

NORA
FISCHER
FOLK



As a singer coming from a classical background and education,

I have always been inspired by music styles and vocal performers who have a great sense of freedom in their musicianship. Various types of music inspire me deeply, but it is probably the world of folk music –from any place on earth– that has shaped me the most. I love listening to anything from the legendary Lebanese singer Fairuz, to the ever-repeating polyphonic singing of the Pygmies, the beautiful Scandinavian melodies, the rhythmic world of African drumming, Bulgarian choirs, Gypsy street musicians, ancient Yiddish lullabies... I could go on for much longer. But it is more than just the specific musical beauty of each of these styles that I love so much. It is also the immense sense of freedom, of purity, and of togetherness that touches me every time. To me, folk music is the pure essence where music comes from in its most original form: to share

our emotions with each other or with ourselves at a specific moment. It has made me understand that music shouldn't be about technical perfection or the fear of doing it 'wrong' or 'right' – it should be the celebration of a moment that we share together, regardless of hierarchy, quality, or a division between the listener and the performer.

You might be surprised about this story, seeing that this disc comprises of classical compositions only. Let me explain! Not only have I been greatly inspired by the sense of freedom I have found in many musical genres, I am also continuously trying to implement some of this freedom in the classical vocal repertoire. And I am not alone. Many composers have seen the beauty of ancient folk melodies, and have used it in their work. And here we encounter another passion of mine: the meeting point of two very different worlds, and the way that they can sometimes create a '2+2=5' moment. Composers such as Maurice Ravel

and Béla Bartók have taken traditional folk melodies, and combined them with their own vocabulary as ingenious composers, creating whole new worlds of sound. The combination of these simple, pure and beautiful melodies, with many added layers of compositional qualities, amounts to wonderful new crossroads of two worlds that appeared to be so far from one another. When they come together, it is a playground of possibilities for vocal expression. Even though we are in a mainly classical sound world, here and there one can make space for the playful, the vulnerable, the intensely intimate or ecstatic joy in a less stylized, and more intuitively approached vocal sound.

Ravel and Bartók were masters in the way they either reinforced, or twisted the original emotions of the melodies they used. In both the *Deux Mélodies Hébraïques* and the *Cinq Mélodies Populaires Grecques*, Ravel finds a beautiful vocabulary in the piano for accompanying the melodies. They are often quite minimal, with a 'less is more' approach, creating an

atmosphere where every subtly added harmony or slight comment from the piano makes the melody shine even more. Bartók was known for his visits to the countryside, where he would record the villagers' traditional melodies. He composed many works based on these melodies, and *Falun* is one of my favourites. The piano accompaniment is so rich, sometimes strengthening the message of the song, sometimes completely reinventing it. In Part 4 for example, we hear a lullaby – simple and pure in itself – but in this version it becomes almost scary (a version I might not recommend singing to a child before sending them off to sleep...). It is this way of building bridges between two very opposing worlds that I find fascinating, and I hope with this disc to meet right in the middle, in a place where we can take off and create 5 out of 2+2.

Nora Fischer



Maurice Ravel
Deux Mélodies Hébraïques

I. Kaddisch

Yithgaddal weyithkaddash scheméh rabba
be'olmâ diverâ khire'outhé veyamli'kh
mal'khouté behayyé'khôn, ouvezome'khôu
ouve'hayyé de'khol beth yisraël ba'agalâ
ouvizman qariw weimrou. Amen.
Yithbara'kh, weyischtaba'h weyithpaër
weyithromam weyithnassé weyithhaddar
weyith'allé weyithhallal scheméh
dequdschâ beri'kh hou. Le'èlà ule'èlà min
kol bir'khata weschiratha touschbehatha
wene'hamathâ daamirân ah! be'olma ah!
ah! ah! ah! ah! Weimrou Amen.

Maurice Ravel
Cinq Mélodies Populaires Grecques

I. Chanson de la mariée

Réveille-toi, réveille-toi perdrix mignonne.
Ouvre au matin tes ailes.
Trois grains de beauté, mon cœur en est brûlé.
Vois le ruban, le ruban d'or que je t'apporte
pour le nouer autour de tes cheveux.
Si tu veux, ma belle, viens nous marier:
dans nos deux familles, tous sont alliés.

