



# CLARE COLLEGE CHAPEL

## Vocal Recital

Sunday 23 February 2025 at 5.25 p.m.

Isabella Theodosius (Clare 2022) | mezzo-soprano  
Isaac Chan (Clare 2023) | piano

*Les nuits d'été*, Op. 7

Hector Berlioz (1803–69)

- i. Villanelle*
- ii. Le spectre de la rose*
- iii. Sur les lagunes: lament*
- iv. Absence*
- v. Au cimetière: clair de lune*
- vi. L'île inconnue: barcarolle*

### **i. Villanelle**

Quand viendra la saison nouvelle,  
Quand auront disparu les froids,  
Tous les deux nous irons, ma belle,  
Pour cueillir le muguet aux bois;  
Sous nos pieds égrenant les perles  
Que l'on voit au matin trembler,  
Nous irons écouter les merles  
Siffler!

Le printemps est venu, ma belle;  
C'est le mois des amants béni,  
Et l'oiseau, satinant son aile,  
Dit ses vers au rebord du nid.  
Oh! viens donc sur ce banc de mousse,  
Pour parler de nos beaux amours,  
Et dis-moi de ta voix si douce:  
Toujours!

Loin, bien loin, égarant nos courses,  
Faisons fuir le lapin caché,  
Et le daim au miroir des sources  
Admirant son grand bois penché;  
Puis, chez nous, tout heureux, tout aises,  
En paniers enlaçant nos doigts,  
Revenons rapportant des fraises  
Des bois!

### **i. Villanelle**

*When the new season comes,  
When the cold has gone,  
We two will go, my sweet,  
To gather lilies-of-the-valley in the woods;  
Scattering as we tread the pearls of dew  
We see quivering each morn,  
We'll go and hear the blackbirds  
Sing!*

*Spring has come, my sweet;  
It is the season lovers bless,  
And the birds, preening their wings,  
Sing songs from the edge of their nests.  
Ah! Come, then, to this mossy bank  
To talk of our beautiful love,  
And tell me in your gentle voice:  
Forever!*

*Far, far away we'll stray from our path,  
Startling the rabbit from his hiding-place  
And the deer reflected in the spring,  
Admiring his great lowered antlers;  
Then home we'll go, serene and at ease,  
And entwining our fingers basket-like,  
We'll bring back home wild  
Strawberries!*

**ii. Le spectre de la rose**

Soulève ta paupière close  
Qu'effleure un songe virginal;  
Je suis le spectre d'une rose  
Que tu portais hier au bal.  
Tu me pris encore emperlée  
Des pleurs d'argent de l'arrosoir,  
Et parmi le fête étoilée  
Tu me promenas tout le soir.

Ô toi, qui de ma mort fus cause,  
Sans que tu puisses le chasser,  
Toutes les nuits mon spectre rose  
À ton chevet viendra danser.  
Mais ne crains rien, je ne réclame  
Ni messe ni –De profundis–;  
Ce léger parfum est mon âme,  
Et j'arrive du paradis.

Mon destin fut digne d'envie:  
Et pour avoir un sort si beau,  
Plus d'un aurait donné sa vie,  
Car sur ton sein j'ai mon tombeau,  
Et sur l'albâtre où je repose  
Un poète avec un baiser  
Écrivit: Ci-gît une rose  
Que tous les rois vont jalouser.

**iii. Sur les lagunes: Lamento**

Ma belle amie est morte:  
Je pleurerai toujours;  
Sous la tombe elle emporte  
Mon âme et mes amours.  
Dans le ciel, sans m'attendre,  
Elle s'en retourna;  
L'ange qui l'emmena  
Ne voulut pas me prendre.  
Que mon sort est amer!  
Ah! sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer!

Le blanche créature  
Est couchée au cercueil.  
Comme dans la nature  
Tout me paraît en deuil!  
La colombe oubliée  
Pleure et songe à l'absent;  
Mon âme pleure et sent  
Qu'elle est dépareillée.  
Que mon sort est amer!  
Ah! sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer!

