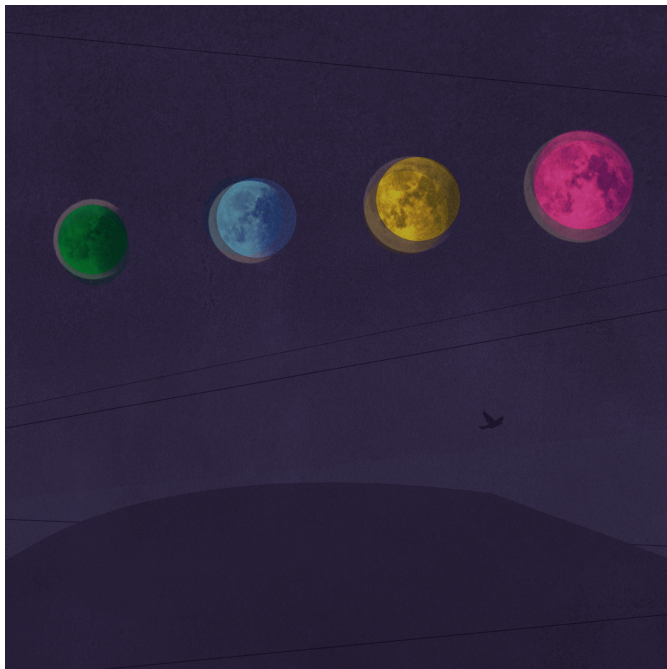


Damask Vocal Quartet | Flore Merlin piano

O schöne Nacht





JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897) *Vier Quartette, Op. 92*

1. I. O schöne Nacht	3'07
2. II. Spätherbst	1'29
3. III. Abendlied	2'25
4. IV. Warum	2'00

HEINRICH VON HERZOGENBERG (1843-1900) *Vier Nottornos, Op. 22*

5. I. Wär's dunkel, ich läge im Walde	3'12
6. II. Nacht ist wie ein stilles Meer	3'24
7. III. Intermezzo: "Zwei Musikanten zieh'n daher"	2'29
8. IV. Wie schön hier zu verträumen	6'00

THEODOR KIRCHNER (1823-1903)

9. <i>Nottornos</i> , Op.28: I. Ruhig, singend	4'58
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J. BRAHMS *Drei Quartette, Op. 31*

10. I. Wechsellied zum Tanze	5'07
11. II. Neckereien	2'27
12. III. Der Gang zum Liebchen	3'25

T. KIRCHNER

13. <i>Nottornos</i> , Op.28: II. Con sentimento	3'05
14. <i>Nottornos</i> , Op.28: III. Moderato	3'05

GUSTAV JENNER (1865-1920) *Zwölf Quartette*

15. II. Richten will ich Tisch und Gastmahl	3'41
16. IV. Ich gehe des Nachts	2'02
17. V. Fensterlein, nachts bist du	1'18
18. XII. Wenn's die Bäume könnten klagen	1'16

T. KIRCHNER

19. *Nottornos*, Op.28: IV. Molto moderato 5'18

J. BRAHMS *Sechs Quartette*, Op. 112

20. I. Sehnsucht 2'39

21. II. Nächtens 1'44

Zigeunerlieder

22. III. Himmel strahlt so helle 1'44

23. IV. Rote Rosenknospen 0'57

24. V. Brennessel steht an Weges Rand 1'22

25. VI. Liebe Schwalbe, kleine Schwalbe 1'00

CHAMBER MUSIC



"Chamber music: music composed for small ensembles of instrumentalists." Thus reads the definition of 'chamber music' in the authoritative *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The word *instrumentalists* seems crucial and unambiguous: no singers allowed. Vocal

quartet Damask would beg to differ. This group, consisting of soprano Katharine Dain, mezzo-soprano Marine Fribourg, tenor Guy Cutting, and baritone Drew Santini, is passionately committed to chamber music. For the quartet, the label of chamber music has nothing do with instrumentation, but rather with an approach, a setting, **a depth of communication and engagement**. As this is the purpose of the quartet, it is only

natural for them to call the music they make chamber music. The Damask approach was vindicated when, in 2017, they received a chamber music residency at Snape Maltings, home of the renowned Aldeburgh Festival - the first group ever to receive a residency in the mentorship programme that was not a string trio or quartet.

Post-Baroque vocal chamber music is performed most often by ad-hoc gatherings of singers, brought together for a festival or a recording. Damask, however, is a set group, and has been for a while. This commitment has a cumulative effect on the music-making, explains Katharine: "We have been singing this repertoire together for years, and that gives us a certain energy, an intimacy with one another and the style that you don't get with casual ensembles. **Damask allows us to grow musically together**, and it enables us to serve and broaden the repertoire in the long term."