II. Là-bas vers l'église

Là-bas vers l'église,
vers l'église Ayio Sidéro
l'église, ô Vierge sainte,
l'église Ayio Constanndino,
se sont réunis, se sont rassemblés
en nombre infini,
du monde, ô Vierge sainte,
du monde tous les plus braves.

Maurice Ravel
Two Hebraic Songs

I. Kaddisch

May His great name be magnified and
hallowed throughout the world that He
created according to His will; and may He
reign over His kingdom in your lifetime and
in your days and in the lifetime of the entire
house of Israel, speedily in our day. Amen.
May the holy name be blessed and lauded,
glorified and uplifted, extolled, honoured,
magnified, and praised. Blessed is He,
higher than all blessing and hymn, praise
and consolation that are spoken in this
world. Ah! Let us say Amen.

Maurice Ravel
Five Greek Folksongs

I. The bride's awakening

Wake up, wake up, darling partridge!
Spread your wings in the morning!
Three beauty-spots! They inflame my heart!
See the ribbon, the golden ribbon I bring you
to tie around your hair.
If you wish, my beauty, let's get married.
Our two families are all for it.

II. Down there by the church

Down there by the church,
by the church of Saint Sideros,
the church, O Holy Virgin,
the church of Saint Constantine,
there are gathered, assembled,
an infinite number
of the world's, O Holy Virgin,
of the world's best people.

III. Quel galant m'est comparable

Quel galant m'est comparable
d'entre ceux qu'on voit passer?
Dis, dame Vassiliki?
Vois, pendus à ma ceinture,
pistolets et sabre aigu...
Et c'est toi que j'aime.

IV. Chanson des cueilleuses de lentilles

Ô joie de mon âme,
joie de mon cœur, trésor qui m'est si cher;
joie de l'âme et du cœur
toi que j'aime ardemment,
tu es plus beau qu'un ange.
Ô lorsque tu parais, ange si doux,
devant nos yeux,
comme un bel ange blond
sous le clair soleil,
hélas! tous nos pauvres cœurs soupirent.

V. Tout gai!

Tout gai, gai
ha, tout gai;
belle jambe, tireli qui danse,
belle jambe, la vaiselle danse.
Tra la la la.

Béla Bartók
Falun - Dedínské Scény BB 87a (Sz 78)

I. Szénagyűjtés (Pri hrabani)

Hej! Gereblyézd, gereblyézd
azt a szép zöld szénát!
Gereblyézném szívesen,
de kend alig kaszált.

III. What beau can be compared to me?

What beau can be compared to me
among those seen passing by?
Tell me, Dame Vassiliki?
See hanging at my belt,
a pistol and a sharp sword...
And it's you that I love.

IV. Song of the mastic gatherers

O joy of my soul,
joy of my heart, treasure so dear to me;
joy of soul and heart,
you whom I love so passionately,
you are more lovely than an angel.
O when you appear,
lovely angel,
like a beautiful fair angel
under the bright sun,
alas! all our poor hearts sigh.

V. Gaily

Gaily, gay,
all gay;
lovely legs, tireli, that dance,
lovely legs, the crockery dances.
Tra la la la.

Béla Bartók: Village Scenes
Dedínské Scény BB 87a (Sz 78)

I. Haymaking

Ai! Rake it now, rake it now,
rake up the new-mown hay!
Ai! I'd gladly rake it now,
if you had mown some more.

Hej! Gereblye, gereblye,
ménkü csapjon bele!
Úgy elaludt, összetört
a gereblye nyele.

II. A Menyasszonynál (Pri neveste)

Száll a páva,
hej, tollát elhullajtja,
szőke kis lány gyűjti
patyolat vánkosba.

Szedd fel kislány, szedd fel,
szükséged lesz rája,
azon fog nyugodni
a babád orcája,
hej, azon.

III. Lakodalom (Svatba)

Ancsurka, a ládád
már szekérré rakták,
vánkosod föltették:
megvan a kelengyed.

Ebből a faluból
másikba kell menni,
sógorral, komával
összeismerkedni.

Ládád jávorfából,
vánkosod pehelyből;
helyre lány vagy, Ancsa,
mégsincs már szeretőd.

