catches the eye.

It's a lizard
Come out
To warm its blood in the sun.
 Small, mottled, stock-still
 With skin like tissue paper
 Respirating energy.

3. 'Leaf'
The leaf from the tree is shed.
It hovers, it flies,
Holds onto the breeze,
Hangs gently,
Quietly swims
It slides - a bright-flash -
White-bellied or yellow
It clowns, colour-whirls,
4. 'Winter Night'

(The poem is a Welsh translation of a Russian poem by Boris Pasternak)

Snow, snow - flurry, flurry
Swept into the corners.
On the table a candle burns.
A candle burns.

Snow, like clouds of summer midges
To the light of the flame,
Swarm to the window, flakes of snow,
Swarm on swarm.

On panes, snow forms meet -
Whirls and arrows.
On the table a candle burns,
A candle burns.

Shadows on white ceilings
Makes the darkness move:
Shapes of hands crossed, feet crossed,
Signs of a crossed fate.

Then a pizzicato
Across the wall, across its sunlight:
Another stop,
Respires again.
Then cranks on
As in an old film.

Sunlight, a lizard, a wall,
An old, old wall.

Fantastically flaunts,
Mouses short-footed, a gurgle of colour,
It wheels obliquely, sways
Down bright to the earth.
The leaf from the tree is being shed -
And what is it doing?
 It's dying.

To the floor shoes are dropped
With a bang and a thud.
The candlestick wept tears
Of wax on the frock.

A world deleted. All things went
Into the white locks of dark snow.
On the table a candle burns,
A candle burns.

To the candle flame a wandering
Breeze comes by,
Heat of temptation, like an angel,
Winged into a cross.

Through February the snow advanced,
And from time to time
On the table a candle burns,
A candle burns.

John Metcalf, In time of Daffodils

Flowers have inspired many poets and there are, in particular, a number of beautiful poems about daffodils. This was a strong enough impulse to pursue this idea for a song cycle; I also felt it to be helpful to have such a strong and consistent theme for the work. The associations with Spring (when the first performance was to be given) and with Wales, further encouraged this approach. The poems are, on the whole, very well known, especially the Wordsworth. Herrick paints a poignant picture of transience and mortality which I have reflected in a very romantic setting. Amy Lowell's poem contains sensuous imagery and a bright vibrant energy which are evocative of the flower and the time of year. The title of the piece is drawn from the first line of a poem by ee cummings (not set). In time of Daffodils were commissioned by Jeremy Huw Williams with funds made available by the Arts Council of Wales and the National Lottery. I subsequently completely reworked the composition into a symphonic cycle in response to a commission from BBC Radio 3, completing two sets of three poems which mirror each other rather as our feelings and experiences have a common ground as the year turns and returns and orchestrated the work for orchestra with important roles for solo - to reflect the pastoral quality of the piece - and

for brass and harp (for their visual association with daffodils). The orchestral version includes a short central interlude linking the two parallel sets of songs.

Jeremy Huw Williams gave the first performance with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and also recorded the work with the same orchestra for Signum.

To Daffodils, by Robert Herrick

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

Daffodils, William Wordsworth

I WANDER'D lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:
For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

To an Early Daffodil, Amy Lowell

Thou yellow trumpeter of laggard Spring!
Thou herald of rich Summer's myriad flowers!
The climbing sun with new recovered powers
Does warm thee into being, through the ring
Of rich, brown earth he woos thee, makes thee fling
Thy green shoots up, inheriting the dowers
Of bending sky and sudden, sweeping showers,

Till ripe and blossoming thou art a thing
To make all nature glad, thou art so gay;
To fill the lonely with a joy untold;
Nodding at every gust of wind to-day,
To-morrow jewelled with raindrops. Always bold
To stand erect, full in the dazzling play
Of April's sun, for thou hast caught his gold

Andrew Paul MacDonald, *Les Chats de Baudelaire*

In 2014, Welsh baritone Jeremy Huw Williams was performing at The Fifth London Festival of American Music in London, UK. On one of his free nights during the festival he attended a concert and heard my solo work, *The Great Square of Pegasus*, played by Canadian violinist Jonathan Chan. Intrigued by my music, Jeremy contacted me and soon thereafter performed my 1992 Blake cycle, *Innocence*, on a tour of Canada and the USA and later another early work, *The Jam At Jerry's Rocks*, which I had reworked for baritone, piano and tape.

Then Jeremy asked me to write something new for him and pianist Paula Fan. We had a shared fascination with the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, and so the wheels were set in motion. When the three of us met at my house in the fall of 2015, the neighbour's cat, Suzie, was with us all day, making sure we understood who ruled the land. Paula then revealed that she had many cats and so Jeremy suggested that I consider Baudelaire's cat poems from the *Spleen et Idéal* section of *Les Fleurs du Mal* for this new cycle.

Pouring over these, I readily agreed. I chose the two “Le Chat” poems and “Les Chats”, hearing wonderful music in the poet’s use of rhythm, contour inflection and cadence. I renamed the poems using the first line of each. “Viens, mon beau chat” is the first Le Chat poem and “Les amoureux fervents” is Les Chats. The last two songs, “Dans ma cervelle se promène” and “De sa fourrure blonde et brune”, are part one and two of the other Le Chat poem. In this cycle I try to capture the essence of our household friend—what Suzie meant to me—from his whimsical nature to the universal vision always apparent in Baudelaire’s work.

