***A Letter from the Sphinx***



***Ada Leverson recounts***

***an interesting evening***

***with friends.***

***I suspect she is making all this up,***

***and I believe her implicitly.***

**(I) *Beardsley and the Brownings***



1.

Oscar, I dined last night with Browning

And Beardsley! Friend, I had a fine

Time of it. We drank so much wine!

What with arch Beardsley, and Browning frowning,

And dear Elizabeth *née* Barrett

Present to goad them on and play

Them off against each other, they

Were *quite* the experience: I shall share it.

2.

Aubrey’s a gifted young musician,

‘Mongst many other wicked things.

Robert, a musicolater, sings

Along when Aubrey plays magician

At the keys, and plucks teardrops of

Chopin, or strums a scandalous tango.

Elizabeth holds out a mango,

A blushing prize, to him whose love

Most sweetly tunes itself to smooth

And voluble discourse of tongue

 On matters musical: for young

She’s grown, and vigorous and, in truth,

Quite dangerous in her sorcerous beauty.

Robert, the Evangelically

Inclined, takes on most manfully

The challenge, thinking it his duty

To do the honours due to Beauty

And Beauty’s blazon in her eyes.

Aubrey, ah, wicked Aubrey! sighs.

He is ironical and snooty,

And yields his rival choice of theme.

*I have one. (Aubrey, do not mock!) Robert speaks in italics.*

*I shall describe the City of Bach.*

The architecture of a dream?

**Asks Aubrey, silver-hatchet-faced,

His black hair parted in the middle,

His attitude an angle, a riddle,

His promise, ah, so soon erased,

So cruelly curtailed, dark-glowing *A second Keats, he, too, died at 25, and of*

In all its tragic anger in this *the same disease. I almost wish I had not*

Hollow-cheeked, acute face of his, *invented him, for such an end.*—[Oscar]

Those eyes so full of deathly knowing.



2. *The City of Bach*

*Fugueberg-of-a-thousand-streets*

*‘Tis called. On this I shall dilate.*

Where is it, then? In a ‘fugue state’? *(Aubrey, behave!)*

*The blueprint lays out on white sheets,*



*On grids of voice in four-part writing,*

*Intersection, circle, and square.*

*And through this place the travellers fare*

*Fleeing each other, or at times fighting,*

*And generally going their*

*Own ways down diverse avenues.*

*But all this counterpoint of views*

*Forms somehow a melodious air*

*Of a clean richness so precisely*

*Beautiful that one weeps for joy*

*To hear the jostling and annoy*

*Of voices drawing harmony*

*From clash of passing dissonance,*

*As textured layers of voice one voice*

*Make of complex assent that joys*

*In God as in a Sacred Dance.*

Aubrey:

The Book of Numerology!

Who knew the cold Masonic God he

Adored was so adorned and gaudy?

He sings Bel Cantor thrillingly.

4. *The Aleph*

*Into the darkness light shall enter!*

*Dark was the Void, without a sun.*

*All things slept their oblivion.*

*Circumference was there none, no centre.*

*Silence was King, things slept a slumber.*

*The Cantor trained a starry choir;*



*They knew no measure of desire*

*And so He said,* ‘Let there be Number’.

*And like the fundamental tone*

*Of things, before things were, There* is*.*

‘Let it be the Aleph’*—lo! ‘tis this. ‘Both tiny and vast: the Aleph-ant’,*

‘Be it infinity-plus-one’ *whispers Aubrey to Elisabeth, snickering.*

*And I am. I the Aleph am.*

What are you? *What am I?* ‘I’ is *Aubrey interjects a question.*

Another, is all the others. Bias

Is built into your Panogram

Towards a certain solipsism

Belied by the Pleroma’s loud

Downbeat into a riotous crowd

Of syncopated anarchism.

*I am the Aleph. I am what*

*I am. Fool! All that is, at all, Saith Rabbi ben Ezra.*

*Endures for ever, past recall.*

Time, saith Shakespeare, is a slut *Says Aubrey.*

Whose pox God wills our flesh to want,

A pampered punk, a Trojan strumpet,

Apocalypse that lips the trumpet

Of the end of all, this Aleph-Ant

Of More in Less and Less in More.

