

By Richard Strauss:

Kornblumen

Cornflowers I call these figures that gently, with blue eyes, preside quietly and modestly, placidly drinking the dew of peace from their own pure souls, communicating with everything that is near, unconscious of the precious sensitivity that they have received from the hand of God. You feel so good among them, as if you were going through a field, of crops through which the breath of evening blew, full of pious quietude and full of mildness.

Wasserrose

Do you know the flower, the fantastic waterlily, celebrated in myth?

On a slim, ethereal stem bobs its translucent, colorless head;
it blooms by reedy pools in groves, protected by the swan, who circles it in solitary vigil;
it opens only in the moonlight with which it shares its silver glimmer:
thus does it bloom, the magical sister of the star, idolized for its dreamy, dark tendrils
which by the edge of the pool can be seen from afar, never reaching what it years for.

Waterlily, so do I call the slim maiden with night-dark locks and alabaster cheeks,
with deep foreboding thoughts showing in her eyes, as if they were ghosts imprisoned on Earth.

When she speaks, it is like the silvery rushing of water; when she is silent, it is the pregnant silence of the moonlit night. She seems to have exchanged radiant expressions with the stars, whose language, of the same nature, she has grown accustomed to.

You can never grow weary of gazing in those eyes fringed with silky, long lashes,
and you believe, as if blessedly, terrifyingly bewitched, whatever the Romantics have dreamed about Elves.

Herr Lenz

Lord Spring leaps through town today, wearing bright blue stockings. And he who has two young legs leaps sap-joyously and sun-sated after, to partake in his bounty. There he is, near the gabled house, his pockets full of gifts; and the hands stretch toward him - everyone would like a bouquet for his sweetheart, hey! I fetch myself a sweetheart away from her glasses and bowls. Hat on! We're running across the square! Lord Spring, to unlock her bosom, a yellow cowslip key!

Ich wollt ein Strausslein binden

I would have made a bouquet but dark night arrived and there was no little flower to be found, or I would have brought it. Then down my cheeks flowed tears onto the clover - I saw that one small flower had come up now in the garden. I wanted to pick it for you deep in the dark clover, but it began to speak: "Ah, do not harm me! "Be kind-hearted, consider your own grief, and do not let me die in agony before my time!" And if it had not spoken so, in the garden all alone, I would have plucked it for you, but now that cannot be. My sweetheart has not come, I am so entirely alone. In love dwells tribulation, and it can be no different.

Morgen

And tomorrow the sun will shine again, and on the path I will take, it will unite us again, we happy ones, upon this sun-breathing earth... And to the shore, the wide shore with blue waves, we will descend quietly and slowly; we will look mutely into each other's eyes and the silence of happiness will settle upon us.

By Claude Debussy:

Pantomime

Pierrot, who is nothing like Clitandre, empties a bottle without ado, and, ever practical, cuts into a pâté. Cassandre, at the end of the avenue, sheds a concealed tear for his disinherited nephew. That impertinent Harlequin schemes the abduction of Columbine and whirls around four times. Columbine dreams, surprised at feeling a heart in the breeze and at hearing voices in her heart. Ah!

Clair de lune

Your soul is a chosen landscape charmed by masques and bergamasques. Playing the lute and dancing and almost sad beneath their fanciful disguises! Even while singing in a minor key of victorious love and fortunate living they do not seem to believe in their happiness, and their song mingles with the moonlight, the calm moonlight, sad and beautiful, which sets the birds in the trees dreaming, and makes the fountains sob with ecstasy, the tall slender fountains among the marble statues!

Pierrot

Good old Pierrot, at whom the crowd gapes, having concluded Harlequin's wedding, walks along the Boulevard du Temple, lost in thought. A girl in a supple garment vainly teases him with a mischievous look; And meanwhile, mysterious and smooth, taking her sweetest delight in him, the white moon, bull-horned, throws a furtive glance at her friend Jean Gaspard Deburau. Ah!

Apparition

The moon was saddened. Seraphims in tears dreaming, bows at their fingers, in the calm of filmy flowers threw dying violas of white sobs sliding over the blue of corollas. It was the blessed day of your first kiss; My reverie, loving to torture me, wisely imbibed its perfume of sadness. That even without regret and without setback leaves the gathering of a dream within the heart that gathered it. I wandered then, my eye riveted on the aged cobblestones. When, with light in your hair, in the street and in the evening, you appeared to me smiling and I thought I had seen the fairy with a hat of light who passed in my sweet dreams as a spoiled child, always dropping from her carelessly closed hand a snow of white bouquets of perfumed stars.

Knoxville, Summer of 1915

by Samuel Barber

It has become that time of evening when people sit on their porches, rocking gently and talking gently and watching the street and the standing up into their sphere of possession of the trees, of birds' hung havens, hangars. People go by; things go by. A horse, drawing a buggy, breaking his hollow iron music on the asphalt; a loud auto; a quiet auto; people in pairs, not in a hurry, scuffling, switching their weight of aestival body, talking casually, the taste hovering over them of vanilla, strawberry, pasteboard and starched milk, the image upon them of lovers and horsemen, squared with clowns in hueless amber.

A streetcar raising its iron moan; stopping, belling and starting; stertorous; rousing and raising again its iron increasing moan and swimming its gold windows and straw seats on past and past and past, the bleak spark crackling and cursing above it like a small malignant spirit set to dog its tracks; the iron whine rises on rising speed; still risen, faints; halts; the faint stinging bell; rises again, still fainter, fainting, lifting, lifts, faints foregone: forgotten. Now is the night one blue dew...

Now is the night one blue dew, my father has drained, he has coiled the hose. Low on the length of lawns, a frailing of fire who breathes....Parents on porches: rock and rock. From damp strings morning glories hang their ancient faces. The dry and exalted noise of the locusts from all the air at once enchants my eardrums.

On the rough wet grass of the backyard my father and mother have spread quilts. We all lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle, my aunt, and I too am lying there....They are not talking much, and the talk is quiet, of nothing in particular, of nothing at all in particular, of nothing at all. The stars are wide and alive, they seem each like a smile of great sweetness, and they seem very near. All my people are larger bodies than mine,...with voices gentle and meaningless like the voices of sleeping birds.

One is an artist, he is living at home. One is a musician, she is living at home. One is my mother who is good to me. One is my father who is good to me. By some chance, here they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, among the sounds of the night. May God bless my people, my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father, oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble; and in the hour of their taking away

Amor

by Richard Strauss

By the fire sat the child Cupid, Cupid and was blind; with his little wings he fans into the flames and smiles; Fan, smile, wily child! Ah, the child's wing is burning! Cupid, Cupid runs quickly. O how the burning hurts him deeply! Beating his wings, he weeps loudly; To the shepherdess's lap runs, crying for help, the wily child. And the shepherdess helps the child, Cupid, Cupid, naughty and blind. Shepherdess, look, your heart is burning; You did not recognize the rascal. See, the flame is growing quickly. Save yourself, from the wily child!