

# A Woman's Love and Life: Then and Now

## Program Notes and Translations

Robert Schumann's (1810-1856) song cycle *Frauenlieben und leben* (1840) is beloved by many a Lieder fanatic for the progression of its short but impactful musical motives. Many a Lieder fanatic will also agree that Adelbert von Chamisso's (1781-1838) poetry does not age well today once they sit with the translation. Something about celebrating being a "lowly maiden" while worshipping a man you just met sits with me like a glass of milk without a dairy pill (read: not good.)

Enter Cheryl-Frances Hoad (b. 1980). Her 2011 song cycle *One Life Stand* set Sophie Hannah's (b. 1971) poems from 4 different poetry collections as a reaction to Chamisso's poetry. As the composition process went on, Hoad drew on Schumann's music to create correlating pieces, especially at the conclusion of each song cycle. This recital will juxtapose each correlating piece to show Hoad's progression from reaction to taking inspiration from Schumann.

### Seit ich ihn gesehen

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 in Kämmerlein;  
seit ich ihn gesehen,  
glaub' ich blind zu sein.

Since I saw him,  
I believe myself to be blind,  
where I but cast my gaze,  
I see him alone.  
As in waking dreams,  
his image floats before me,  
dipped from deepest darkness,  
brighter in ascent

All else dark and colorless  
everywhere around me,  
for the games of my sisters  
I no longer yearn.  
I would rather weep  
silently in my little chamber,  
Since I saw him,  
I believe myself to be blind.

### A Brief Encounter

I loved you and I left you at the station.  
I watched you on the platform and I waved,  
Taking in every scrap of information.  
Ev'ry last detail of your face, I saved.

Thinking that when the engine started running.  
And as the train proceeded down the track.  
You'd shrink, then disappear.

But love is cunning.

The station café faded into black,  
So did the world around you and beside you.

You alone seemed to grow.

In broken hearts both distance and perspective are denied you.  
Love looks no smaller as the train departs.

Text by Sophie Hannah, *First of the Last Chances* (2003)

### Er, der Herrlichste von Allen

Er, der Herrlichste von Allen,  
wie so milde, wie so gut!  
Holde Lippen, klares Auge,  
heller Sinn und fester Muth.

So wie dort und blauer Tiefe,  
hell und herrlich, jener Stern,  
also Er an meinem Himmel,  
hell und herrlich, heher und fern.

Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen;  
nur betrachten deinen Schein,  
nur in Demuth ihn betrachten,  
selig nur und traurig sein.

Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,  
deinem Glücke nur geweiht;  
darfst mich niedre Magd nicht kennen,  
hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit.

Nur die Würdigste von Allen  
darf beglücken deine Wahl,  
und ich will die Hohe segnen  
viele tausend Mal.

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

He, the most glorious of all,  
[Oh] how mild, [oh] how good!  
Lovely lips, clear eyes,  
bright mind, and steadfast courage.

Just as yonder in the blue depths,  
bright and glorious, that star,  
[as] He is in my heavens,  
bright and glorious, lofty and distant.

Meander, meander you paths,  
but to observe your gleam,  
but to observe in meekness,  
but to be blissful and sad!

Hear not my silent prayer,  
consecrated only to your happiness,  
you may not know me, [a] lowly maid,  
[you] lofty star of glory!

Only the worthiest of all  
may make happy your choice,  
and I will bless her, the lofty onw,  
many thousand times.

I will rejoice then and weep,  
blissful, blissful I'll be then;  
if my heart should also break,  
break, oh heart, what of it?

Er, der Herrlichste von Allen,  
wie so milde, wie so gut!  
Holde Lippen, klares Auge,  
heller Sinn und fester Muth,  
wie so milde, wie so gut!

He, the most glorious of all,  
[Oh] how mild, [oh] how good!  
Lovely lips, clear eyes,  
bright mind, and steadfast courage,  
[oh] how mild, [oh] how good!

### The Pros and the Cons

He'll be pleased if I phone to ask him how he is.  
It will make me look considerate and he likes considerate people.  
He'll be reassured to see that I haven't lost interest,  
which might make him happy and then I'll have done him a favour.  
If I phone him right now I'll get to speak to him sooner  
than I will if I sit around waiting for him to phone me.

