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Consone Quartet
&
Helen Charlston *mezzo-soprano*

On the wings of song

National Centre for Early Music
Tuesday 9 July | 2.00pm

Helen Charlston *mezzo-soprano*

&

Consone Quartet

Agata Daraškaite *violin*

Magdalena Loth-Hill *violin*

Elitsa Bogdanova *viola*

George Ross *cello*

On the wings of song

Sechs Lieder, op. 13

Clara Schumann 1819-96

1. Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen
2. Sie liebten sich beide
3. Liebeszauber
4. Der Mond kommt still gegangen
5. Ich hab' in deinem Auge
6. Die stille Lotosblume

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges, op. 34 no. 2

Felix Mendelssohn 1809-47

Maienlied, op. 1 no. 4

Fanny Mendelssohn 1805-47

Die Liebende Schreibt, op. 86 no. 3

Felix Mendelssohn

Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh

Fanny Mendelssohn

Frauenliebe und -leben

Robert Schumann 1810-56

1. Seit ich ihn gesehen
2. Er, der Herrlichste von allen
3. Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben
4. Du Ring an meinem Finger
5. Helft mir, ihr Schwestern
6. Süßer Freund, du blickest mich verwundert an
7. An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust
8. Nun has du mir den ersten schmerz getan

‘On the wings of a song,
I’ll carry you, my love, away,
Away...’ (Heinrich Heine)

In the spirit of a festival of musical metamorphosis, today’s lunchtime recital celebrates the intimate world of Lieder, but not quite as one might expect it. All the repertoire heard today was originally written for piano and voice, but today we hear these songs lovingly arranged by violinist Bill Thorp, for voice and string quartet.

Whilst there is no historical precedent for this sort of arrangement, one cannot help but imagine that expanding these songs to include string instruments might just be the sort of fun that was had at domestic evenings of music-making, at which these songs would have been first heard. Consider the success of Haydn’s *Scottish Songs* written for voice and string trio, Schubert’s inclusion of solo clarinet in *Shepherd on the Rock*, or (much later) Brahms’s *Two songs for Voice, Viola and Piano*. Our dream to swap the piano for string quartet then doesn’t seem so far away.

For me as a singer, the experience of expanding these songs to include string quartet has been a gloriously enlightening one. We first explored this repertoire together as BBC New Generation Artists, recording for radio sessions on Radio 3. I know these songs inside out, and yet the division of lines to four unique voices played by four unique brains has changed these songs for me, perhaps forever. The possibility for both clarity and cohesion of sound that the strings provide, particularly when playing on period instruments as the Consone Quartet are, gives a new transparency to these songs that I didn’t know was missing. Bill’s arrangements are beautifully done, allowing our ears to follow the accompaniment with utmost precision, whilst also enclosing the voice in a sound world that becomes bigger and fuller than its parts.

Sechs Lieder, op. 13 flit between the worlds of love and loss in six succinct songs. Showing Clara Schumann’s talents as a miniaturist, each song conjures its own atmosphere with immense clarity: from the inevitability of sadness to the excitement of new love. The set ends with a musical question mark in the seemingly unfinished final chord of *Die Stille Lotosblume*; are we left in the devastation of loss or the joy of love? Perhaps it is for us to decide.

Siblings Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn wrote prolifically in their short lives. They wrote hundreds of songs each, and their song output has become somewhat entwined historically, as some of Fanny’s earliest songs were erroneously published

under her brother's name. This afternoon we hear from them both. Felix shows us the breadth of his expression from simplicity in *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges* to the extravagance of *Die Liebende Schreibt*. Fanny guides us through a world bursting with joy in *Maienlied*, and stops time in her enchanting setting of Goethe's *Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh*.

Robert Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben* has beguiled audiences for two centuries. A series of vignettes, it considers a (somewhat nineteenth-century) progression of the different roles of womanhood: from helpless teenage lover, to wife, mother and widow. Seven of the eight songs end with a soloistic moment in the accompaniment without the voice. These postludes give a work of monologue a second voice, and help bring us full circle, when the opening theme returns played just by the string quartet.