BRAHMS FRONT AND CENTRE



In light of this commitment, it is perhaps no surprise that Damask chose a programme centred around Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) on their debut CD, *O schöne Nacht*. After all, the German composer is often seen as the greatest chamber music composer of the nineteenth century, which in itself is often considered the Golden Age of chamber music. But the composer has special significance for the members of Damask as well: for them, Brahms's music is the cornerstone of the vocal quartet repertoire. Other composers, including Schubert and Schumann, wrote great quartets before Brahms, and the quartet repertoire extends through the twentieth century to the present day. But, says Marine, "**we always come back to Brahms.**"

While Brahms is the focal point, the album also includes works by three of his

lesser-known contemporaries and friends. Each composer has his own distinct voice, and together they paint a fuller picture of Romantic affect and style. Guy: “Jenner is very theatrical, while Herzogenberg is more lyrical, and Kirchner is extremely passionate. Each of these characters complements aspects of Brahms’s vocal writing while also presenting great music that is rarely performed. It’s an exciting mix of the familiar and the unknown.”

O SCHÖNE NACHT



The title of the CD is taken from the eponymous first song of Johannes Brahms’s *Vier Quartette*, Op. 92 (1884), and **establishes the album’s theme: night and its many connotations.** Drew elaborates: “Most well-known is probably the Schubertian and Romantic side of the

night, with its loneliness and especially *Sehnsucht* and *Weltschmerz*. Then there are the social aspects, both the familiarity of remembering and being with loved ones, as the unfamiliarity of meeting alluring strangers. The night can of course also be strongly sensual and intimate, both spiritually as well as physically.” The quartet feels that Brahms’s *Drei Quartette*, Op. 31, which is included on this CD, exemplifies this versatility very well. In this work, each song embodies a different nocturnal aspect: a party with dancing in “Wechselied zum Tanze”, playful teasing and flirtation in “Neckereien”, and finally sensual longing in the masterpiece “Der Gang zum Liebchen”, which the quartet considers to be one of Brahms’s most beautiful short works in any genre.

In addition to this thematic connection between the pieces, and the social proximity of their composers, there are also musical links. The most direct is that between “O schöne Nacht” itself and

"Nacht ist wie ein stilles Meer", from *Vier Notturmos* by Heinrich von Herzogenberg (1848-1900). The first few bars of the two songs are identical; although it is often assumed that Herzogenberg copied his more famous contemporary, **it is actually Brahms who paid homage to his friend's work by echoing the opening arpeggios and the subsequent syncopated motive.** The song has an expository quality; after the title phrase is sung by the quartet together, each voice, from low to high, then sings a phrase alone. In these phrases, environmental elements are introduced, respectively the moon, the stars, the dew and the nightingale. The song culminates in a tantalizingly unfinished scene ("the youth creeps softly to his beloved") in which the repetition of the word *soft* ('sacht'), sung by the full quartet, has an almost sexual undertone.

ZIGEUNERLIEDER



Brahms's Op. 112 presents a series in contrasts: the first two songs epitomize restless, Romantic existential longing, while the last four *Zigeunerlieder* present the sunny side of the coin. Brahms's references to folk material (the texts are translated from Hungarian) are subtle but effective. When the poetry has irregular phrase lengths, he emphasizes them; when the lines are regular, he uses repetition and elongation to gracefully introduce disorder. Brahms supports these decisions with strong, rollicking rhythmic motives that give a fresh, dance-like character to these four delightful songs. Even apart from these elements, his word-painting in this Opus 112 is particularly expressive. References to birds receive quick staccato figurations, sighs are represented with passionate leaps, sad uncertainty is reflected by cloudy

piano motives, and the sound can change dramatically when a new character is introduced. Guy: **"I feel safe in saying that these songs see some of Brahms's most assured vocal writing and command of piano color"**.

GUSTAV JENNER



Gustav Jenner (1865-1920) was the only formal composition student that Brahms ever took on. There are those who unkindly say that were it not for this dubious honour, he would not be remembered at all, but the quartet has been thrilled to discover his unique compositional voice. Marine: **"His vocal music has a fire to it, a theatrical and sometimes shocking energy.** It looks forward to the extreme dramatic effects of Alban Berg." Included on this CD are four of Jenner's *Zwölf Quartette*. The first of these

(the second of the twelve pieces), "Richten will ich Tisch und Gastmahl", is perhaps the best example of his narrative and almost explosive compositional style. The opening is reminiscent of the powerful "Kyrie" (also in a chilling D minor) from Mozart's *Requiem*. Powerful on-the-beat vertical structures give a relentless, dirge-like motion to the ghoulis scene, while shivering piano gestures and large leaps in the vocal lines keep the anxiety level high. The text-setting is particularly dramatic in this song: with the hushed singing of "ach", the ultimate expression of pain, the music almost comes to a halt.

