If wishes were fairies I would not stay,
But they would wile my soul away;
And peace would creep
Into my sleep as soft
As a dream at evenfall,
When the crickets sing
And the curlews call;
And 'tis I would wake for no
New morrow
On the grey round of this
World of sorrow.

*Loch Kyoonbawn, the fair, calm lake
'Moymalla, the plain of honey

Text by Joseph Cambell (1879-1944)
Program

from 25 Schottische Lieder, Op. 108

The sweetest lad was Jamie
Sunset

Four Songs for soprano, cello and piano

Mercy
Stones
The Lacemaker
Shelter

Schon lacht der holde Frühling

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Musicians:
André Previn
(b. 1929)
W. A. Mozart
(1756-1791)

Ludwig van Beethoven's folksong settings are among the least familiar of his output, yet he wrote far more of them than any other genre, composing 180 arrangements of Scottish, Irish, and Welsh folksongs for one or more voices with piano, violin, and cello accompaniment between 1809 and 1818. This body of work stemmed from collaboration with George Thomson, a Scotsman who was an avid music lover and amateur cellist, and grew out of a movement from the early 18th century to collect folksongs. However, Thomson wanted to make his collections surpass his predecessors in scope, variety, and quality. To do this, he commissioned well-known figures such as Haydn and Beethoven to write complex harmonizations, to compose instrumental introductions and postludes, and to add optional violin and cello parts. Although Beethoven's settings were considered to be of exceedingly high quality, they were too complicated for amateur musicians to play. As a result, none of them sold well, and were deemed too difficult for their intended public.

The sweetest lad was Jamie
The sweetest lad was Jamie,
The sweetest, the dearest,
And well did Jamie love me,
And not a fault has he.
Yet one he had it spoke his praise,
He knew not woman's wish to tease,
He knew not all our silly ways, alas!
The woe to me!

For though I loved my Jamie
Sincerely and dearly,
Yet often when he wooed me,
I held my head on high;
And huffed and tossed with saucy air,
And danc'd with Donald at the fair,
And plac'd his ribbon in my hair and
Jamie pass'd him by!

So when the war pipes sounded,
Dear Jamie, he left me,
And now some other maiden
Will Jamie turn to woo.
My heart will break,
And well it may,
For who would word of pity say
To her who threw a heart away,
So faithful and so true!
Oh! Knew he how I loved him, 
Sincerely and dearly; 
How I would fly to meet him! 
Oh! Happy were the day! 
Some kind, kind friend, 
Oh, come between, 
And tell him of my altered mien! 
That Jeanie has not Jeanie been 
Since Jamie went away.

Sunset

The sun upon the Weirdlaw hill, 
In Ettrick's vale is sinking sweet; 
The westland wind is hush and still, 
The lake lies sleeping at my feet. 
Yet not the landscape to mine eye 
Bears those bright hues that once it bore; 
Tho' Ev'ning, 
With her richest dye, 
Flames o'er the hulls on Ettrick's shore.

With listless look along the plain, 
I see Tweed's silver current glide; 
And coldly mark the holy fane of 
Melrose rise in ruin'd pride. 
The quiet lake, the balmy air, 
The hill, the stream, the tower, 
The tree, are they still 
Such as once they were, 
Or is the dreary change in me?

Alas the warp'd and broken board, 
How can it bear the painters dye? 
The harp of strain'd and tuneless chord, 
How to the minstrel's skill reply? 
To aching eyes 
Each landscape lowers, 
To feverish pulse each gale blows chill: 
And Araby's or Eden's bowers, 
Were barren as this moorland hill.

Text by George Thompson (1757 - 1821)

Four Songs for soprano, cello, and piano

Four Songs for soprano, cello and piano were written in 1994 by André Previn, and use poems by Toni Morrison. The first song, Mercy, examines how the media looks at starvation, blood and misfortune in settings such as Ethiopia. The traveler and the probing camera, as referred to in the poem, attempt to exploit those in this circumstance who can only turn away in shame. The poem expresses embarrassment at the way the media invades the privacy of the dying. The musical setting for this poem can be described as static, somber, slow and chromatic. The poem used for Stones is based on an old blues song called Rocks in my Bed and was inspired by the blues singer Bessie Smith. The voice in this poem is a brash, bold woman who is angry at the absence of a man in her life. Only stones warm her bed at night. In The Lacemaker, the character in the poem is hollow, regretful, and mournful. The lyrics describe a spinster, a woman who has settled for less in life. Her vocation as a lacemaker has prevented her from committing 'crimes' in her life- that is, passions that she has left unexplored. The music reflects this intense sadness and disappointment. The vocal line is segmented and simple, while the cello and piano are highlighted throughout. In this way, Previn's music is highly representative of the poem; underscoring a woman who has lived an insignificant and lackluster life. The final song, Shelter, is about a woman who is having a good time in her imagination. She thinks about her man and of the challenges, both mythical and metaphorical, that she can overcome with him.