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Sechs Lieder, op. 13

Clara Schumann

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen
Und starrte ihr Bildnis an,
Und das geliebte Antlitz
Heimlich zu leben begann.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich
Ein Lächeln wunderbar,
Und wie von Wehmutstränen
Erglänzte ihr Augenpaar.

Auch meine Tränen flossen
Mir von den Wangen herab –
Und ach, ich kann's nicht glauben,
Dass ich dich verloren hab!

Heinrich Heine

I stood darkly dreaming
And stared at her picture,
And that beloved face
Sprang mysteriously to life.

About her lips
A wondrous smile played,
And as with sad tears,
Her eyes gleamed.

And my tears flowed
Down my cheeks,
And ah, I cannot believe
That I have lost you!

Sie liebten sich beide

Sie liebten sich beide, doch keiner
Wollt' es dem andern gestehn;
Sie sahen sich an so feindlich,
Und wollten vor Liebe vergehn.

Sie trennten sich endlich und sah'n sich
Nur noch zuweilen im Traum;
Sie waren längst gestorben
Und wussten es selber kaum.

Heinrich Heine

They loved one another, but neither
Wished to tell the other;
They gave each other such hostile looks,
Yet nearly died of love.

In the end they parted and saw
Each other but rarely in dreams.
They died so long ago
And hardly knew it themselves.

Liebeszauber

Die Liebe saß als Nachtigall
Im Rosenbusch und sang;
Es flog der wunderschöne Schall
Den grünen Wald entlang.

Und wie er klang, - da stieg im Kreis
Aus tausend Kelchen Duft,
Und alle Wipfel rauschten leis',
Und leiser ging die Luft;
Die Bäche schwiegen, die noch kaum
Geplätschert von den Höh'n,
Die Rehlein standen wie im Traum
Und lauschten dem Getön.

Und hell und immer heller floß
Der Sonne Glanz herein,
Um Blumen, Wald und Schlucht ergoß
Sich goldig roter Schein.

Ich aber zog den Wald entlang
Und hörte auch den Schall.
Ach! was seit jener Stund' ich sang,
War nur sein Widerhall.

Emanuel von Geibel

Love's magic

Love, as a nightingale,
Perched on a rosebush and sang;
The wondrous sound floated
Along the green forest.

And as it sounded, there arose a scent
From a thousand calyxes,
And all the treetops rustled softly,
And the breeze moved softer still;
The brooks fell silent, barely
Having babbled from the heights,
The fawns stood as if in a dream
And listened to the sound.

Brighter, and ever brighter
The sun shone on the scene,
And poured its red glow
Over flowers, forest and glen.

But I made my way along the path
And also heard the sound.
Ah! all that I've sung since that hour
Was merely its echo.

Der Mond kommt still gegangen

Der Mond kommt still gegangen
Mit seinem gold'nen Schein.
Da schläft in holdem Prangen
Die müde Erde ein.

Und auf den Lüften schwanken
Aus manchem treuen Sinn
Viel tausend Liebesgedanken
Über die Schläfer hin.

Und drunten im Tale, da funkeln
Die Fenster von Liebchens Haus;
Ich aber blicke im Dunklen
Still in die Welt hinaus.

Emanuel von Geibel

The moon rises silently
With its golden glow.
The weary earth then falls asleep
In beauty and splendour.

Many thousand loving thoughts
From many faithful minds
Sway on the breezes
Over those who slumber.

And down in the valley
The windows sparkle of my beloved's
house;
But I in the darkness gaze
Silently out into the world.

Ich hab' in deinem Auge

Ich hab' in deinem Auge
Den Strahl der ewigen Liebe gesehen,
Ich sah auf deinen Wangen
Einmal die Rosen des Himmels stehn.