HEINRICH VON HERZOGENBERG



Heinrich von Herzogenberg became close friends with Brahms after marrying Elisabeth von Stockhausen, who was a former piano pupil of the German

composer. The couple and the composer corresponded extensively and intimately. Brahms would often send his manuscripts with notes or jokes, as he did with “O schöne Nacht” in 1877, in which he slyly called his musical plagiarism a form of flattery. Herzogenberg’s music is as romantic as Brahms’s but with even more dramatically elongated shapes and phrase lengths, a sheer pleasure to sing and listen to, Drew says: **“The music contains such big lyrical gestures, and is so incredibly sensual!”**

All the texts in Herzogenberg’s *Vier Nottornos*, Op. 22 (first published 1876), are written by the German poet Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857), whose poems also inspired composers such as Mendelssohn, Wolf and Richard Strauss. In the first song, “Wär’s dunkel, ich läg im Walde”, the speaker seems to lie in waiting for someone, but listeners never learn for whom or why. However, in the original poem, *Die Einsame*, a fragment follows, which resolves this yearning as stemming from an unrequited

love. No such narrative resolution is to be found in the *Nottornos*, as all four songs explore longing without fulfillment, even the up tempo third *Notturmo* “Intermezzo: Zwei Muzikanten zieh’n daher”. The fourth song, the most substantial of the set, describes nighttime forest scenes which are both achingly beautiful and slightly chilling; it is no surprise to learn that Eichendorff wrote this poem while grieving the recent death of his child.

BRAHMS’S PIANO



Flore Merlin, the pianist on this CD, plays a very special piano on this recording: a J. B. Streicher grand from c. 1868 graciously loaned for this project by its owner, Piet Kuijken. Brahms preferred Streicher pianos from the early 1860s onward, and in 1872 he received an instrument (straight and

single-strung, as this one is) from the maker for his own use at home. It was on this instrument that Brahms composed and played on until the end of his life. Marine: "It is very special to work with an instrument from this era. **Its close relationship to Brahms gives an intimate understanding of his sound-world and musical vision.**"

But there are even more tangible musical results from working with this instrument: "On a modern grand piano, Flore always has to hold back in her use of dynamics, so as not to overpower us. On this piano, she can really play them as written, allowing for much more contrast. This in turn grants us the possibility to be more subtle." The piano's registers sound strikingly different from each other; the bass has particularly powerful colors, while the treble is lyrical and soft-grained. This versatility also required an adjustment in approach. Unlike a modern piano, which is regulated to present as even a sound quality as possible from top to bottom, **the Streicher**

has as individual a musical personality as a human voice. "It did mean that we had to do some experimentation," says Marine. "But it worked out wonderfully."

The piano gets its own moment to shine in the *Nottornos*, Op. 28, by Theodor Kirchner (1823-1903). From the beginning, Damask had wanted to include music for solo piano on this album, as they frequently do in concerts. Then, the quartet often includes Brahms, but on this CD they ended up with something different, as Katharine explains: "When Flore found these unrecorded and gorgeous pieces, it felt like we had struck gold." Kirchner was befriended and admired by many composers, including the Schumanns and Brahms, but was perpetually in personal and financial trouble. Perhaps as a result, he has languished in obscurity for more than a century. These **four Nottornos, passionate, reflective, and yearning**, show the true value of his compositional voice, as well as the Streicher's full range of color.

GATHERING



Chamber music is not the only pursuit for the members of Damask. They are also in high demand in opera, oratorio, and as conductors throughout Europe and North America. Getting together takes solid planning, so they cram as much rehearsal and performance time into their gatherings as possible. Drew laughs: “Our get-togethers are always incredibly intense, especially as we often also sleep in the same house. **Luckily, we are a great match, not only musically but also personality-wise.** We cook, eat, and laugh a lot when we’re not working!”

The recording sessions took place at a former farm, which has been re-purposed as concert hall ‘Onder de linden’ (under the linden trees), in the village of Valthermond in the easternmost part of the Netherlands. True to form, the quartet also slept at the

location, joined by Flore and Frerik de Jong, recording producer and label owner at 7MNTN. The recording process demanded profound concentration, says Katharine: “We really want to tell every story of every song. We try to do that in our performances as well, but reaching an audience through a recording is much more intimate. In a recording, every word, gesture, and small shift in color matters to the story-telling.” Frerik was impressed by the stamina of the musicians: “After a full day of recording we would still do a short session after dinner, just because they all wanted to go on. I can’t remember having seen such drive in a recording session. **These musicians dare to push their limits and work with full concentration at every moment.**”

O schöne Nacht

O schöne Nacht!

