



## Soundstreams presents *Love Songs*

### Repertoire

Claude Vivier, *Love Songs*

Claude Vivier, *Hymnen an die Nacht*

Christopher Mayo, *Oceano Nox*

### Artists

**David Fallis**, music director

\*Vocal ensemble:

**Carla Huhtanen**

**Lindsay McIntyre**

**Vania Chan**

**Robin Dann**

**Bud Roach**

**Alex Samaras**

**Keith Lam**

**Gregory Oh**, piano

**Ryan Scott**, percussion

*\*The participation of these Artists is arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance, Opera, Theatre Policy (DOT).*

### Program Note by David Jaeger

The unique and idiosyncratic music of Claude Vivier (1948–1983) has continued to inspire composers, performers and concert presenters alike over the almost forty years since his death. The Montreal born composer's works focus obsessively on topics such as love, death, loneliness, childhood, eternity and the afterlife. His music has fascinated audiences around the world, and in 2019 Soundstreams' artistic director Lawrence Cherney was invited to create several programs of Vivier's music for a festival planned by London's Southbank Centre.

Like so many other planned concerts and tours around the world, the Claude Vivier Southbank Festival was forced to postpone due to the pandemic. Plans to reschedule



the festival for the Spring of 2022 have prompted Soundstreams to reinstate its programs, including the current presentation, *Love Songs*, among several others.

Vivier's *Love Songs* were composed in 1977 for the modern dance company, Le Groupe de la Place Royale. Le Group emphasized interdisciplinary work, and in the case of this new creation by Vivier, the dancers would be required to sing. In order to compose a vocal piece for non-trained voices, Vivier created a simplified notation, reduced to the bare essentials of pitch register, rhythm and text. In an interview Vivier said, "What I was looking for was a normal voice. Like, very often with singers you have a trained voice quality and in the case of love, when you talk about love, you don't use your technically trained voice to talk about it. You use this very natural voice that you or I or anyone has. It gives an aura of a very intimate quality, which is very important to the piece."

Vivier drew together the texts for *Love Songs* as a collage of excerpts from several sources. These include love poems by Herman Hesse (1877–1962), spiritual songs by the German romantic poet Novalis (1772–1801), traditional English nursery rhymes, as well as Vivier's own invented language. Music director David Fallis assembled an ensemble of contrasting voice types and guided them, through rehearsal, in refining and conveying the spirit of the work.

Vivier's 1975 *Hymnen an die Nacht* (Hymns to Night) sets the poetry of Novalis for soprano and piano. In this case, Vivier extracted lines from Novalis' long poem of the same title, written as a eulogy at the death of the poet's wife, in 1800. There are six hymns in the Novalis poem, developing the image of the night as death, and a gateway to eternal life. Vivier embraced these ideas, and the lines he extracted for his setting conjure an idyllic, primeval time. Soprano Carla Huhtanen describes it as "a time when people worshipped the sun, and death was not integrated as part of life, but seen as a benign brother of sleep."

Soundstreams commissioned Toronto composer Christopher Mayo to create an homage to Vivier for this presentation and for the upcoming tour. Mayo wrote, "Vivier's school friend, Gilles Beaugard, recalls that the first composition of Vivier's he saw was a setting of the poem *Oceano Nox* by Victor Hugo. There is no record of this piece of juvenilia besides Beaugard's recollection, the piece itself is lost. Hugo's *Oceano Nox* is a poem about sailors lost at sea, their memories decaying in the minds of friends and family as their bodies decay at the bottom of the ocean. This piece is a vain attempt to conjure Vivier's lost work from the ether. In trying to focus in on Vivier's lost composition, this work stumbles upon quotations from two other settings of Hugo's poem: a choral setting by Georges Alary from 1899, and a song by Laure Collin from 1869." The work is scored for seven voices, piano and percussion and has no text, as Mayo uses the voices by sounding them through pitch pipes, organ pipes, as well as whistling.



## Texts

Claude Vivier, *Love Songs*

Text

Translation

**Main Duet**

**Girl**

Wenige wissen das Geheimnis der Liebe.

Few know the secret of love.

Tristan!

**Boy**

Isolde!

**Girl**

Fühlen unersättlichkeit und ewigen

Feel unquenchable and never ending

Durst.

thirst.

**Main Duet**

Deux fois puissant' et bel',  
elle dévoil' à l'est son corps.

Twice powerful and beautiful,  
she unveils her body in the east.