Und wie der Strahl im Aug' erlischt
Und wie die Rosen zerstieben,
Ihr Abglanz ewig neu erfrischt,
Ist mir im Herzen geblieben,

Und niemals werd' ich die Wangen
seh'n
Und nie in's Auge dir blicken,
So werden sie mir in Rosen steh'n
Und es den Strahl mir schicken.

Friedrich Rückert

I saw in your eyes
The ray of eternal love,
I saw on your cheeks
The roses of heaven.

And as the ray dies in your eyes,
And as the roses scatter,
Their reflection, forever new,
Has remained in my heart,

And never will I look at your cheeks,
And never will I gaze into your eyes,
And not see the glow of roses,
And the ray of love.

Die stille Lotosblume

Die stille Lotosblume
Steigt aus dem blauen See,

The silent lotus flower
Rises out of the blue lake,

Die Blätter flimmern und blitzen,
Der Kelch ist weiß wie Schnee.

Da gießt der Mond vom Himmel
All seinen gold'nen Schein,
Gießt alle seine Strahlen
In ihren Schoß hinein.

Im Wasser um die Blume
Kreiset ein weißer Schwan,
Er singt so süß, so leise
Und schaut die Blume an.

Er singt so süß, so leise
Und will im Singen vergehn.
O Blume, weiße Blume,
Kannst du das Lied verstehn?

Emanuel von Geibel

Its leaves glitter and glow,
Its cup is as white as snow.

The moon then pours from heaven
All its golden light,
Pours all its rays
Into the lotus flower's bosom.

In the water, round the flower,
A white swan circles,
It sings so sweetly, so quietly,
And gazes on the flower.

It sings so sweetly, so quietly,
And wishes to die as it sings.
O flower, white flower,
Can you fathom the song?

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provided via Oxford International Song
Festival (www.oxfordsong.org)

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges,
Herzliebchen, trag' ich dich fort,
Fort nach den Fluren des Ganges,
Dort weiss ich den schönsten Ort.

Dort liegt ein rotblühender Garten
Im stillen Mondenschein;
Die Lotosblumen erwarten
Ihr trautes Schwesterlein.

Die Veilchen kichern und kosen,
Und schau'n nach den Sternen empor;
Heimlich erzählen die Rosen
Sich duftende Märchen ins Ohr.

Es hüpfen herbei und lauschen
Die frommen, klugen Gazell'n;
Und in der Ferne rauschen
Des heil'gen Stromes Well'n.

Felix Mendelssohn

On wings of song, my dearest,
I shall carry you away,
away to the meadows by the Ganges;
I know the loveliest place there.

A garden with red blooms
lies there in the still moonlight;
the lotus flowers await
their cherished sister.

The violets titter and flirt
and look up at the stars;
secretly the roses recount
fragrant tales in each other's ears.

Coming friskily to listen
are the innocent, quick gazelles;
in the distance murmur
the waves of the sacred river.

Dort wollen wir niedersinken
Unter dem Palmenbaum,
Und Lieb' und Ruhe trinken
Und träumen seligen Traum.

Heinrich Heine

There we will sink down
beneath the palm tree
and taste love and peace
and dream blessed dreams.

English Translation © Richard Wigmore,
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Maienlied, op. 1 no. 4

Läuten kaum die Maienglocken,
Leise durch den lauen Wind,
Hebt ein Knabe froh erschrocken,
Aus dem Grase sich geschwind.
Schüttelt in den Blütenflocken,
Seine feinen blonden Locken,
Schelmisch sinnend wie ein Kind.

Und nun wehen Lerchenlieder
Und es schlägt die Nachtigall,
Von den Bergen rauschend wieder
Kommt der kühle Wasserfall.
Rings im Walde bunt Gefieder,
Frühling, Frühling ist es wieder
Und ein Jauchzen überall.

Und den Knaben hört man schwirren,
Goldne Fäden, zart und lind,
Durch die Lüfte künstlich wirren,
Und ein süßer Krieg beginnt.
Suchen, fliehen, schmachend irren,
Bis sich Alle hold verwirren.
O besel'gend Labyrinth!