Am Himmel märchenhaft

Erglänzt der Mond in seiner ganzen
Pracht;

Um ihn der kleinen Sterne liebliche
Genossenschaft.

Es schimmert hell der Tau
Am grünen Halm; mit Macht
Im Fliederbusche schlägt die
Nachtigall;
Der Knabe schleicht zu seiner
Liebsten sacht—

O schöne Nacht!

—Georg Friedrich Daumer

O beautiful night!

O beautiful night!

The moon in full fantastical splendor
shines from the heavens
and little stars gather round it
in sweet fellowship.

The dew gleams brightly
on the green grass; powerfully
the nightingale calls from the elder;
the youth softly steals to his
sweetheart—

O beautiful night!

Spätherbst

Der graue Nebel tropft so still
Herab auf Feld und Wald und Heide,
Als ob der Himmel weinen will
In übergroßem Leide.

Die Blumen wollen nicht mehr
blühn,

Die Vöglein schweigen in den
Hainen,

Es starb sogar das letzte Grün,
Da mag er auch wohl weinen.

—Hermann Allmers

Late Autumn

The grey mist drips so silently
down onto the field and wood and
heath

as if Heaven wanted to weep
from overwhelming sorrow.
The flowers will bloom no more,
the birds are silent in the groves,
even the last bit of green has died:
Heaven should indeed weep.

Abendlied

Friedlich bekämpfen
Nacht sich und Tag;
Wie das zu dämpfen,
Wie das zu lösen vermag.
Der mich bedrückte,
Schläfst du schon, Schmerz?
Was mich beglückte,

Sage, was war's doch, mein Herz?
Freude wie Kummer,
Fühl' ich, zerrann,
Aber den Schlummer
Führten sie leise heran.
Und im Entschwehen,
Immer empor,
Kommt mir das Leben
Ganz wie ein Schlummerlied vor.

—Friedrich Hebbel

Evening Song

Peacefully the night
struggles with the day—
how to dampen it,
how to dissipate it.
O Pain that oppressed me,
do you already sleep?
O Heart, what was it
that so gladdened me?
Joy, like anguish,
Has melted away, I feel,
but in their place
sleep was gently ushered in.
And as they drift away
ever aloft,
it seems to me that life
is just like a lullaby.

Warum?

Warum doch erschallen
Himmelwärts die Lieder?
Zögen gerne nieder
Sterne, die droben
Blinken und wallen,
Zögen sich Lunas
Lieblich Umarmen,
Zögen die warmen,
Wonnigen Tage
Seliger Götter
Gern uns herab!

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Why?

Why then do songs
resound to the heavens?
They would gladly draw
down the stars that twinkle
and surge above;
They would clasp
the moon in loving embrace;
They would gladly beckon
down to us the warm,
blissful days
of the blessed gods!

Wär's dunkel, ich läge im Walde

Wär's dunkel, ich läge im Walde,
Im Walde rauscht's so sacht,
Mit ihrem Sternenmantel
Bedeckt mich da die Nacht,

Da kommen die Bächlein gegangen:
Ob ich schon schlafen tu?
Ich schlaf nicht, ich höre noch lange
Den Nachtigallen zu,
Wenn die Wipfel über mir
schwanken,
Es klingt die ganze Nacht,
Das sind im Herzen die Gedanken,
Die singen, wenn niemand wacht.
—Joseph von Eichendorff

If it were dark, I would lie in the wood

If it were dark, I would lie in the
wood,
the wood that rustles so softly.
The night drapes me
in her mantle of stars.
The streams come to me, asking:
are you sleeping?
No, I am not! For a long time yet
I will listen to the nightingale
while the treetops sway above me;
they sound all night long.
These are the thoughts of my heart
that sing when no one else is awake.

Nacht ist wie ein stilles Meer

Nacht ist wie ein stilles Meer,
Lust und Leid und Liebesklagen
Kommen so verworren her
In dem linden Wellenschlagen.

Wünsche wie die Wolken sind,
Schiffen durch die stillen Räume,
Wer erkennt im lauen Wind,
Ob's Gedanken oder Träume? —
Schließ' ich nun auch Herz und
Mund,
Die so gern den Sternen klagen:
Leise doch im Herzensgrund
Bleibt das linde Wellenschlagen.
—Joseph von Eichendorff

Night is like a silent sea

Night is like a silent sea;
joy and sorrow and love's laments
become entangled
in the waves' gentle throbbing.
Desires are like clouds
sailing through the silent space;
who could know, in this warm
breeze,
if they are thoughts or dreams?
Though I now close my heart and
lips
which so gladly complain to the
stars,
still in the depths of my heart
the waves continue gently to throb.