**ii. The spectre of the rose**

*Open your eyelids,  
Brushed by a virginal dream;  
I am the spectre of a rose  
That yesterday you wore at the dance.  
You plucked me still sprinkled  
With silver tears of dew,  
And amid the glittering feast  
You wore me all evening long.*

*O you who brought about my death,  
You shall be powerless to banish me:  
The rosy spectre which every night  
Will come to dance at your bedside.  
But be not afraid – I demand  
Neither Mass nor De Profundis;  
This faint perfume is my soul,  
And I come from Paradise.*

*My destiny was worthy of envy;  
And for such a beautiful fate,  
Many would have given their lives –  
For my tomb is on your breast,  
And on the alabaster where I lie,  
A poet with a kiss  
Has written: Here lies a rose  
Which every king will envy.*

**iii. On the lagoons: a lament**

*My dearest love is dead:  
I shall weep for evermore;  
To the tomb she takes with her  
My soul and all my love.  
Without waiting for me  
She has returned to Heaven;  
The angel who took her away  
Did not wish to take me.  
How bitter is my fate!  
Alas! to set sail loveless across the sea!*

*The pure white being  
Lies in her coffin.  
How everything in nature  
Seems to mourn!  
The forsaken dove  
Weeps, dreaming of its absent mate;  
My soul weeps and feels  
Itself adrift.  
How bitter is my fate!  
Alas! to set sail loveless across the sea!*

Sur moi la nuit immense  
S'étend comme un linceul;  
Je chante ma romance  
Que le ciel entend seul.  
Ah! comme elle était belle,  
Et comme je l'aimais!  
Je n'aimerai jamais  
Une femme autant qu'elle.  
Que mon sort est amer!  
Ah! sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer!

*The immense night above me  
Is spread like a shroud;  
I sing my song  
Which heaven alone can bear.  
Ah! how beautiful she was,  
And how I loved her!  
I shall never love a woman  
As I loved her.  
How bitter is my fate!  
Alas! to set sail loveless across the sea!*

#### **iv. Absence**

Reviens, reviens, ma bien-aimée;  
Comme une fleur loin du soleil,  
La fleur de ma vie est fermée  
Loin de ton sourire vermeil!

#### **iv. Absence**

*Return, return, my sweetest love!  
Like a flower far from the sun,  
The flower of my life is closed  
Far from your crimson smile!*

Entre nos cœurs quelle distance!  
Tant d'espace entre nos baisers!  
Ô sort amer! ô dure absence!  
Ô grands désirs inapaisés!

*Such a distance between our hearts!  
So great a gulf between our kisses!  
O bitter fate! O harsh absence!  
O great unassuaged desires!*

Reviens, reviens, ma bien-aimée.  
Comme une fleur loin du soleil,  
La fleur de ma vie est fermée  
Loin de ton sourire vermeil!

*Return, return, my sweetest love!  
Like a flower far from the sun,  
The flower of my life is closed  
Far from your crimson smile!*

D'ici là-bas, que de campagnes,  
Que de villes et de hameaux,  
Que de vallons et de montagnes,  
À lasser le pied des chevaux.

*So many intervening plains,  
So many towns and hamlets,  
So many valleys and mountains  
To weary the horses' hooves.*

Reviens, reviens, ma bien-aimée.  
Comme une fleur loin du soleil,  
La fleur de ma vie est fermée  
Loin de ton sourire vermeil!

*Return, return, my sweetest love!  
Like a flower far from the sun,  
The flower of my life is closed  
Far from your crimson smile!*

**v. Au cimetière**

Connaissez-vous la blanche tombe  
Où flotte avec un son plaintif  
L'ombre d'un if?  
Sur l'if, une pâle colombe,  
Triste et seule, au soleil couchant,  
Chante son chant;

Un air maladivement tendre,  
À la fois charmant et fatal,  
Qui vous fait mal  
Et qu'on voudrait toujours entendre,  
Un air, comme en soupire aux cieux  
L'ange amoureux.

On dirait que l'âme éveillée  
Pleure sous terre à l'unisson  
De la chanson,  
Et du malheur d'être oubliée  
Se plaint dans un roucoulement  
Bien doucement.

Sur les ailes de la musique  
On sent lentement revenir  
Un souvenir;  
Une ombre, une forme angélique  
Passe dans un rayon tremblant,  
En voile blanc.

Les belles-de-nuit, demi-closes,  
Jettent leur parfum faible et doux  
Autour de vous,  
Et le fantôme aux molles poses  
Murmure, en vous tendant les bras:  
Tu reviendras?

Oh! jamais plus, près de la tombe  
Je n'irai quand descend le soir  
Au manteau noir,  
Écouter la pâle colombe  
Chanter sur la pointe de l'if  
Son chant plaintif!