J. von Eichendorff

Fanny Mendelssohn

Hardly do the lilies-of-the-valley ring
faintly in the gentle wind,
than a boy starts gaily
and quickly from the grass.
In the blossoms he shakes
his fine blond locks,
with roguish feeling, like a child.

And now the lark songs can be heard,
and the nightingale sings;
from the mountains roars again
the sound of the cool waterfall.
Around the forest are bright feathers;
It is Spring again
and there is rejoicing everywhere.

And one hears the boy twanging;
golden threads, delicate and gentle,
stir the air in a synthetic commotion,
and a sweet war begins.
There is searching, fleeing, languishing
yearning,
until everything tangles itself sweetly.
O blissful labyrinth!

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Die Liebende schreibt

Ein Blick von deinen Augen in die
meinen,
Ein Kuß von deinem Mund auf meinem
Munde,
Wer davon hat, wie ich, gewisse Kunde,
Mag dem was anders wohl erfreulich
scheinen?

Entfernt von dir, entfremdet von den
Meinen,
Da führ ich die Gedanken in die Runde,
Und immer treffen sie auf jene Stunde,
Die einzige; da fang ich an zu weinen.

Die Träne trocknet wieder
unversehens:
Er liebt ja, denk ich, her in diese Stille,
O solltest du nicht in die Ferne reichen?

Vernimm das Lispeln dieses
Liebewehens;
Mein einzig Glück auf Erden ist dein
Wille,
Dein freundlicher, zu mir; gib mir ein
Zeichen!

Johann Wolfgang Goethe

Wandrer's Nachtlid II

Über allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh',
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.
Warte nur, balde
Ruhest du auch.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe

Felix Mendelssohn

One glance from your eyes into mine,
One kiss from your mouth onto my
mouth,
Who, like me, is assured of these,
Can he take pleasure in anything else?

Far from you, estranged from my family,
I let my thoughts rove constantly,
And always they fix on that hour,
That precious hour; and I begin to weep.

Suddenly my tears grow dry again:
His love, I think, he sends into this
silence,
And should you not reach out into the
distance?

Receive the murmurs of this loving sigh;
Your will is my sole happiness on earth,
Your kind will; give me a sign!

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Fanny Mendelssohn

Over every mountain-top
Lies peace,
In every tree-top
You scarcely feel
A breath of wind;
The little birds are hushed in the
wood.
Wait, soon you too
Will be at peace.

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provided via Oxford International Song
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Frauenliebe und -leben

Seit ich ihn gesehen,

Glaub ich blind zu sein;
Wo ich hin nur blicke,
Seh ich ihn allein;
Wie im wachen Traume
Schwebt sein Bild mir vor,
Taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel,
Heller nur empor.

Sonst ist licht- und farblos
Alles um mich her,
Nach der Schwestern Spiele
Nicht begehrt ich mehr,
Möchte lieber weinen,
Still im Kämmerlein;
Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub ich blind zu sein.

Er, der Herrlichste von allen,

Wie so milde, wie so gut!
Holde Lippen, klares Auge,
Heller Sinn und fester Mut.

So wie dort in blauer Tiefe,
Hell und herrlich, jener Stern,
Also er an meinem Himmel,
Hell und herrlich, hehr und fern.

Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen;
Nur betrachten deinen Schein,
Nur in Demut ihn betrachten,
Selig nur und traurig sein!

Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,
Deinem Glücke nur geweiht;
Darfst mich niedere Magd nicht kennen,
Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!

Robert Schumann

Since first seeing him,

I think I am blind,
Wherever I look,
Him only I see;
As in a waking dream
His image hovers before me,
Rising out of deepest darkness
Ever more brightly.

All else is dark and pale
Around me,
My sisters' games
I no more long to share,
I would rather weep
Quietly in my room;
Since first seeing him,
I think I am blind.