If I want to and don't, aren't I being a bit immature?  
We're both adults.  
Does it matter, with adults, who makes the first move?

But there's always the chance he'll back off if I come on too strong.  
The less keen I appear, the more keen he's likely to be,  
and I phoned him twice on Thursday, and once on Friday.  
He must therefore be fully aware that it's his turn, not mine.

For all I know he could have gone off me already  
and if I don't phone I can always say, later,  
that I went off him first.

Text by Sophie Hannah, 1995-1996\*

### Ich kann's nicht fassen

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben,  
es hat ein Traum mich berückt;  
wie hätt er doch unter Allen  
mich Arme er höht und beglückt?

I can't grasp it, nor believe it,  
a dream has bewitched me;  
How should he, among all the others,  
lift up and make happy poor me?

Mir war's, er habe gesprochen,  
"ich bin auf ewig dein",  
mir war's, ich traume noch immer,  
es kann ja nimmer so sein!

It seemed to me, as if he spoke,  
"I am thine eternally",  
it seemed, I dreamed on and on,  
it could never be so!

O lass, im Traume mich Sterben,  
gewieget an seiner Brust,

Oh, let me die in this dream,  
cradled on his breast,

den seligsten Tod mich schlürfen  
in Thränen unendlicher Lust!

let the most blessed death drink me up  
in tears of infinite bliss!

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben,  
es hat ein Traum mich berückt;  
wie hätt er doch unter Allen  
mich Arme er höht und beglückt?

I can't grasp it, nor believe it,  
a dream has bewitched me,  
how should he, among all the others,  
lift up and make happy poor me?

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben,  
es hat ein Traum mich berückt!

I can't grasp it, nor believe it,  
a dream has bewitched me!

### Tide to Land

I know the rules and hear myself agree  
Not to invest beyond this one night stand.  
I know your pattern: in and out like the sea.  
The sharp north wind must blow away the sand.

Soon my supply will meet your last demand,  
And you have no further use for me.  
I will not swim against the tide to land.  
I know the rules and hear myself agree.

I've kept a stash of hours, just two or three,  
To smuggle off your coast like contraband.  
We will both manage (you more easily)  
Not to invest beyond this one night stand.

To narrow-minded friends I will expand  
On cheap not being the same as duty free.  
I'll say it was exactly what I planned.  
I know your pattern: in and out like the sea.

It's not as if we were designed to be  
Strolling along the beachfront, hand in hand.  
Things change, of natural necessity.  
The sharp north wind must blow away the sand.

And every storm to rage, however grand,  
Will end in pain and shipwreck and debris  
And each time there's a voice, I have to strand  
On a bare rock, hardened against its plea.

I know the rules.

Text by Sophie Hannah, *First of the Last Chances* (2003)

### Du Ring an meinem Finger

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

You ring on my little finger,  
my little golden ring,  
I press you piously upon my lips,  
[piously upon] my heart.

Ich hatt' in aus geträumet,  
der Kindheit friedlich schönen Traum,  
ich fand allein mich verloren,  
im öden, unendlichen Raum.

I had dreamt it,  
the tranquil, lovely dream of childhood,  
I found myself alone and lost  
in barren, infinite space.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,  
da hast du mich erst belehrt,  
hat meinem Blick erschlossen  
des Lebens unendlichen, tiefen Werth.

You ring on my little finger,  
you have taught me for the first time,  
have opened my gaze unto  
the endless, deep value of life.

Ich will ihm dienen, ihm leben,  
ihm angehöre ganz,  
hin selber mich geben und finden verklärt  
mich in seinem Glanz.

I want to serve him, live for him,  
belong to him [entirely],  
Give myself and find myself  
transfigured in his radiance.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,  
mein goldenes Ringelein,  
ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,  
an das Herze mein!

You ring on my finger,  
my little golden ring,  
I press you piously upon my lips,  
[piously upon] my heart!

### Ante-Natal

My husband doesn't want to hold the plastic pelvis model.  
He tells the other husbands that it's bound to be a doddle.  
He thinks the point of classes is to teach, not molly-coddle.  
He'll go so far, but not an inch beyond.