Intermezzo

Zwei Musikanten ziehn daher
Vom Wald aus weiter Ferne,
Der eine ist verliebt gar sehr,
Der andre wär es gerne.
Die stehn allhier im kalten Wind
Und singen schön und geigen:
Ob nicht ein süßverträumtes Kind
Am Fenster sich wollt zeigen?
Und durch das Fenster steigen ein
Waldrauschen und Gesänge,
Da bricht der Sänger mit herein
Im seligen Gedränge.
—Joseph von Eichendorff

Interlude

Two musicians emerge
from the distant forest;
one is very much in love
and the other would like to be.
They stand here in the cold wind
and sing and fiddle beautifully:
won't the sweet maiden of their
dreams
show herself at the window?
And through the window
forest shivers and songs rise up,
and the singer breaks through
in a blissful scramble.

Wie schön, hier zu verträumen

Wie schön, hier zu verträumen
Die Nacht im stillen Wald,
Wenn in den dunklen Bäumen
Das alte Märchen hallt!
Die Berg' im Mondesschimmer
Wie in Gedanken stehn,
Und durch verworr'ne Trümmer
Die Quellen klagend geh'n.
Denn müd' ging auf den Matten
Die Schönheit nun zur Ruh',
Es deckt mit kühlen Schatten
Die Nacht das Liebchen zu.
Das ist das irre Klagen
In stiller Waldespracht,
Die Nachtigallen schlagen
Von ihr die ganze Nacht.
Die Stern' gehen auf und nieder—
Wann kommst du, Morgenwind,
Und hebst die Schatten wieder
Von dem verträumten Kind?
Schon rührt sich's in den Bäumen,
Die Lerche weckt sie bald—
So will ich treu verträumen
Die Nacht im stillen Wald.
—Joseph von Eichendorff

How lovely to dream away the night

How lovely to dream away the night
here in the silent forest,
where the old fairytales echo
among the dark trees!

The mountains stand shimmering
in moonlight as if deep in thought,
and through scattered ruins
the springs mournfully flow.
Then wearily across the meadows
Beauty goes to her rest,
and the night drapes the beloved
with her cool shadows.
There is an eerie lament
in the silent forest's splendor;
the nightingales cry
for her the entire night.
The stars rise and then fall—
when will you come, morning wind,
to lift the shadows once again
from the dreaming child?
Already she is stirring in the trees,
the lark will soon wake her—
thus would I faithfully dream away
the night in the silent forest.

Wechselied zum Tanze

Die Gleichgültigen:
Komm mit, o Schöne, komm mit mir
zum Tanze;
Tanzen gehöret zum festlichen Tag.
Bist du mein Schatz; nicht, so kannst
du es werden,
Wirst du es nimmer, so tanzen wir
doch.
Komm mit, o Schöne, komm mit mir
zum Tanze;
Tanzen verherrlicht den festlichen Tag.

Die Zärtlichen:
 Ohne dich, Liebste, was wären die
 Feste?
 Ohne dich, Süße, was wäre der Tanz?
 Wärest du mein Schatz nicht, so möcht
 ich nicht tanzen,
 Bleibst du es immer, ist Leben ein
 Fest.
 Ohne dich, Liebste, was wären die
 Feste?
 Ohne dich, Süße, was wäre der Tanz?
 Die Gleichgültigen:
 Laß sie nur lieben, und laß du uns
 tanzen!
 Schmachkende Liebe vermeidet den
 Tanz.
 Schlingen wir fröhlich den drehenden
 Reihen,
 Schleichen die andern zum
 dämmernden Wald.
 Laß sie nur lieben, und laß du uns
 tanzen!
 Schmachkende Liebe Vermeidet den
 Tanz.
 Die Zärtlichen:
 Laß sie sich drehen, und laß du uns
 wandeln!
 Wandeln der Liebe ist himmlischer
 Tanz.
 Amor, der nahe, der höret sie spotten,
 Rächet sich einmal, und rächet sich
 bald.
 Laß sie sich drehen, und laß du uns
 wandeln!

Wandeln der Liebe ist himmlischer
 Tanz.

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Dialogue at the Dance

The Indifferent Ones:
 Come along, lovely, come dance
 with me;
 dancing is fitting on such a festive day.
*If you're not yet my darling, you could
 become so,
 and even if not, let's dance anyway.*
 Come along, lovely, come dance
 with me;
 dancing is fitting on such a festive day.
The Lovers:
 Without you, dearest, what use is a
 holiday?
 Without you, sweetest, what use is
 a dance?
*If you weren't my darling, I wouldn't
 want to dance;
 if you remain so always, life will be a
 celebration.*
 Without you, dearest, what use is a
 holiday?
 Without you, sweetest, what use is
 a dance?
The Indifferent Ones:
 Let them love, and let us dance!
 Languishing love avoids the dance.
 Let's weave joyfully through the
 turning rows

and let the others steal away to the
 dim woods.