He, the most wonderful of all,

How gentle and loving he is!
Sweet lips, bright eyes,
A clear mind and firm resolve.

Just as there in the deep-blue distance
That star gleams bright and brilliant,
So does he shine in my sky,
Bright and brilliant, distant and
sublime.

Wander, wander on your way,
Just to gaze on your radiance,
Just to gaze on in humility,
To be but blissful and sad!

Do not heed my silent prayer,
Uttered for your happiness alone,
You shall never know me, lowly as I am,
You noble star of splendour!

Nur die Würdigste von allen
Darf beglücken deine Wahl,
Und ich will die Hohe segnen,
Viele tausendmal.

Will mich freuen dann und weinen,
Selig, selig bin ich dann;
Sollte mir das Herz auch brechen,
Brich, o Herz, was liegt daran?

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben,

Es hat ein Traum mich berückt;
Wie hätt er doch unter allen
Mich Arme erhöht und beglückt?

Mir war's, er habe gesprochen:
„Ich bin auf ewig dein“—
Mir war's—ich träume noch immer,
Es kann ja nimmer so sein.

O lass im Traume mich sterben,
Gewieget an seiner Brust,
Den seligen Tod mich schlürfen
In Tränen unendlicher Lust.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringelein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

Ich hatt ihn ausgeträumet,
Der Kindheit friedlich schönen Traum,
Ich fand allein mich, verloren
Im öden, unendlichen Raum.

Du Ring an meinem Finger
Da hast du mich erst belehrt,
Hast meinem Blick erschlossen
Des Lebens unendlichen, tiefen Wert.

Only the worthiest woman of all
May your choice elate,
And I shall bless that exalted one
Many thousands of times.

Then shall I rejoice and weep,
Blissful, blissful shall I be,
Even if my heart should break,
Break, O heart, what does it matter?

I cannot grasp it, believe it,
A dream has beguiled me;
How, from all women, could he
Have exalted and favoured poor me?

He said, I thought,
'I am yours forever',
I was, I thought, still dreaming,
After all, it can never be.

O let me, dreaming, die,
Cradled on his breast;
Let me savour blissful death
In tears of endless joy.

You ring on my finger,
My golden little ring,
I press you devoutly to my lips,
To my heart.

I had finished dreaming
Childhood's peaceful dream,
I found myself alone, forlorn
In boundless desolation.

You ring on my finger,
You first taught me,
Opened my eyes
To life's deep eternal worth.

Ich will ihm dienen, ihm leben,
Ihm angehören ganz,
Hin selber mich geben und finden
Verklärt mich in seinem Glanz.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringelein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
Freundlich mich schmücken,
Dient der Glücklichen heute mir,
Windet geschäftig
Mir um die Stirne
Noch der blühenden Myrte Zier.

Als ich befriedigt,
Freudigen Herzens,
Sonst dem Geliebten im Arme lag,
Immer noch rief er,
Sehnsucht im Herzen,
Ungeduldig den heutigen Tag.

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
Helft mir verscheuchen
Eine törichte Bangigkeit,
Dass ich mit klarem
Aug ihn empfangen,
Ihn, die Quelle der Freudigkeit.

Bist, mein Geliebter,
Du mir erschienen,
Giebst du mir, Sonne, deinen Schein?
Lass mich in Andacht,
Lass mich in Demut,
Lass mich verneigen dem Herren mein.

Streuet ihm, Schwestern,
Streuet ihm Blumen,
Bringet ihm knospende Rosen dar,

I shall serve him, live for him,
Belong to him wholly,
Yield to him and find
Myself transfigured in his light.

You ring on my finger,
My golden little ring,
I press you devoutly to my lips,
To my heart.

Help me, my sisters,
With my bridal attire,
Serve me today in my joy,
Busily braid
About my brow
The wreath of blossoming myrtle.

When with contentment
And joy in my heart
I lay in my beloved's arms,
He still called,
With longing heart,
Impatiently for this day.