She is the sultry cigarette girl

In Space’s Cabaret, she’ll whirl

You for a tango on the floor

And lead you to a curtained garden,

One soft and flowery bed. She’ll turn

The gramophone crank, you will yearn

For her, and soften, and then harden

Sleeper awake! The sweet thief’s gone,

And you an elephant of wrinkled

Memory on sheets, think how it twinkled,

The ring she need no longer pawn. *E.B.B. looks on amused as the*

*two rivals glare at one another.*

*Robert resumes, dactylically rhapsodic.*

5.  *Tetra-Anagrammaton*



*Bach: A brook flowing down from the mountain.*

*Bellows: The lungs of the organ aloft,*

*Booming like thunder, now distant and soft.*

*Bach: Flows to the sea and returns as a fountain.*

*Anna his sweet Magdalena, the singer.*

*Allemande: dancer, and German by birth,*

*Andante it moves, lightly touching the earth.*

*Appoggiatura, the discord-bringer.*

*Clavichord thirds embellish the cello.*



*Circle of fifths its own tail devours.*

*Clef unto clef calls, and it showers*

*Chords misted with a chromatic halo.*

*H: Pronounced ‘asch’, a German ‘B’.*

*Harmony’s honey is bittersweet:*

*Hear how in One all the bird-songs meet,*

*Harps, how they’re plucked of their melody!*

6.

*High on the senses’ crest, the ear*

*Is hungry and deep, a shadowy hollow*

*Harmony-hallowed. Troubles follow:*

*Cursing and tears are all we hear.*

*Evil visits us in our dreams.*

*When the Physician comes, we are too sick*

*To drink the potion of His music.*

*When shall we enter a house whose beams*

*Are stronger than the winds of time?*

*How low they lie among the stones,*

*The scattered staves of human bones!*

*They would in stepwise sureness climb*

*To sopranino heights of Heaven*

*And descant sweetly on the Word*

*Melismas round the tonic chord*

*With every dissonance forgiven.*

**7.

*Each part is made of many parts:*

*A single heart, faithful and true.*

*Two hearts in love. One, broken in two.*

*Each heart is made of many hearts.*

*The heart of pride, sickly and cold.*

*The Queen of Hearts, upon her throne,*

*Wears a gold crown, but sits alone,*

*Her heart worn out in have and hold.*

*The heart of hate, baffled and wild.*

*And that miraculous red bird*

*That beats in the hand of the Word*

*Of God is the heart of a child.*



8.