Let them love, and let us dance!
 Languishing love avoids the dance.
 The Lovers:
 Let them whirl, and let us wander!
 Meandering in love is a heavenly
 dance.
 Cupid, close by, overhears their jeers;
 someday soon he'll have his revenge.
 Let them whirl, and let us wander!
 Meandering in love is a heavenly
 dance.

Neckereien

Fürwahr, mein Liebchen, ich will
 nun frein,
 Ich führ' als Weibchen dich bei
 mir ein,
 Mein wirst du, o Liebchen, fürwahr
 du wirst mein,
 Und wolltest du's auch nicht sein.
 "So werd' ich ein Täubchen von
 weißer Gestalt,
 Ich will schon entfliehen, ich flieg' in
 den Wald,
 Mag dennoch nicht deine, mag
 dennoch nicht dein,
 Nicht eine Stunde sein."
 Ich hab' wohl ein Flintchen, das trifft
 gar bald,
 Ich schieß' mir das Täubchen herunter
 im Wald;

Mein wirst du, o Liebchen, fürwahr
du wirst mein,
Und wolltest du's auch nicht sein.
"So werd' ich ein Fischchen, ein
goldener Fisch,
Ich will schon entspringen ins
Wasser frisch;
Mag dennoch nicht deine, mag
dennoch nicht dein,
Nicht eine Stunde sein."
Ich hab' wohl ein Netzen, das
fischt gar gut,
Ich fang' mir den goldenen Fisch
in der Flut;
Mein wirst du, o Liebchen, fürwahr
du wirst mein,
Und wolltest du's auch nicht sein.
"So werd' ich ein Häschen voll
Schnelligkeit,
Und lauf' in die Felder, die Felder
breit,
Mag dennoch nicht deine, mag
dennoch nicht dein,
Nicht eine Stunde sein."
Ich hab' wohl ein Hündchen, gar
pffiffig und fein,
Das fängt mir das Häschen im Felde
schon ein:
Mein wirst du, o Liebchen, fürwahr
du wirst mein,
Und wolltest du's auch nicht sein.
—Joseph Wenzig

Flirtation

*It's true, dearest, I'm chasing you,
I plan to make you my wife;
you'll be mine, dear, truly mine,
whether you like it or not.
"Then I'll become a white-figured
dove,
I'll fly away, fleeing into the forest.
I won't be yours, never yours;
the hour will never come."
I have a little pistol that drives
quickly,
I'll shoot down the little dove in
the forest;
you'll be mine, dear, truly mine,
whether you like it or not.
"Then I'll become a little golden fish
and I'll dive into the cold water;
I won't be yours, never yours;
the hour will never come."
I have a little net that fishes very
well;
I'll catch the little fish in the stream;
you'll be mine, dear, truly mine,
whether you like it or not.
"Then I'll become a swift little hare
and will run into the wide field.
I won't be yours, never yours;
the hour will never come."
I have a little dog, lithe and clever,
who will catch the little hare in
the field;
you'll be mine, dear, truly mine,
whether you like it or not.*

Der Gang zum Liebchen

*Es glänzt der Mond nieder,
Ich sollte doch wieder
Zu meinem Liebchen,
Wie mag es ihr geh'n?
Ach weh', sie verzaget
Und klaget, und klaget,
Daß sie mich nimmer
Im Leben wird seh'n!
Es ging der Mond unter,
Ich eilte doch munter,
Und eilte daß keiner
Mein Liebchen entführt.
Ihr Täubchen, o girret,
Ihr Löffchen, o schwirret,
Daß keiner mein Liebchen,
Mein Liebchen entführt!
—Joseph Wenzig*

The Path to the Beloved

*The moon is shining down,
so I shall set off
to return to my love.
How is she, I wonder?
Ah, no! she despairs
and laments and laments
that she will never again
see me in this life!
The moon descended
but I gladly hurried on,
hurrying so that no one
would steal away my love.
Keep cooing, doves,*

keep swirling, breezes,
so that no one
will steal away my love!

**Richten will ich Tisch und
Gastmahl**

Richten will ich Tisch und
Gastmahl,
Laden die unselig lieben;
Und mein Herz geb' ich zu essen,
Und zu trinken ihnen Tränen.
Seufzer, Klagen sind die Diener,
Die Verliebten zu bedienen;
Und der Schenk soll schwarzer
Tod sein;
Weint ihr Steine, seufzt ihr Mauern!
Heil'ger Tod, das soll der Schenk
sein.
Steine, seufzt und rufet: "Ach!" nur.
—Ferdinand Gregorovius

**I would like to prepare a
banquet table**

I would like to prepare a banquet
table
and invite those that are unlucky
in love;
and I will give them my heart to eat
and tears to drink.
Sighs and laments are the servants
that wait on the lovers,
and the gift shall be black death:

Cry, stones; sigh, walls!
Holy death, that shall be the gift.
Stones, sigh and cry only: "Ah!"