Le Chat

Viens, mon beau chat, sur mon coeur amoureux;
Retiens les griffes de ta patte,
Et laisse-moi plonger dans tes beaux yeux,
Mêlés de métal et d'agate.
Lorsque mes doigts caressent à loisir
Ta tête et ton dos élastique,
Et que ma main s'enivre du plaisir
De palper ton corps électrique,
— *Charles Baudelaire*

Je vois ma femme en esprit. Son regard,
Comme le tien, aimable bête
Profond et froid, coupe et fend comme un dard,
Et, des pieds jusques à la tête,
Un air subtil, un dangereux parfum
Nagent autour de son corps brun.

The Cat

Come, my fine cat, against my loving heart;
Sheathe your sharp claws, and settle.
And let my eyes into your pupils dart
Where agate sparks with metal.
Now while my fingertips caress at leisure
Your head and wiry curves,
And that my hand's elated with the pleasure
Of your electric nerves,
— Roy Campbell, *Poems of Baudelaire* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952)

I think about my woman — how her glances
Like yours, dear beast, deep-down
And cold, can cut and wound one as with lances;
Then, too, she has that vagrant
And subtle air of danger that makes fragrant
Her body, lithe and brown.

Les Chats

Les amoureux fervents et les savants austères
Aiment également, dans leur mûre saison,
Les chats puissants et doux, orgueil de la maison,
Qui comme eux sont frileux et comme eux sédentaires.
Amis de la science et de la volupté
Ils cherchent le silence et l'horreur des ténèbres;
L'Erèbe les eût pris pour ses coursiers funèbres,
S'ils pouvaient au servage incliner leur fierté.
— *Charles Baudelaire*

Ils prennent en songeant les nobles attitudes
Des grands sphinx allongés au fond des
solitudes,
Qui semblent s'endormir dans un rêve sans fin;
Leurs reins féconds sont pleins d'étincelles
magiques,
Et des parcelles d'or, ainsi qu'un sable fin,
Etoilent vaguement leurs prunelles mystiques.

Cats

Sages austere and fervent lovers both,
In their ripe season, cherish cats, the pride
Of hearths, strong, mild, and to themselves allied
In chilly stealth and sedentary sloth.
Friends both to lust and learning, they frequent
Silence, and love the horror darkness breeds.
Erebus would have chosen them for steeds
To hearses, could their pride to it have bent.
— Roy Campbell, *Poems of Baudelaire* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952)

Dreaming, the noble postures they assume
Of sphinxes stretching out into the gloom
That seems to swoon into an endless trance.
Their fertile flanks are full of sparks that tingle,
And particles of gold, like grains of shingle,
Vaguely be-star their pupils as they glance.

Le Chat

I.
Dans ma cervelle se promène,
Ainsi qu'en son appartement,
Un beau chat, fort, doux et charmant.

Quand il miaule, on l'entend à peine,
Tant son timbre est tendre et discret;
Mais que sa voix s'apaise ou gronde,
Elle est toujours riche et profonde.

C'est là son charme et son secret.
Cette voix, qui perle et qui filtre
Dans mon fonds le plus ténébreux,
Me remplit comme un vers nombreux
Et me réjouit comme un philtre.
Elle endort les plus cruels maux
Et contient toutes les extases;
Pour dire les plus longues phrases,
Elle n'a pas besoin de mots.
Non, il n'est pas d'archet qui morde
Sur mon coeur, parfait instrument,
Et fasse plus royalement
Chanter sa plus vibrante corde,
Que ta voix, chat mystérieux,
Chat séraphique, chat étrange,
En qui tout est, comme en un ange,
Aussi subtil qu'harmonieux!
— *Charles Baudelaire*

The Cat

I.
A fine strong gentle cat is prowling
As in his bedroom, in my brain;
So soft his voice, so smooth its strain,
That you can scarcely hear him miowling.
But should he venture to complain
Or scold, the voice is rich and deep:
And thus he manages to keep
The charm of his untroubled reign.
This voice, which seems to pearl and filter
Through my soul's inmost shady nook,
Fills me with poems, like a book,
And fortifies me, like a philtre.
His voice can cure the direst pain
And it contains the rarest raptures.
The deepest meanings, which it captures,
It needs no language to explain.
There is no bow that can so sweep
That perfect instrument, my heart:
Or make more sumptuous music start
From its most vibrant cord and deep,
Than can the voice of this strange elf,
This cat, bewitching and seraphic,
Subtly harmonious in his traffic
With all things else, and with himself.

— Roy Campbell, *Poems of Baudelaire* (New York:
Pantheon Books, 1952)

II.
De sa fourrure blonde et brune
Sort un parfum si doux, qu'un soir
J'en fus embaumé, pour l'avoir
Caressée une fois, rien qu'une.
C'est l'esprit familier du lieu;
Il juge, il préside, il inspire
Toutes choses dans son empire;
peut-être est-il fée, est-il dieu?
Quand mes yeux, vers ce chat que j'aime
Tirés comme par un aimant,
Se retournent docilement
Et que je regarde en moi-même,
Je vois avec étonnement
Le feu de ses prunelles pâles,
Clairs fanaux, vivantes opales
Qui me contemplent fixement.

II.
So sweet a perfume seems to swim
Out of his fur both brown and bright,
I nearly was embalmed one night
From (only once) caressing him.
Familiar Lar of where I stay,
He rules, presides, inspires and teaches
All things to which his empire reaches.
Perhaps he is a god, or fay.
When to a cherished cat my gaze
Is magnet-drawn and then returns
Back to itself, it there discerns,
With strange excitement and amaze,
Deep down in my own self, the rays
Of living opals, torch-like gleams
And pallid fire of eyes, it seems,
That fixedly return my gaze.