*Follow one street through all the towns,*

*Cross the one town by myriad streets:*

*Such the complexity that meets*

*The ear with wiles to thread these sounds.*

*Every listening reveals*

*A unique city; say, therefore,*

*Infinite cities to explore,*

*And ne’er the same one twice unreels*

*Itself before the venturing ears.*

*As often as they listen, these*

*Will always hear a different piece,*

*No road is royal, each path veers*

*Off on its own course, no twin brother*

*It has among the ways to get*

*From end to end of town, and yet*

*Each path’s as good as any other.*

*Such is the infinitely complex*

*Bach fugue: complex yet clear, and thus*

*Infinitely perspicuous*

*As the eye of the* regorum Rex*.*

*So every work of Bach’s contains*

*More music than the ear can hear,*

*Though asymptotically we near*

*The whole towards which our hearing strains.*

*His music is pure* in excelsis

Deo gloria, *the Infinite*

*Dwells in the ringing shrine of it*

*More than in anybody else’s.*

9. *Cantata and Mass*

*Cantata, a pew filled with voices*

*Diversely joined in one devotion*



*Spending itself in sound like ocean*

*Waves on the altar. Grief rejoices.*

*But dissonance comes like a sword*

*Amongst the tones, with ills and evils*

*The tonic major heals—but, Devil’s*

*Interval, you baffle the chord!*

*The hearts’ tritones prevaricate.*

*Sweet distant voices fall and rise.*

*We hear the tunes of Paradise*

*But swordsman Michael guards the gate.*

*The heart’s a furtive, darkling coast,*

*Tough muscle, Lord, perversely soft,*

*Made whole when the priest holds aloft*

*The consubstantiated Host.*

*Robert knocks back a glass of wine*

*and turns storytelling balladeer.*

10. *A Prince and a Subject*

*He is the Prince, a man of pallid*

*Visage, and pride unlimited*

*Inside a small and narrow head.*

*I am the subject of the ballad.*

*As vast as a great fugue it was,*

*This Prince’s grandiosity.*

*Once, as his coach-and-six rolled by,*

*What every loyal subject does*

*I failed to do: I would not raise*

*My cap, when duty bid me show*

*The Christian virtue of a low*

*Obsequiousness. In those days*

*High Worldliness decreed that even*

*Our music should wear livery,*

*Though only true Divinity*

*It ought to serve, and highest Heaven.*

*Fetters and a floor strewn with straw*

*Would be the fugitive’s if caught—*

*Though freedom in this place meant naught*

*But wearing lighter chains. I saw*

*My chance, and leaping on my horse,*

*Broke through the guards’ ranks and attained*

*The open road. How my horse strained*

*To outstrip the advancing force!*

*She plunges on in a dust cloud,*

*Presto, and her hooves on the ground*

*In demisemiquavers pound,*

*Whilst gaining hooves beat fast and loud.*

*I turn at a remote byway*

*And somehow narrowly escape.*

*I try to modulate my shape.*

*(Such are the games subjects must play.)*

*I change the angle of my figure,*

*And backwards, even upside-down*

*I walk at times, from town to town,*

*Now seeming smaller and now bigger,*

*Disguise myself, almost become*

*Another subject altogether,*

*Darting hither in stealth and thither,*

*Hotly pursued. My nightly home*

*I make in taverns, wayside inns.*

*The crashing entry of his men*

*Awakens me, again, again,*

*Come in the name of the great Prince.*

*Only an open window gapes*

*At them when they burst through the door.*

*Another night: we play once more*

*This stretto of entries and escapes.*

*It ends with capture, but a finer*

*End than the gallows waits for me.*

*My crime was thinking I was free.*

*My life concludes in sad B minor.*

*‘Im finstern Tal, fürchte ich kein From the Lutheran Bible, Psalm 23*

*Unglück‘. I pray here, in my prison, (‘Yea, though I walk through the*

*Waiting to die. For He is risen.* *Valley of Death, I shall fear no evil‘).*

*His tomb empty; so shall be mine.*

11.

*We go about our business, friend*

*To enemy and enemy*

*To friend. The town hall clock strikes three.*

*Around the clock stiff figures wend*

*The circle of fallen Man and end*

*Where they began, as in a prison*

*Exercise yard. Soul’s prayer-gears (listen!)*

*Chime: ‘Bury your clocks and ascend’.*

12.

*Out in the yard, bread, cheese, and beer.*

*Anna my wife, the gifted singer,*

*At our wild children wags a finger*

*Smiling in daylight soft and clear.*

*They scramble over bench and board. Thomasskirche, Leipzig.*

*Smoking my Meerschaum pipe, I am lost*

*In thought. The beer tastes stale. The cost*

*To fix the roof I can’t afford!*

*A sort of fugue, those scampering cats…*

*That post in Leipzig… I review*

*My awkward speech: the interview,*

*The sacred, stupid bureaucrats!*

*Can rules be followed so far that*

*You break them? Do you then become*

*The leader? Leading where? God, home?*

*Meanwhile, cat runs away from cat.*



13*. The Passion According to St. Matthew*

*O Christ our Lord and living Word,*

*This music is your beating pulse.*

*As through these dissonant intervals*

*Lines journey towards the tonic chord,*

*And as the chosen tribe of Moses*

*Walked forty years through desert sand*

*Until they reached the Promised Land,*

*Rose made of thorns composed of roses,*

*So up a path of flails and curses*

*You strove, to crown our exaltation*

*From the tower of humiliation,*

*As it is writ in Matthew’s verses.*



*And in this Passion, in this pity*

*Let sound the tolling bell, for dun*

*Will grow the day ere long: the sun*

*Is setting on the human city.*

14. *Aubrey’s Palinode*

Two subjects scraping, now and then,

Against each other, blade on blade



In spark and clash, then retrograde

Going their separate ways again:

Yes, that’s what counterpoint is all

About. Bach is its master—and

Its slave. The structure is quite grand

But such formality may pall.