My husband is afraid of meeting women called Magenta,  
Of sharing wholesome snacks outside the Early Learning Centre,  
Of any exercise that's an incontinence preventor.

My husband listens to my fear, tells me to overcome it,  
Changes the subject to the Davos Economic Summit,  
Decides that if there's pain he'll simply ask the nurse to numb it.  
He says he doesn't think it sounds that bad.

My husband doesn't care if I'm a leaner or a squatter,  
Says pregnancy is no excuse for reading *Harry Potter*.  
He isn't keen on Stephanie or Amos or Carlotta.  
Leave it to him; he named our last car.

On Father's Day my husband gets a card he's not expecting,  
I say it's from the baby with a little redirecting.  
He doesn't blame my hormones or insist that I'm projecting.  
He tells me he's the father of a star.

Text by Sophie Hannah, *First of the Last Chances* (2003)

[INTERMISSION]

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,  
freundlich mich schmücken,  
dient der Glücklichen heute, mir,  
windet geschäftig  
mir um die Stirne  
noch der blühenden Myrthe Zier.

Help me, you sisters,  
friendly, adorn me,  
serve me, today's fortunate one,  
busily wind  
about my brow  
the adornment of blooming myrtle.

Als ich befriedigt,  
freudigen Herzens,  
sonst dem Geliebten in Arme lag,  
immer noch rief er,  
sehnsucht im Herzen,  
ungeduldigten heutigen Tag.

Otherwise gratified,  
of joyful heart,  
I would have lain in the arms of the beloved.  
so he ever called out,  
yearning in his heart,  
impatient for the present day.

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,  
hilft mir verscheuchen  
eine thörichte Bangigkeit,  
dass ich mit klarem  
Aug' ihn empfangen,  
ihn, die Quelle der Freudigkeit.

Help me, you sisters,  
help me to banish  
a foolish anxiety,  
so that I may with clear  
eyes receive him,  
him, the source of joyfulness.

Bist, mein Geliebter,  
du mir erschiene,  
giebst du mir, Sonne, deinen Schein?  
Lass mich in Andacht,  
lass mich in Demuth,  
lass mich verneigen in Herren mein.

Do you, my beloved,  
you appear to me,  
do you give, Sun, your shine to me?  
Let me with devotion,  
let me with meekness,  
let me curtsy before my Lord.

Streuet ihm, Schwestern,  
streuet ihm Blumen,  
bringet ihm knospende Rosen dar.  
Aber euch Schwestern,  
grüss' ich mit Wehmuth,  
freudig scheidend aus eurer Schaar.

Strew him, sisters,  
strew him with flowers,  
bring him budding roses.  
But, you sisters,  
I greet [him] with melancholy,  
joyfully departing from your midst.

## The Shadow Tree

In the lake, a reflected tree dangles while its counterpart squats on the land.  
Together they look, from some angles, like a hand growing out of a hand.  
Trunk to trunk, bark to water, they stand.

One is real, that would be the contention,  
while the other, illusion or fake, is a trick of the light,  
an invention of the skin on top of the lake.

I am here for the shadow tree's sake,  
for its unannounced coming and going  
(no one plants, no one chops)

I would give anything for a shadow tree, knowing,  
as its branches get caught in the sieve  
of the surface of water and live for a glance of the moon,  
moments only, that the dark fabrication I saw was a miracle,  
not like the lonely, unexceptional lump on the shore,  
such a sticker for natural law with its sap,  
its botanical listing and its representation at Kew,  
its pedantic disciples, insisting that one cannot be both false and true.

We are shadow trees. That's what we do.

Text by Sophie Hannah, 1995-1996\*

## Süsser Freund!

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  
heir an meiner Brust,  
will in's Ohr dir flüstern  
alle meine Lust.

Sweet friend, you gaze  
upon me in wonderment  
you cannot grasp it,  
why I can weep;  
Let the moist pearls'  
unaccustomed adornment  
tremble, [joyfully and brightly]  
in my eyes.

How anxious my bosom,  
how rapturous!  
If only I knew, with words,  
how I should say it;  
come and bury your visage  
here in my breast,  
I want to whisper in your ear  
all my happiness!