Suivant la route de l'ordre  
elle s'accord' aux quatres orientes.

Following the ordained path,  
she is in harmony with the four

**Female**

directions.

Hickory dickory dock,  
the mouse ran up the clock,  
the clock struck one and down he run.

**Voice**

Ewigen Durst!

Never ending thirst.

**Main Duet**

Hickory dickory dock

**Main Duet Boy**

Aber wer jemals von heissen geliebten  
Lippen Athem des Lebens sog,

But whoever has sucked in the breath of  
life from hot beloved lips,

**Voice**

Listen!

**Two groups**

Broke my nice new rattle.  
Tweedledum, Tweedledee.

**Voice**

Peter Pumkin eater  
Had a wife and couldn't keep her.  
Put her in a pumpkin shell  
And there he kept her very well.

**Main Duet Girl**

Hey! why do you laugh? This is a sad  
story.

**Main Duet**

**Girl**

Mao wa é na mayo oa nao nao na wa

(invented language)

**Boy**

Aber wer jemals von heißen geliebten  
Lippen Athem des Lebens sog,

**Duet**

Qui est elle, ta bien aimé?

**Voice**

Sa peau est douce comme les nuits de  
Septembre.

Maitre Merlin m'a dit où ell' est,  
mais je ne puis te dire.

**Ensemble**

Mao wa é na mayo oa nao nao na wa

**Voice**

Son palais de porphyre est sur  
le mont éternité,  
ses yeux de diamant cherche là...

**Duet**

Maitre Jakob sait où ell' est mais  
nous ne pouvons dir' où elle est.  
C'est tout.

**Voice**

C'est tout.

**Ensemble**

Ma ao nao à à una nao á oá nako wà na  
wa nako ma wa na wa kao mogno nu.

**Solo A**

Di ya ko, di ya kopè, di ya kopè ni

**Duo A**

Esko miskou miskou

Na kou kou pa

**Solo B**

Kio si, kio kio kio si, boagadébobi bobi  
bobo bi

**Duo B**

Signamo signamo yamani kato

**Main Duet Girl**

Please don't leave me alone, you know  
I'm afraid in the dark.

**Main Duet Boy**

Heissere Wollust durchlebt die Seele  
durstiger and hungrier.

**Solo Voice**

One, two, buckle my shoe

3, 4, knock at the door

5, 6, pick up sticks

7, 8, lay them straight,

But whoever has sucked in the breath of  
life from hot beloved lips,

Who is she, your best beloved?

Her skin is as soft as September nights.

Master Merlin has told me where she is,  
but I cannot tell you.

(invented language)

Her palace of porphyry is  
On the mount of eternity,  
Her diamond eyes search there...

Master Jacob knows where she is  
but we cannot say where she is.  
That's all.

That's all.

(invented language)

Hotter lust trembles through the soul,  
thirstier and hungrier.



9, 10, a big fat hen,  
11, 12, dig and delve,  
13, 14, maids a courting  
15, 16, maids in the kitchen,  
17, 18, maids in waiting,  
19, 20, my plate is empty

**Girl**

Please don't leave me alone in the dark.  
I'm afraid.

**Main Duet Boy**

Ich bin der Hirsch und du das Reh,

**Main Duet Girl**

Der Vogel du und ich der Baum.  
Die Sonne du und ich der Schnee,

**Main Duet Boy**

Du bist der Tag und ich der Traum.

**Voice**

1, 2, I love you too.

**Main Duet Girl**

Nachts aus meinem schlafenden Mund  
Fliegt ein Goldvogel zu dir,

**Voice**

Huc ades, o formose puer, tibi lilia plenis  
ecce ferunt Nymphae calathis; tibi  
candida Nais,  
pallentis violas et summa papavera  
carpens,  
narcissum et florem iungit bene olentis  
anethi;

tum casia atque aliis intexens suavibus  
herbis

mollia luteola pingit vaccinia caltha.

Ipse ego cana legam tenera lanugine  
mala

castaneasque nuces, mea quas Amaryllis  
amabat;

addam cerea pruna—honos erit huic  
quoque pomo—

et vos, o lauri, carpam et te, proxime  
myrte,

sic positae quoniam suavis miscetis  
odores.

**Girls**

Twinkle twinkle little star how I wonder  
what you are,

I am the buck and you the doe,

You the bird and I the tree.

You the sun and I the snow.

You are the day and I am the dream.