I prefer madness in my music.

Thor-hammering Wagner. Poetry, *By Walter Sickert.*

Too, Schubert’s sweet melancholy.

Or the dark side of Mozart, too sick

To finish his last masterpiece, The *Requiem.*

Coughing up genius in a garret.

(Sometimes I simply cannot bear it,

This dying. Where shall I find peace?)



[*Aubrey improvises mockingly on some favourite themes*

*and anathemas of the* *Evangelically-minded Robert,*

*including his* *hated Calibanesque natural theology.*]

15.

Galuppi, give us a toccata

On themes as wild as the Galapagos,

Or Guinean shores, where anthropophagus

Natives are chanting a cantata

In praise of Nature (God, or Book

Of Darwin, Devil’s script?) They praise

The Vulcan-Spark that in a blaze

Makes oily missionaries cook.

They dance around the fire and shout

Hosannas to a tikki god,

This Gnostic cargo cult of fraud-

Shamans and tribal odd-men-out.

Mutations on the theme of apes

Ever-evolving into angels

 As an idea in the brain gels

They sing, and praise all protean shapes.

16. *Another Venetian Toccata*

Galapagan Galuppi sings

The faded beauty of the feather

That on a belle, in heady weather

Of Carnivale, adorned the wings

Of gold, the Cupid guise in which



She revelled in the Doge’s Palace,

Quaffing the moment in its chalice

At the masked ball where all the rich

And haughty nobles of Poseidon’s

Cherished old harlot City go

To see and be seen, ‘mid the flow

Of champagne, and the smile that widens

On Lady Cupid’s face, the fire

Of all the prostituted splendour

Of her fine face when they attend her,

Her beaux, the Knights of her Desire,

*As she becomes, in all her glory, Robert interjects.*

*A vision of Venus, clam-shell borne,*

*Stroking the tumid Unicorn* ‘*Under the Hill’, detailing the erotic*

*In Aubrey’s filthy little story. adventures of Venus and Tannhäuser.*

And your Porphyria? Her hair

You twined into a strangling cord.

You killed the one that you adored.

Porphyria, at least the rare *The power of suggestion! Robert’s skin*

*turns purple, blisters appear, he feels*

Variety you suffer from, *stomach ains, becomes depressed, and*

Brings seizures and delusions, brings *begins to sweat profusely as Aubrey looks*

Depression, anxious thoughts, and things, *on gloatingly… But with a great effort of*

Bump-in-the-night things, oh! they come. *will he shakes off the curse. Aubrey, having*

*made his point, resumes the singing match.*



17.

Now let her walk her along the Lido

Alone and lovelorn, for of all

The beaux the one she chose to fall

In love with is the faithless Guido!

And let the sands she walks be changed

To shores Galapagan, or better,

Of Easter Island: yes, there set her

Down in a barren and estranged

Marooning, let my lady pace



Among the cold and brooding heads

Of gone gods underneath the reds

And purples of her dusky days,

Her Knights of Stone, and every breath

She takes their breathless faces mock.

And let them join, as flesh and rock,

The stone death and the living death.

18. *Abt Vogler and Improvisation*

*Praise on the instrument your own Robert’s turn.*

*Hands made the God whose own Hands made*

*Your hands His instrument, and bade*

*Abt Vogler find the proper tone,*



*As of each thing its Final Cause,*

*For each hue of the rainbow’s blazon*

*And, in a mighty Diapason,*

*Sound all the Stations of the Cross.*

*Fell Time, that makes the roses wilt,*

*Hath laid low, with his envious malice,*

*Another Solomonic palace*

*Bad angels and good devils built.*

19. *A Hand of Tarot Cards A sort-of run-off election or elimination*

*round, as narrated by my dear Sphinx.*

Now they are playing with the cards, *The loser must gradually disappear, like*

The Twin Arcana of the Tarot *the grin, turned* moue*, of the Cheshire Cat.*

Goddess, a Gipsy nomad, narrow-

Eyed and sly, who picks crystal shards



Of questionable epiphany

 From the seamed rock-face of the random.