**v. In the cemetery**

*Do you know the white tomb,  
Where the shadow of a yew  
Waves plaintively?  
On that yew a pale dove,  
Sad and solitary at sundown  
Sings its song;*

*A melody of morbid sweetness,  
Delightful and deathly at once,  
Which wounds you  
And which you'd like to hear forever,  
A melody, such as in the heavens,  
A lovesick angel sighs.*

*As if the awakened soul  
Weeps beneath the earth together  
With the song,  
And at the sorrow of being forgotten  
Murmurs its complaint  
Most meltingly.*

*On the wings of music  
You sense the slow return  
Of a memory;  
A shadow, an angelic form  
Passes in a shimmering beam,  
Veiled in white.*

*The Marvels of Peru, half-closed,  
Shed their fragrance sweet and faint  
About you,  
And the phantom with its languid gestures  
Murmurs, reaching out to you:  
Will you return?*

*Ah! nevermore shall I approach that tomb,  
When evening descends  
In its black cloak,  
To listen to the pale dove  
From the top of a yew  
Sing its plaintive song!*

**vi. L'île inconnue**

Dites, la jeune belle,  
Où voulez-vous aller?  
La voile ouvre son aile,  
La brise va souffler!

L'aviron est d'ivoire,  
Le pavillon de moire,  
Le gouvernail d'or fin;  
J'ai pour lest une orange,  
Pour voile une aile d'ange,  
Pour mousse un séraphin.

Dites, la jeune belle,  
Où voulez-vous aller?  
La voile ouvre son aile,  
La brise va souffler!

Est-ce dans la Baltique  
Dans la mer Pacifique,  
Dans l'île de Java?  
Ou bien est-ce en Norvège,  
Cueillir la fleur de neige  
Ou la fleur d'Angsoka?

Dites, la jeune belle,  
Où voulez-vous aller?

Menez-moi, dit la belle,  
À la rive fidèle  
Où l'on aime toujours.  
– Cette rive, ma chère,  
On ne la connaît guère  
Au pays des amours.

Où voulez-vous aller?  
La brise va souffler.

**vi. The unknowable isle**

*Tell me, pretty young maid,  
Where is it you would go?  
The sail is billowing,  
The breeze about to blow!*

*The oar is of ivory,  
The pennant of watered silk,  
The rudder of finest gold;  
For ballast I've an orange,  
For sail an angel's wing,  
For cabin-boy a seraph.*

*Tell me, pretty young maid,  
Where is it you would go?  
The sail is billowing,  
The breeze about to blow!*

*Perhaps the Baltic,  
Or the Pacific  
Or the Isle of Java?  
Or else to Norway,  
To pluck the snow flower  
Or the flower of Angsoka?*

*Tell me, pretty young maid,  
Where is it you would go?*

*Take me, said the pretty maid,  
To the shore of faithfulness  
Where love endures forever.  
– That shore, my sweet,  
Is scarce known  
In the realm of love.*

*Where is it you would go?  
The breeze is about to blow!*

Words *Théophile Gautier (1811–72)*

**Isabella Theodosius** is a third-year mezzo-soprano studying English at Clare College. She currently sings as an alto in Clare College Choir. Prior to Cambridge she studied with Samling Academy (2020-2022) in the North-East. Since arriving in Cambridge, she has performed regularly in solo recitals, having a particular interest in multi-media performance and is active in the university opera scene.

**Isaac Chan** is a second-year Music student at Clare, and is one of the university's Conducting Scholars, where he studies part-time at the Royal Academy of Music with Sian Edwards, and horn with Richard Watkins. He is the conductor of the university's Symphony Orchestra and Wind Orchestra, as well as principal horn of the flagship University Orchestra. In 2024, he was named conductor of the Hong Kong Youth Philharmonia, where he made his local debut with Mahler's First Symphony. He is engaged frequently with conducting at Trinity College Music Society, with programmes including Mahler's Fourth Symphony, *Siegfried Idyll* and a recent commemorative performance of Faure's *Requiem*. He is a double award-holder on the University's Instrumental Award Scheme, in both brass quintet and piano trio – as well as a previous choral scholar at Clare. He is one of the pianists in Cambridge's Lieder Scheme, and particularly enjoys conducting opera, having conducted productions such as *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Soldier's Tale*, and a reimagining of Mozart's operas. This summer, he looks forward to being an Assistant Conductor at the Vienna Opera Academy. Outside of performing, Isaac is a keen reader, enjoying fields from music theory to cultural history and philosophy.