By night from my sleeping mouth  
A goldfinch flies to you,

Come here, oh beautiful boy. Behold, for  
you the nymphs bring lilies in full  
baskets; for you brilliant Nais, plucking  
pale violets and poppy heads, joins  
together narcissus and the flower of  
sweet dill;

then interweaving cassia and other sweet  
herbs sets hyacinth with golden  
marigold.

I myself pick quinces, white with soft  
down  
and nutty chestnuts, which my Amaryllis  
had loved; I add to this prunes – the  
honor will be to this fruit as well, and  
you, oh laurel, I take, and you,  
neighbouring myrtle, since thus next to  
each other you will mix your sweet odors.



Up above the world so high! Like a diamond in the sky.

**Main Duet Girl**

Hell ist sein stimme, sein Flugel bunt.  
Der singt dir das Lied von der Liebe,  
Der singt dir das Lied von mir.

**Solo A**

Na res ka

**Solo B**

Yo mu

**Solo C**

Ro kia ma rich kou

**Boys**

Mao kio kiaro, kiao kiao ka.

**Main Duet Girl**

Come night, come Romeo, come thou day  
in night.

For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night  
Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.  
Come gentle night, come loving black-  
browed night.

Give me my Romeo.

And when he shall die, take him and cut  
him out in little stars

and he will make the face of heaven so  
fine

that all the world will be in love with  
night

and pay no worship to the garish sun.

**Voice**

Requiem aeternam dona eis domine.

Grant them eternal rest, Lord.

**Voices**

Up above the world so high! Like a  
diamond in the sky

**Scène des pleurs**

(individual crying)

**Voice**

Requiem aeternam dona eis domine.

Grant them eternal rest, Lord.

**Voice**

Romeo, Romeo, oh I have bought the  
mansion of love but not possessed it,  
And though I am sold not yet enjoyed.

**Voices**

Give me my Romeo!

**Main Duet Girl**

Master Merlin!

**Main Duet Girl**

Master Merlin, my wooden horse is broken.

**Main Duet Boy**

I tell you where's bruder Jacob's workshop,  
but you must answer my question.  
What is it that walks first on 4 legs,  
then on 2, and finally on 3?

**Main Duet Girl**

Oh let me think. This is the human being,  
that walks first on four legs in his childhood,  
then on two in his adult time,  
and then with a walking stick to help the old man.

**Melody of the End**

Kuo sa vè Rouma kayesh

(invented language)

Ki za mi Roki za mi

Rouch kia ba ya

Fo no Kana Rai Kana.

Ya Rèch tiévi

Ya Rèch tiévi malikig Rouch.

No Rachki yaz da mayè

Mizo ka Lai

Mizo warchki

Mavai mavaro.

Lai, lai.

**Ensemble**

Va rouchka, maya ros kima do savi,

Raya utch tou meya raska.

Dewa dje Gèg za ras kiou mayè,

Za ras kioma,

Do savi raya, maya roski matchi maya.

Znova Rich na, zno' va do Richna Gadis.

Moutchè Razva kie.

**Voices**

Babouchka mouvè rich kiau ska ba bouch  
ka laru,

Mo wa wi wow ti an ki lo mi.

Ma o ve mich tio veskow mao mao mao.

Tow mè skow veus kade nou ma neus kiè  
now nè skiow.



Claude Vivier, *Hymnen an die Nacht*

Text

Über der Menschen weitverbreitete  
Stämme  
herrschte vorzeiten ein eisernes Schicksal  
mit stummer Gewalt.  
Eine dunkle, schwere Binde  
lag um ihre bange Seele.  
Unendlich war die Erde,  
der Götter Aufenthalt, und ihre Heimat,  
reich an Kleinoden  
und herrlichen Wundern.  
Seit Ewigkeiten stand  
ihr geheimnisvoller Bau.  
Über des Morgens blauen Bergen,  
in des Meeres heiligem Schoß  
wohnte die Sonne,  
das allzündende, lebendige Licht.

Translation

Over the farflung families of men  
in ancient times an iron Fate ruled  
with dumb force.  
A dark heavy oppression  
lay around their anxious souls.  
The Earth was endless,  
the abode of gods and their homeland,  
rich in gems  
and glorious miracles.  
From eternal ages stood  
its mysterious form.  
Beyond the blue hills of morning,  
in the sacred bosom of the sea  
lived the sun,  
the all-igniting, living Light.

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