She has a partner: they in tandem

Can raise the dead, for a small fee.

*Browning, with a touch*

*Alas, the lightning-stricken Tower, of* Schadenfreude.

*From which two men fall to their death! Beardsley looks stricken.*

*Ah, numbered is your every breath.*

*How soon it comes, your Hour, your Hour.*

[*Things get confusing here, Oscar, so let me summarise the Pantomime costume- and*

*scene- changes that ensue, the detailed chronicling of which will have to wait till the next*

*post, or if you prefer, chapter: Elizabeth Browning becomes Lizzie Siddal with a strong dose*

*of Lilith. Robert Browning becomes Gabriel Rossetti, Beardsley withers away, and much else*

*besides takes place, all of it deliciously decadent. Be patient, friend, the sequel followeth anon!*]

I must go now: we are invited

To the Asquiths for a late supper.

My next has things that Martin Tupper

Would cough at; *you* will be delighted.

***Sphinx***

**(II) *Gabriel and les Femmes Damnées***



1.

Yes, as I told you in my last,

Our beardless Beardsley’s dead. Poor Aubrey’s

A blasted flower. Ah, no more strawberries

For Aubrey! Eternity is vast.

Now as for Robert, he’s turned dark

As he Rossettifies—no great *Not, thank God, ‘Tupperossettifies’,*

Stretch for one so Italianate. *as Max—cheeky lad!—portmanteau-*

And she is having quite the lark, *cises in his fine ‘No. 5 the Pines’.*

E.B.B. as divine Lizzie,

A lady noble as Godiva,

Yet who in Death is so alive a

Creature, who is as fresh as she?

What’s most intriguing, though, is this:

She has turned tribade recently: *Trousered like George Sand; a pagan.*

A fascinating thing to be,

As we both think. What he thought his,

Poor husband—the sweet, pulpy mango *Gabriel, that is, yet residually Robert.*

Of Passionate Ecstasy Divine—

Is, rather startlingly, mine:

She asks me if I’d like to tango!

That is to say (how? There’s the riddle!)

Elizabeth survives in Lizzie.

(The metaphysics make one dizzy:

She is herself *and* Lizzie Siddal.)

*If dreams were true, this would be Heaven, Gabriel is brooding in an arm-chair in a shadowy*

She says. *But love is seldom true. corner: this is his dark soirée of the soul. He looks*

*From red to blue he changes hue. on helplessly and yet eagerly, recognising the*

*On earth, love, true love is not given. cosmic justice or ‘Karma’ of what is unfolding*

*before his reddened, tortured and excited eyes:*

He, too, must improvise his part, *a scene of Hell-cat Sapphos in writhing attitudes*

I mean her husband, who grows old *of wanton and lascivious ecstasy! As clearly*

And sees and hears, and feels the gold *carved into his psyche as the Tables of sin done*

And strangling hair about his heart. *and atoned for placed on Pride’s Cornice on*

*Mount Purgatory as Rein and Spur for pilgrims*

Her soul of late is concentrated *as they slowly ascend to the Earthly Paradise.*

On sin, our Lizzie-Beth is Lilith: *To Swinburne, it is all a ‘blue movie’, and he acts*

*Flesh giveth life, but Spirit killeth, accordingly. Meanwhile Marcel arrives…*

Saith Lady Henrietta, sated

With food of love, though in a mood

Swinburne is busy playing with

Himself off in a corner, singing

In intense anapestics, flinging

Ejaculates to swell the myth

Of Onan to heroical

Proportions, though the jerky movement

Of leptic limbs could use improvement,

And he is generally hysterical.