Weisst du nun die Thränen,  
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,

Do you know the tears  
that I can weep?  
Should you not see them,  
you beloved man?  
Stay by my heart,  
feel its beat,  
that I may, faster and faster,  
hold thee,

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 Bildniss  
mir entgegen lacht,

Here, at my bed,  
the cradle shall have room,  
where it silently conceals  
my lovely dream;  
the morning will come  
where the dream awakes,  
and from there your image  
shall smile at me.

### Rubbish at Adultery

Must I give up another night to hear you whinge and whine  
About how terribly grim you feel  
And what a dreadful swine  
You are?

You say you'll never leave your wife and children.  
Fine;  
When have I ever asked you to?  
I'd settle for a kiss.

Couldn't you, for an hour or so, just leave them out of *this*?  
A rare ten minutes off from guilty diatribes – what bliss.  
Yes, I'm aware you're sensitive: a tortured, wounded soul.

I'm after passion, thrills, and fun.  
You say fun takes its toll,  
So what are we doing here?  
I fear we've lost our common goal.

You're rubbish at adultery. I think you ought to quit.  
Trouble is, at fidelity you're also slightly shit.  
Choose one and do it properly,  
You stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid, git.  
Git.

Text by Sophie Hannah, *Pessimism for Beginners* (2006)



### An meinem Herzen

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

At my heart, at my breast,  
you are my rapture, you are my happiness!  
The joy is the love,  
the love is the joy,  
I have said it, and won't take it back.

I've thought myself [to be] rapturous,  
but now I'm happy beyond that.  
Only she that suckles, only she that loves  
the child, to whom she gives nourishment;

Only a mother knows alone  
what it is to love and be happy.  
Oh, how I pity then the man  
who cannot feel another mother's joy!

You [are] dear, dear angel, you,  
You look at me and smile  
At my heart, at my breast,  
you [are] my rapture, you [are] my happiness!

### In the Chill

I wore no coat. My legs were bare.  
I would not feel or see the greyer nights, the cooler air.  
Now it blows into me,  
This autumn you concealed so well.

You told me it was spring  
and made the swish of leaves that fell sound like awakening.  
I was the fool in shorts and shades  
Cloudbathing in the chill.

I had been warned that summer fades  
But spring meant I could still hope  
for the heat and light to start.

You were my longest day.  
Your ice preserves my summer heart  
Now winter's on the way.

Text by Sophie Hannah, *Pessimism for Beginners* (2006)

### Nun hast du mir

Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz gethan,  
der aber traf.  
Du schläfst, du harter, unbarmherz'ger Mann,  
den Todesschlaf.

Now you have given me, for the first time,  
pain, how it struck me.  
You sleep, you hard, merciless man,  
the sleep of death.

Es blicket die Verlassne vor sich hin,  
die Welt ist leer,  
geliebet hab' ich und gelebt,  
ich bin nicht lebend mehr;

The abandoned one gazes straight ahead,  
the world is void.  
I have loved and lived,  
I am no longer living.

Ich zieh' mich in mein Inn'res still zurück,  
der Schleier fällt,  
da hab' ich dich und mein verlornes Glück,  
du meiner Welt!

I withdraw silently into myself,  
the veil falls,  
there, I have you and my lost happiness,  
oh, you, my world!

### The Cycle

I cannot stay,  
I'm not the one deserting,  
Or go;  
You are no longer here to leave.

I can't forgive, not without also hurting.  
Can't forget, or I'll be even more naïve.

I can't confer; I'd feel like I was cheating.  
I can't concede a case I've never fought  
Or win and not administer a beating.

I cannot settle in or out of court,  
Cannot give in case I implicate the taker,  
Can't take from everyone with ground to give  
And gather acre on untended acre  
When I just need a few square feet to live,

Can't end this in a neat or messy way.  
I cannot start again. I cannot stay.

Text by Sophie Hannah, *First of the Last Chances* (2003)

Translations for *Frauenlieben und leben* from [lieder.net](http://lieder.net) by Daniel Platt  
Further clarifications added by Vanessa Moya

\*Texts from *The Hero and the Girl Next Door* (1995) & *Hotels like Houses* (1996)