Ich gehe des Nachts

Ich gehe des Nachts, wie der Mond
tut geh'n,
Ich suche, wo den Geliebten sie
haben:
Da hab ich den Tod, den finstern,
geseh'n.
Er sprach: such nicht, ich hab ihn
begraben.
—Ferdinand Gregorovius

I walk at night

I walk at night, following the moon;
I seek the place where they have
taken my beloved.
But then I saw death, the Dark One.
He said: "Search no longer. I have
buried him."

Fensterlein, nachts bist du zu

Fensterlein, nachts bist du zu,
Tust auf dich am Tag mir zu Leide:
Mit Nelken umringelt bist du;
O öffne dich, Augenweide!
Fenster aus köstlichen Stein,
Drinnen die Sonne, die Sterne da
draußen,

O Fensterlein heimlich und klein,
Sonne da drinnen und Rosen
daraußen.

—Ferdinand Gregorovius

**Little window, you are closed
by night**

and by day, to my sorrow, you
are open:
you are encircled with carnations;
Ah, if you would open, what a
welcome sight!
Window of precious stone,
within—sunlight, without—stars,
O little window, secret and small,
sunlight within and roses without.

Wenn's die Bäume könnten klagen

Wenn's die Bäume könnten klagen,
Wenn die Blätter Zungen wären,
Möchte doch manch Blatt mir
fehlen,
Und die Welt Papier zum schreiben,
Tint' das Wasser in den Meeren,
Federn, Blumen nicht zu zählen,
Möchte doch manch Blatt mir
fehlen,
Meine Liebe dir zu sagen.
–Joseph von Eichendorff

If the trees could cry out

If the trees could cry out,
if the leaves were tongues,
still I might not have enough
leaves;
and if the world were writing-
paper,
if the sea's waters were ink,
if the world's countless flowers
were quills,
still I might not have enough sheets
to tell you of my love.

Sehnsucht

Es rinnen die Wasser Tag und
Nacht,
Deine Sehnsucht wacht.
Du gedenkest der vergangenen Zeit,
Die liegt so weit.

Du siehst hinaus in den
Morgenschein
Und bist allein.
Es rinnen die Wasser Tag und
Nacht,
Deine Sehnsucht wacht.
—Franz Theodor Kugler

Longing

Like water that flows day and night,
your longing abides.
You think about a vanished time
in the distant past.
You look out into the morning light
and you are alone.
Like water that flows day and night,
your longing abides.

Nächtens

Nächtens wachen auf die irren,
Lügenmäch't'gen Spukgestalten,
Welche deinen Sinn verwirren.
Nächtens ist im Blumengarten
Reif gefallen, daß vergebens
Du der Blumen würdest warten.
Nächtens haben Gram und Sorgen
In dein Herz sich eingenistet,
Und auf Tränen blickt der Morgen.
—Franz Theodor Kugler

At Night

At night those eerie,
deceptive phantoms awake,
disorienting the mind.
At night in the flower garden
frost falls; you wait
in vain for flowers' blooms.
At night grief and worry
nestle within your heart
and the morning gazes upon tears.

Himmel strahlt so helle und klar

Himmel strahlt so helle und klar,
Heller strahlt mir dein Augenpaar.
Du meine Rose, mir ins Auge blick,
Daß ich dich segne in meinem Glück.
Vögleins Lied so lieblich erklingt,
Süß' res Lied mir mein Liebchen
singt.
Du meine Rose, mir ins Auge blick,
Daß ich dich segne in meinem Glück.
Sonne küßt das ganze Erdenrund,
Heißer küßt mich dein Rosenmund.
Du meine Rose, mir ins Auge blick,
Daß ich dich segne in meinem Glück.
—Hugo Conrat

**The heavens beam so bright and
clear**

The heavens beam so bright and
clear,
but brighter still is the beam of
your eyes.
You, my rose, gaze into my eyes,
that I may bless you in my happiness.
The little bird's song resounds so
sweetly,
but my darling sings a much sweeter
song.

You, my rose, gaze into my eyes,
that I may bless you in my happiness.
The sun kisses the entire world,
but your rosy lips kiss me more
warmly.

You, my rose, gaze into my eyes,
that I may bless you in my happiness.