*I, too, have loved Gomorrah’s daughters.*

*I am a jealous dog*, Marcel

Says to the nonplussed Gabriel,

In whose eyes tremble troubled waters.

Never more moving is a moving

Picture than when the impassioned mover

Is than the moved, belovèd lover

More movèd still, such pleasures proving,

And thus is on our pulses proved,

When Love’s high revels wax frenetic,

How brief is she, and how kinetic,

No sooner than no longer loved,

But back into her negatives

Wound up, and stored in those warehouses

Of memory lime tea arouses

Less and less frequently, she lives

In glamourous glow upon the screen

No more, but in the dim archives

Of memory gives, or dreams she gives,

Performances everywhere seen

And encored in life’s theatre.

But no one sees, and no one cares

How gracefully she climbs the stairs.

For who has even heard of her?

To bite blue stars into my bosom

And feel my faded flowers blossom.

Ah, how her evil does me good!

The modest remnants of my modesty

Bid me omit details and skip

To languid sequel: I, with lip

Bruised, serving a reclining goddess tea.

*2. Gabriel to Lizzie*

*The palmy days shall come no more,*

*My love. You only I saw, ah, you,*

*Bellissima, so gifted, too,*

*And so alive in every pore*

*With the Imagination’s life.*

*Like coppery hair that overflows*

*The coffin of dead Love’s repose*

*When one retrieves from a dead wife*

*The volume pored through by a worm*

*Was the profusion of my grief*

*And the despair of my belief*

*That in the elegance of form*

*And stanzas radiant with pain*

*I might revive the moment still*

*In the fane on the wooded hill,*

*The wedding white, still free of stain.*

*The thousands-in-itself containing*

*Pastel I made of you in words,*

*The tonic pulse through all the chords*

*Of Memory at its task, unstaining*

*What faithless Heart had fouled, and Time*

*Had put in storage, was the guilt*

*From which my House of Life was built,*

*Each joist a penitential rhyme.*

*But the long cloud that veils the moon*

*And the long wood that leads to light*

*Shed double darkness on the Night*

*Of the Soul, and the end comes soon.*

*At a table, in a dark room*

*I called to you, and you replied*

*That you were not the one who died.*

*Who spoke to me, then, through the gloom?*

*Lizzie speaks to Gabriel from the divan*

*where she lies with her head in my lap.*

*3. Lizzie to Gabriel Ada Leverson’s note*.—[Mr V]