Mercy

I could watch heads 
turn from the traveler's look 
the camera's probe 
bear the purity of their 
shame 
hear mute desolation in syllables 
ancient as 
death. 
I could do these things if only if only 
I knew that when milk 
spills 
and hearts stop 
derheel 
some small thing gone 
chill 
is right to warm toward a touch because 
mercy 
lies in wait 
like a shore. 
Mercy like a shore.
Stones

I don't need no man
telling me I ain't one.
My trigger finger strong
as his on a shot gun.
Buttercake and roses smooth
stones in my bed.
Handmade quilts cover
stones in my bed.
I don't need no man
telling me I ain't one.
My backbone ain't like his
but at least I got one.
High-heeled slippers break
stones in my bed.
Games played at night trick
stones in my bed.
Stones in my bed. Stones.
I don't need no man telling me.

The Lacemaker

I am as you see
what most becomes me;
miles skipped
cancelled trips
masters yet unmet.
Lace alone is loyal, sacred, royal,
in control
of crimes stopped
by patterns of blood
bred to best behavior.
As you see I am
what has become of me.

Shelter

In this soft place
Under your wings
I will find shelter
From ordinary things.

Here are the mountains
I want to scale
Amazon rivers
I'm dying to sail.

Here the eyes of the forest
I can hold in a stare
And smile at the movement
Of Medusa's green hair.

Schon lacht der holde Frühling

W.A. Mozart's Schon lacht der holde Frühling is full of coloratura writing—pyrotechnic runs, leaps, and ornaments in the upper range of the soprano voice. It is a free-standing concert aria that does not come from a Mozart opera, although it is commonly included in the less-than-famous Il barbiere di Siviglia by Giovanni Paisiello.

Schon lacht der holde Frühling
Auf blumenreichen Matten,
Wo sich Zephire gatten
Unter geselligem Scherze.
Wenn auch auf allen Zweigen
Sich junge Blüten zeigen,
Kehrt doch kein leiser
Trost in dieses arme Herz.
Da sitze ich und weine
Einsam auf der Flur
Nicht um mein verlornes Schafchen,
Nein, um den Schäfer Lindor nur.

Anonymous text

Already fair Spring smiles
On flowerdight meadows,
Where west winds mate
In convivial sport.
Although young blossoms appear
On every branch,
No gentle consolation
Returns to this poor heart.
Here I sit and weep
Alone in the lea
But it is not for my lost lamb,
No, it is for the shepherd Lindoro that I weep.

Translation by S. Spencer

Leden

In her short life, Vítězslava Kaprálová showed every sign of becoming a major musical figure in the 20th century, studying with prominent composition and conducting teachers, winning prestigious international composition prizes, and even conducting the BBC Orchestra in London in 1938. She composed in all genres yet maintained a special place in her heart for the art song. Leden was written in 1933. For the surrealistic text by the Czech poet Vítězslav Nezval, Kaprálová chose an unusual instrumentation, flute, two violins, cello and piano, the affect of which creates a unique atmosphere, capturing the decadent imagery and melancholy emotions of the poem. Kaprálová died in exile in France in 1940 from tuberculosis.
from Romance-Suite

Dmitri Shostakovich composed the song cycle Romance-Suite for soprano, violin, cello and piano in 1967, utilizing texts from the Russian poet, Alexander Blok. Shostakovich combines three obbligato instruments in a variety of ways so as to produce a panoply of contrasting forms which exploits all the possibilities of tone-painting inherent in the images and moods of Blok’s lyrics. Ophelia’s Song is loosely tied to Shakespeare’s Hamlet, as Shostakovich’s version describes Hamlet as a warrior who leaves without returning and who dies far away. We were together depicts a tender love song for the violin, which contrasts with the following song, The Sleeping City. This melancholy depiction cannot silence the “dark days” in the poet’s heart. In the fourth song, a ferocious Storm unleashes its rage, yet shows pity for those who have no roof over their head. This is followed by Secret Signs, the most ambiguous of the set. The cycle ends with Music, which features the entire ensemble.

Опхелия.

Песня Офелии
Разлучаясь с девой милой, друг,
Ты клялся мне любить!
Уезжая в край постельный,
Кляту данную хранить!
Там, за Данией счастливой,
Берега твои во мгле
Вал сердитый, говорливый
Моет слёзы на скале.
Мильный вонь не вернётся,
Весь одетый в серебро
В гробе тяжко всколыхнётся
Бант и чёрное перо.

Опхелия.

Ophelia’s Song

When you left your beloved,
My love, you swore to love me,
You left for a distant land,
And swore to keep your oath!

Beyond the happy land of Denmark,
The shores are in darkness,
The angry waves wash
Over the rocks.

My warrior shall not return,
All dressed in silver.
The bow, and the black feather
Will restlessly lie in their grave.