Help me, my sisters,
Help me banish
A foolish fearfulness;
So that I with bright eyes
May receive him,
The source of all my joy.

Have you, my love,
Really entered my life,
Do you, O sun, give me your glow?
Let me in reverence,
Let me in humility
Bow before my lord.

Scatter flowers, O sisters,
Scatter flowers before him,
Bring him budding roses.

Aber euch, Schwestern,
Grüss ich mit Wehmut,
Freudig scheidend aus

Süsser Freund, du blickest

Mich verwundert an,
Kannst es nicht begreifen,
Wie ich weinen kann;
Lass der feuchten Perlen
Ungewohnte Zier
Freudig hell erzittern
In dem Auge mir!

Wie so bang mein Busen,
Wie so wonnevoll!
Wüsst ich nur mit Worten,
Wie ich's sagen soll;
Komm und birg dein Antlitz
Hier an meiner Brust,
Will in's Ohr dir flüstern
Alle meine Lust.

Weisst du nun die Tränen,
Die ich weinen kann,
Sollst du nicht sie sehen,
Du geliebter Mann?
Bleib an meinem Herzen,
Fühle dessen Schlag,
Dass ich fest und fester
Nur dich drücken mag.

Hier an meinem Bette
Hat die Wiege Raum,
Wo sie still verberge
Meinen holden Traum;
Kommen wird der Morgen,
Wo der Traum erwacht,
Und daraus dein Bildnis
Mir entgegen lacht.

But you, sisters,
I greet with sadness,
As I joyfully take leave of you.

Sweet friend, you look

At me in wonder,
You cannot understand
How I can weep;
Let the unfamiliar beauty
Of these moist pearls
Tremble joyfully bright
In my eyes!

How anxious my heart is,
How full of bliss!
If only I knew
How to say it in words;
Come and hide your face
Here against my breast,
For me to whisper you
All my joy.

Do you now understand the tears
That I can weep,
Should you not see them,
Beloved husband?
Stay by my heart,
Feel how it beats,
That I may press you
Closer and closer.

Here by my bed
There is room for the cradle,
Silently hiding
My blissful dream;
The morning shall come
When the dream awakens,
And your likeness
Laughs up at me.

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!

Das Glück ist die Liebe, die Lieb ist das Glück,
Ich hab's gesagt und nehm's nicht zurück.

Hab überschwenglich mich geschätzt,
Bin übergücklich aber jetzt.

Nur die da säugt, nur die da liebt
Das Kind, dem sie die Nahrung giebt;

Nur eine Mutter weiss allein,
Was lieben heisst und glücklich sein.

O, wie bedaur' ich doch den Mann,
Der Mutterglück nicht fühlen kann!

Du lieber, lieber Engel, Du
Du schauest mich an und lächelst dazu!

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!

**Nun hast du mir den ersten
Schmerz getan,**
Der aber traf.
Du schläfst, du harter, unbarmherz'ger
Mann, Den Todesschlaf.

Es blicket die Verlassne vor sich hin,
Die Welt ist leer.
Geliebet hab ich und gelebt, ich bin
Nicht lebend mehr.

Ich zieh' mich in mein Innres still zurück,
Der Schleier fällt,
Da hab ich dich und mein verlornes
Glück,
Du meine Welt!

Adelbert von Chamisso

On my heart, at my breast,
You my delight, my joy!

Happiness is love, love is happiness,
I've always said and say so still.

I thought myself rapturous,
But now am delirious with joy.

Only she who suckles, only she who loves
The child that she nourishes;

Only a mother knows
What it means to love and be happy.

Ah, how I pity the man
Who cannot feel a mother's bliss!

You dear, dear angel, you,
You look at me and you smile!

On my heart, at my breast,
You my delight, my joy!

**Now you have caused me my first
pain,**
But it struck hard,
You sleep, you harsh and pitiless man,
The sleep of death.

The deserted one stares ahead,
The world is void.
I have loved and I have lived,
And now my life is done.