*You were with* her *the night I died, Fanny Cornforth, perhaps.*

*Weren’t you, my Guggums, my Don Juan?*

 *The woods are dark, dark is the Ruin*

*Whose crumbling is a suicide.*

*The clearing where we two once stood,*

*Remember? held a secret fane*

*And there we made ourselves a vain*

*Religion, and we called it good.*

*Memories of when we stood beneath*

*The clinging trees in that dark wood*

*Are your soul’s ghostly Tantalus food,*

*And my death is the air you breathe.*

*I haunt you as you haunted me.*

*When you first saw me, sweet, I was*

*In a tub, freezing for the cause*

*Of Art, and for Millais: to be*

*The true Ophelia, feel as she*

*Felt as she slid downstream to Death,*

*Singing, till water mixed with breath,*

*Snatches of lauds and balladry,*

*I drowned my health, and bathed my aches*

*In the green waters of a drug.*

*Like Poems of Resurrection dug*

*Out of the grave that Despair makes*

*For Hope are these, my words to you,*

*My fallen angel, Gabriel,*

*And the lines do not scan so well*

*As once they did, when they were new.*

*Here is what makes me so perverse*

*And charms you with such evil charm:*

*You cannot do me any harm:*

*I do not love you, dear, and, worse,*

*I do not need you. I am a scandal*

*Of beauty, and am wholly free.*

*All you can do is mirror me,*

*And tie the latchet of my sandal,*

*If I elect you to the honour.*

*I am a wild thing, and uncanny.*

*Alexa Wilding, say, or Fanny*

*Cornforth, ah, the outrageous stunner!*

*And she you call the Elephant*

*Are but the mourning of my Eve, They replaced me as your models and lovers.*

*Guggums. It is for me you grieve, Like a Lilith’s Lilith they supplanted me.*

*Who for so many does did pant,*

*And, like the hart that fouls the fount*

*Of Immortality for which*

*He thirsts, consigned me to a ditch*

*Who should have been your Eden Mount.*

*And stillborn as a hopeless dream*

*Was the issue of my lonely hours.*

*Ophelia wept in herbs and flowers*

*And sank into a laudanum stream.*

*How sour at times, and out of key*

*Thy sweet bells seem to jangle now!*

*Old Adam, sweat pours from thy brow,*

*Half-monk, half-monkey, ah! for thee*

*To toll the long contrite blue bells*

*Of my poetic Resurrection*

*And nurse an unfulfilled erection*

*In Purgatory’s chaste halls and Hells!*



5.

And back to mad *frottage* and other

Heavenly Purgatories of Hell

Do we return… Poor Gabriel!

The penalty is the sin’s brother,

And recompense is injury’s

Sister, and ah, how sweet a fiddle

To stroke is vengeance! (Lizzie Siddal,

My beauteous dear! We mustn’t tease.)

I trust all’s well with your age-old

Latest *hoc opus*, it all sounds

Quite laboured! When you go your rounds,

Dear, bundle up, or you’ll catch cold.

*Yours affectionately,*

***Sphinx***

6. *Reply by Telepathogram:*

Dear Sphinx, I savour this tableau.

Too soon you choose to draw the curtain!

In a mad world— this much is certain—

The curtain falls on every show.

In church, in temple or in mosque, her

Face, and the lust it sparked, would be

The same religion. Think of me,

My dear Sphinx.—Your affectionate

***Oscar***

***Musical Program***

**Page 3**

Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I: *Prelude and Fugue No. 3 in C Sharp Major*. Friedrich Gulda, piano.

**Page 4**

Bach, *The Passion of Our Lord according to St. Matthew*, BWV 244. No. 1 Double Chorus: “Come, ye daughters.” New York Philharmonic, Collegiate Chorus, Leonard Bernstein, conductor.

**(Töchter Zion und Gläubige Seelen)**

Kommt, ihr Töchter, helft mir klagen,  
Sehet! - Wen? - den Bräutigam!  
Seht ihn! - Wie? - als wie ein Lamm.  
Sehet! - Was? - seht die Geduld,

Seht! - Wohin? - auf unsre Schuld.  
Sehet ihn aus Lieb und Huld  
Holz zum Kreuze selber tragen.

**(Daughters of Zion and Faithful Souls)**  
Come, daughters, help me lament,  
behold! - Whom? - the Bridegroom!  
Behold Him! - How? - As a Lamb.  
Behold! - What? - behold the patience,  
look! - Where? - at our guilt.  
See Him, out of love and graciousness  
bear the wood for the Cross Himself.

**Trans. Pamela Dellal**

**Page 5**

### Bach, French Suite No. 5, Allemande. Piotr Anderszewski, piano.

**Page 6**

### Bach, Crab Canon, from A Musical Offering. Video by Jos Leys. [**http://www.youtube.com/watch?list=RDxUHQ2ybTejU&v=xUHQ2ybTejU**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?list=RDxUHQ2ybTejU&v=xUHQ2ybTejU)

**Page 7**

Bach, *The Passion of Our Lord according to St. John,* BWV 245. No. 1 Chorus: "Herr, unser Herrscher." English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner, conductor.

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| Herr, unser Herrscher, dessen Ruhm  In allen Landen herrlich ist! Zeig uns durch deine Passion, Daß du, der wahre Gottessohn,  Zu aller Zeit,  Auch in der größten Niedrigkeit, Verherrlicht worden bist!  Lord, our ruler, Whose fame  In every land is glorious! Show us, through Your passion, That You, the true Son of God, Through all time, Even in the greatest humiliation, Have become transfigured! |

Trans. Pamela Dellal

**Page 9**

Bach, *The Passion of Our Lord according to St. Matthew*, BWV 244. No. 68 Double Chorus: “In deepest grief, here sit we weeping.” New York Philharmonic, Collegiate Chorus, Leonard Bernstein, conductor.