Szeretőd ha nincs is,
hites urad léssen,
nem fogsz elhervadni,
mint rózsza a réten.

Ai! Don't you stop raking now,
you have not done your work,
all because, from sleepiness,
you went and broke your rake.

II. At the Bride's Home

Proud the peacocks flutter.
Ai! Shimmering fall their feathers,
pretty girl takes them,
fills the clean white pillows.

Take them, girl, take them,
Ai! You'll soon need these feathers,
for upon these pillows
your lover's head will rest,
Ai, just wait.

III. Wedding

Annie, in your boxes
carried on the wagon,
there's fine clothes and bedding,
all for when you're married.

To the bridegroom's village,
fast as we are able,
we will drive, see his place,
get to know his people.

Finest maple boxes,
pillow stuffed with feather,
Annie, pretty girl,
now you have no lover.

Now she has a husband;
though she's lost a lover,
she will not, like a rose,
fade away and wither.

Rózsza vagyok, rózsza,
amíg nincsen uram;
ha már uram léssen,
rózsza le hull rólam.

Isten veled, Ancsa!
Ezt se hitted volna:
mi innét elmegyünk
s itt hagyunk magadba.

IV. Bölcsődal (Ukolievarka)

Beli fiam, beli,
aludj fiam lelkem!
Fogsz-e majd gondozni,
hej, mikor megöregszem?

Foglak, anyám, foglal,
amíg legény leszek;
ha megházasodom,
tetőled elmegyek.

Aludjál, aludjál,
engem békén hagyjál!
Amíg békén nem hagysz,
addig el nem alhatsz.

Zöld erdőbe menj el,
fehér inged vedd fel;
ingecskéd fehérlik,
a zöld erdőn végig.

Fehér ingecskédet
Maris varrta néked,
zöldelő berekbe
selyemmel hímmezte.

Beli fiam, beli,
fehér szárnyú tündér!
A fekete földbe,
csak el ne repülnél!
Beli, kicsi fiam, beli...

I'm a rose, a rose,
but only when I'm single,
when I have a husband,
petals drop and shrivel.

Say farewell, dear Annie,
say farewell and leave them:
off they go, full of joy,
you must not go with them.

IV. Lullaby

Darling, slumber, slumber,
darling little baby!
When your mother grows old,
will you then take care of her?

I will take care of you, mother,
while I'm single;
but when I am married,
I'll go off and leave you.

Slumber, slumber, darling,
don't give me more trouble,
soon you'll quietly slumber,
darling keep quiet, be still.

Go into the green wood,
wear your white shirt;
let you little white shirt twinkle,
through the dark green branches.

Your white shirt that twinkles,
our old Mary sewed it
for you in the green fields.
She embroidered it with silk.

Darling, slumber, slumber,
baby, little white angel,
don't you ever leave me,
darling, never fly away.
Slumber, slumber, darling baby...

V. *Legénytánc (Tanec mladencov)*

Tölgyes bucka tövibe,
gyere pajtás izibe!
Tölgyes buckán iszalag,
táncolj, amíg legény vagy!

Három kecske meg egy bak,
szókj fel pajtás, szókj fel csak!
Szóknék biz én jó nagyot,
de a lábam megbotlott.
Hopsza, pajtás, pattanj fel,
a kecskét ki hajtja el?
Én bizony elhajtanám,
csak ne lesne farkas rám.

V. *Lads' Dance*

Little oak tree, grow up strong,
dance, young fellow, dance along!
Little oak tree breaks in two,
dance, while life is free and new!

Hey, old goat, old Billy, dance,
if you can, stand up and prance!
I tried prancing ere I could,
tripped and tumbled; it was no good.
Now my lad, the time has come,
get the goats and drive them home!
Yes, I'd gladly drive them if
old wolf hadn't scared me stiff.

Maurice Ravel
Deux Mélodies Hébraïques

II. L'Énigme éternelle

Frägt die Welt die alte Casche, tra la la...
Entfernt men, tra la la...
Un as men will kennen sagen, tra la la...
Frägt die Welt die alte Casche, tra la la...

Maurice Ravel
Two Hebraic Songs

II. The eternal enigma

The world asks the old question, tra la la...
Men reply, tra la la...
And when men say, tra la la...
The world asks the old question: tra la la...

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