Silently I withdraw into myself,
The veil falls,
There I have you and my lost
happiness,
You, my world!

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Festival (www.oxfordsong.org)

Consone Quartet

The first period instrument string quartet to be selected as BBC New Generation Artists, the Consone Quartet are fast making a name for themselves with their honest and expressive interpretations of repertoire, notably from the classical and romantic eras.

Formed at the Royal College of Music in London, the Consone Quartet launched their professional career in 2015, shortly after which they were awarded two prizes at the 2015 York Early Music International Young Artists Competition, including the EUBO Development Trust Prize and a place on the EEEmerging Scheme in France. They went on to win the 2016 Royal Over-Seas League Ensemble Prize, and in 2022 were awarded a prestigious Borletti-Buitoni Trust (BBT) fellowship.

The quartet has been enthusiastically received at London's major venues, as well as further afield in Poland, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Bulgaria and Slovenia. Festival invitations include Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Dartington, Two Moors, Buxton, MA Festival in Bruges, Heidelberger Streichquartettfest and Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in Germany. This year the quartet returns to the English Haydn Festival and the York Early Music Festival, both of which are loyal supporters and regularly host the group. Consone are Artists-in-Residence at Paxton House (2023-2025) and at Saxon Shore Early Music Kenardington (2024-2027). Following tours of South America (2018) and Canada (2023) the quartet will return to North America in 2025 to perform both alone and in with pianist Kristian Bezuidenhout.

Last year the Consone Quartet premiered a new work for string sextet by Gavin Bryars, commissioned by friends of the Quartet, the Borletti-Buitoni Trust and BBC Radio 3. The sextet, entitled 'The Bridges of Königsberg', was featured in six concerts around the UK, culminating in a London premiere at St Martin-in-the-Fields, which was broadcast on Radio 3. The concerts were kindly supported by the Continuo Foundation.

Education work remains a core interest to the group, having worked with students at the Royal College of Music in London, Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, as Hans Keller Fellows for 2020-2022.

The Consone's debut recording explored music by Haydn and Mendelssohn. In 2022 they launched a new partnership with Linn Records, beginning with the complete cycle of Mendelssohn's string quartets. The first album, released in Spring 2023 and featured both the '1823' and op. 44 no. 3 quartets.

consonequartet.com

Helen Charlston

Helen Charlston was recently a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist (2021-23), and a recipient of the 2021 Ferrier Loveday Song Prize. In 2023 she won a *Gramophone Award* for Best Concept Album, and collected the vocal award at the *BBC Music Magazine Awards*, both for her second Delphian album: *Battle Cry* – the only recording that year to win at both ceremonies.

Helen was a Rising Star of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment 2017-2019, and was selected for Le Jardin des Voix academy with Les Arts Florissants in 2021. Helen's other accolades include the first prize in the 2018 Handel Singing Competition and finalist in the Grange Festival International Singing Competition. In July 2022 Helen was announced as one of Classic FM's Rising Stars (30 under 30). In the 2022/23 Season she made her debut at Versailles Royal Opera singing Dido in Purcell *Dido & Aeneas*, and at Grange Festival singing Sorceress/Spirit in the same opera. This season she covers the title role in Charpentier *Médée* at Opéra national de Paris.

On the concert platform in 2023/24, Helen premieres a new song cycle written for her as a companion piece to Schumann *Dichterliebe* by Héloïse Werner at the Oxford International Song Festival and Wigmore Hall, reunites with Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Richard Egarr to perform Bach B minor Mass, tours Bach's *St John Passion* with Les Arts Florissants in Asia, records Britten *Phaedra* live in concert with BBC Philharmonic, sings Handel's *Messiah* with the Warsaw Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic, and Britten Sinfonia, and Monteverdi's *Vespers* in Geneva with Ensemble I Gemelli.

helencharlston.com

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YORK EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

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