Wir setzen uns mit Tränen nieder  
Und rufen dir im Grabe zu:  
Ruhe sanfte, sanfte ruh!

Ruht, ihr ausgesognen Glieder!  
    - Ruhet sanfte, ruhet wohl. –

Euer Grab und Leichenstein  
Soll den ängstlichen Gewissen  
Ein bequemes Ruhekissen  
Und der Seelen Ruhstatt sein.  
    - Ruhet sanfte, sanfte ruht! -  
Höchst vergnügt  
Schlummern da die Augen ein.

We sit down with tears  
and call to You in the grave:  
rest gently, gently rest!  
Rest, you exhausted limbs!  
    - Rest gently, rest well.

 Your grave and headstone  
 shall, for the anxious conscience,  
 be a comfortable pillow  
and the resting place for the soul.  
    - rest gently, gently rest! -  
 Highly contented,  
 there the eyes fall asleep.

Trans. **Pamela Dellal**

**Page 10**

Wagner, *Das Rheingold.* “Entrance Of The Gods Into Valhalla.” Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, conductor.

**Page 10**

Schubert, *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. Renée Fleming, soprano.

Meine Ruh' ist hin,

Mein Herz ist schwer,

Ich finde sie nimmer

Und nimmermehr.

Wo ich ihn nicht hab

Ist mir das Grab,

Die ganze Welt

Ist mir vergällt.

Mein armer Kopf

Ist mir verrückt,

Mein armer Sinn

Ist mir zerstückt.

Meine Ruh' ist hin,

Mein Herz ist schwer,

Ich finde sie nimmer

Und nimmermehr.

Nach ihm nur schau ich

Zum Fenster hinaus,

Nach ihm nur geh ich

Aus dem Haus.

Sein hoher Gang,

Sein' edle Gestalt,

Seine Mundes Lächeln,

Seiner Augen Gewalt,

Und seiner Rede

Zauberfluß,

Sein Händedruck,

Und ach, sein Kuß!

Meine Ruh' ist hin,

Mein Herz ist schwer,

Ich finde sie nimmer

Und nimmermehr.

Mein Busen drängt sich

Nach ihm hin.

Ach dürft ich fassen

Und halten ihn,

Und küssen ihn,

So wie ich wollt,

An seinen Küssen

Vergehen sollt!

**Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel**

My peace is gone,

My heart is heavy,

I will find it never

and never more.

Where I do not have him,

That is the grave,

The whole world

Is bitter to me.

My poor head

Is crazy to me,

My poor mind

Is torn apart.

My peace is gone,

My heart is heavy,

I will find it never

and never more.

For him only, I look

Out the window

Only for him do I go

Out of the house.

His tall walk,

His noble figure,

His mouth's smile,

His eyes' power,

And his mouth's

Magic flow,

His handclasp,

and ah! his kiss!

My peace is gone,

My heart is heavy,

I will find it never

and never more.

My bosom urges itself

toward him.

Ah, might I grasp

And hold him!

And kiss him,

As I would wish,

At his kisses

I should die!

Trans. Lynn Thompson

**Page 11**

Galuppi, *Sonata in d minor.* Fabio Bonizzoni, cembalo.

**Page 12**

Monteverdi, *Orfeo*. Act I: Sinfonia. “Ecco pur cha voi ritorno.” English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner, conductor.

**Page 12**

Pachelbel, *Magnificat: Fugue No. I in d*. Fabian Schwarzkopf, organ.

**Page 13**

Mozart, Requiem Mass in D Minor, K. 626. III. Sequentia, 6: Lacrimosa (Chorus). Collegium Vocale, Philippe Herreweghe, conductor.

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| --- | --- |
| Lacrimosa dies illa, qua resurget ex favilla judicandus homo reus. Huic ergo parce, Deus, pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem. Amen. | That day of tears and mourning, when from the ashes shall arise, all humanity to be judged. Spare us by your mercy, Lord, gentle Lord Jesus, grant them eternal rest. Amen. |