Rote Rosenknospen

Rote Rosenknospen
künden schon des Lenzes Triebe.
Rosenrote Wangen
Deuten Mädchens erste Liebe.
Kleiner roter Vogel,
Flieg herab zur roten Rose!
Bursche geht zum ros'gen
Mädchen kosen.
—Hugo Conrat

Red Rosebuds

Redrosebuds
announce Spring's awakening.
Rosy red cheeks
hint at a maiden's first love.
Little red bird,
fly away to the red rose!
The lad is off to court
the rosy-cheeked maiden.

Brennessel steht am Wegesrand

Brennessel steht am Wegesrand,
Neider und Feinde hab' ich in Stadt
und Land.
Neidet, haßt, verleumdet,
doch das bringt mir keine Not,
Wenn mir nur mein süßes Liebchen
treu bleibt bis zum Tod.
—Hugo Conrat

Nettles stand at the roadside

Nettles stand at the roadside;
I have jealous enemies in city and
country.
I am envied, hated, slandered,
and yet I'm not bothered at all
as long as my sweetheart
stays true to me until death.

Liebe Schwalbe, kleine Schwalbe

Liebe Schwalbe, kleine Schwalbe,
Trage fort mein kleines Briefchen!
Flieg zur Höhe, fliege schnell aus,
Flieg hinein in Liebchens Haus!
Fragst man dich, woher du
kommst,
Wessen Bote du geworden,
Sag, du kommst vom treuesten
Herzen,
Das vergeht in
Trennungsschmerzen.
—Hugo Conrat

Dear swallow, little swallow

Dear swallow, little swallow,
carry away my little message!
Fly into the heights, fly quickly,
fly off to my sweetheart's house!
If she asks where you've come from,
whose messenger you are,
say that you come from a faithful
heart
that is almost dying from the pain
of absence.

BIOGRAPHY DAMASK VOCAL QUARTET

Damask, a vocal quartet based in the Netherlands, unites four musicians of five nationalities: American-Dutch soprano Katharine Dain, French mezzo-soprano Marine Fribourg, English tenor Guy Cutting, and Canadian baritone Drew Santini. Since 2014, Damask has been giving voice to the stunning but neglected repertoire for vocal quartet, from the piano-accompanied chamber works of Haydn, Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms to music of the 20th and 21st centuries (a cappella and with various instruments) by Milhaud, Messiaen, Stravinsky, Schönberg, Ned Rorem, and David Lang, among others. Equally important to Damask's mission is the broadening and enrichment of the repertoire through regular commissions of new works written for the quartet's unique beauty, unity, and versatility of sound from composers including Gregory Spears, Reiko Fūting, Lewis Nielson, and Federico Mosquera, as well as arrangements of existing pieces from Matthijs

van de Woerd and Raphael Fusco.

Damask has performed in festivals and concert halls in the Netherlands, Germany, France, England, and the United States. In 2017 the quartet featured as ensemble-in-residence at Snape Maltings, home of the Aldeburgh Festival, where its members benefited from an intensive working period with pianist Roger Vignoles. Regular collaborators include pianist Flore Merlin and Oerknal! New Music Collective.

The name Damask refers to a luxurious woven textile motif developed in 14th-century Damascus (now present-day Syria), a vibrant meeting point of several major international trade routes where materials, ideas, cultures, and art/design practices were freely exchanged. The resulting damask motif, still in use today, is a fitting metaphor for the ensemble, which weaves together diverse repertoires, cultural traditions, and musical personalities into a strong and beautiful whole.

BIOGRAPHY FLORE MERLIN

A passionate chamber musician, Flore Merlin is a member of Nuori Trio (whose recordings of works by Alexis de Castillon and Henriette Renié have been highly praised), Arto Duo, and Zoltan Duo, and regularly collaborates with other recognized instrumentalists and singers such as Anne Le Bozec and Damask Vocal Quartet. She appears frequently in concert, notably on France Musique and in festivals including "Piano à Riom", "Messiaen au Pays de la Meije", Festival Debussy, Aldeburgh Music, and Schubertiade d'Espace 2.

A graduate of the conservatories of Paris, Helsinki and Brussels in piano, fortepiano, vocal accompaniment and vocal coaching, she has studied with many influential artists, including A. Planès, T. Hakkila, A. Le Bozec and E. Olivier. Her interest in notation and musical interpretation led her to study fortepiano and harpsichord with B. van Oort, M. Bilson and A. Zylberajch.



Flore Merlin at the 1868 J. B. Streicher

She works as an accompanist and vocal coach at the Paris Conservatory, Ecole Normale de Musique Alfred Cortot, Lille Opera and Maîtrise de Radio France, and has collaborated with conductors such as D. Reiland, P. Herreweghe, C. Eschenbach, Y. Sado and J. Chauvin.



ABOUT 7 MOUNTAIN RECORDS



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