Мы были вместе

Мы были вместе, помню я
Ночь волновавшую, скрипку пела,
Ты в этих днях была моя,
Ты с каждым часом хорошоела.

Сквозь тихое жутчанье струй,
Сквозь тайну женственной ульбки
К устан просился подседел,
Просились в сердце звуки скрипки.

Город спит

Город спит, окутан глою,
Чуть мерцают фонари
Там далеко, за Невой,
Вижу отблески зарии.
В этом дальнем отраженьи,
В этих отблесках отгна
Приятно пробужденье
Дней, тосливых для меня.

Буря

О, как безумен за окном Ревёт,
Бушует буря зла,
Несутся тучи, льют дождём,
И ветер воет, замирает!

Ужасна ночь! В такую ночь
Мис жал людей, лишённых кровь,
Сожаленье гонит прочь -
В объятья холода сырого!

Бороться с мраком и дождём,
Определив свои границы
О, как безумен за окном
Бушует ветер, изнывая!

Тайные знаки

Разгораются тайные знаки
На глухой, непробудной стене
Золотые и красные маки
Надо мной тяготеют во сне.

Укрывался в ночное пещеры
И не помню суровых чудес.
На заре голубые химеры
Смотрят в зеркале ярких небес.

We were together

We were together, I remember
Violins sang in vibrant darkness,
You were mine then,
With every hour you grew more fair.

The secrets of a woman’s smile,
The quiet whispering of breezes
Set tender kisses on my lips,
Like the strings of love in my heart.

The tempest

Beyond my window, fierce and wild,
The savage tempest roars and rages,
Outside my window,
The clouds fly over, the rain teems down,
And the wind whines and moans!

Oh, awful darkness! On such a night
I pity those bereft of shelter:
A deep compassion drives me forth
To share the winter’s Damp embraces!

To strive against the gloom and rain,
At one with outcasts, doomed to suffer
Beyond my window, fierce and wild,
The raging wind sinks in exhaustion!

Secret Signs

The secret signs appear
On the impenetrable wall.
Golden and crimson poppies
Blossom in my dreams.

I drown in the caverns of night
And forget the magic of my dreams.
My fanciful thoughts reflect
In the bright heavens.
These moments will disappear,  
And the young beauty's eyes  
Will close  
Like the pages of a book.

The star's canopy is low now,  
The darkest dreams lie in the bottom of the heart.  
My end is close, as fate has ordained,  
War and fire are before me.

At night, when agitation dies down,  
When the city sinks into the mist,  
O how much music  
There is in the heavens,  
And what concert on earth!

Forget the storms of your life,  
See such beautiful roses bloom!  
What are the tears of humans  
When the hour of twilight comes!

O sovereign of the universe,  
Accept through pain and blood  
The cup filled to the brim  
With your slave's desires.

Translation by Jeremy Drake

Roger Quilter was an English composer who is known mostly for his vocal music.  
A prolific composer, his output forms an important body for early 20th century song repertoire.  
Three Pastoral Songs use verses by a contemporary Irish poet, Joseph Campbell. It dates from 1921 and was designed originally for low voice and piano trio.

I will go with my father a-ploughing
I will go with my father a-ploughing  
To the green field by the sea,  
And the rooks and the crows  
and the seagulls  
Will come flocking after me.  
I will sing to the patient horses  
With the lark in the shine of the air,  
And my father will sing the plough-song  
That blesses the cleaving share.

I will go with my father a-sowing  
To the red field by the sea,  
And the rooks and the gulls  
and the starlings  
Will come flocking after me.  
I will sing to the striding sowers  
With the finch on the flow'ring sloe,  
And my father will sing the seed-song  
That only the wise men know.

I will go with my father a-reaping  
To the brown field by the sea,  
And the geese and the crows  
and the children  
Will come flocking after me.  
I will sing to the weary reapers  
With the wren in the heat of the sun,  
And my father will sing the scythe-song  
That joys for the harvest done.

In Cherry Valley the cherries blow;  
The valley paths are white as snow  
And in their time with clusters red  
The heavy boughs are crimsoned.  
Now the low moon is looking thro'  
The glimmer of the honey dew.  
A petal trembles to the grass,  
The feet of fairies pass and pass.

I wish and I wish  
I wish and I wish and I wish I were  
A golden bee in the blue of the air,  
Winging my way at the mouth of day  
To the honey marges of  
Loch Kyoonbawn;  
Or a little green drake or a silver swan,  
Floating upon the stream of Aili,  
And I to be swimming gaily, gaily.

I wish and I wish and I wish I could be  
A bud on the branch of a red thorn tree  
That blows at the head of Blanid’s Bed,  
And sheds a petal at ev’ry breath;  
Or a white milestone on the shining path  
That climbs the cairn and dips the hollow,  
Up to the walls of bright Moymalla.