



Composers: Johannes Brahms (1833-97), Clara Schumann (1819-96), Robert Schumann (1810-56), Sally Beamish (b.1956)

Title: **Birdsong**

Artists: Roderick Williams *baritone*, Andrew West *piano*

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SOMM RECORDINGS

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DDD

Johannes Brahms		Johannes Brahms	
☐ An die Nachtigall, Op.46 No.4	3:18	☐ Vergebliches Ständchen, Op.84 No.4	1:45
☐ Mädchenlied, Op.107 No.5	1:31	☐ Sapphische Ode, Op.94 No.4	2:35
☐ Das Mädchen, Op.95 No.1	2:22	☐ Von ewiger Liebe, Op.45 No.1	0:55
Clara Schumann		Robert Schumann	
☐ Liebst du um Schönheit, Op.12 No.2	2:06	☐ Frauenliebe und -leben, Op.42	[20:46]
Johannes Brahms		☐ Seit ich ihn gesehen	2:13
☐ Das Mädchen spricht, Op.107 No.3	1:25	☐ Er, der Herrliche von allen	3:15
☐ Salamander, Op.107 No.2	1:01	☐ Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben	1:50
☐ Nachtigall, Op.97 No.1	2:20	☐ Du Ring an meinem Finger	2:30
Sally Beamish: Four Songs from Hafez		☐ Helft mir, ihr Schwestern	1:50
☐ Nightingale	3:35	☐ Süßer Freund	3:52
☐ Peacock	4:22	☐ An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust	1:21
☐ Fish	2:48	☐ Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan	3:55
☐ Hoopoe	5:10	Total duration:	59:21

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SOMM Recordings is pleased to announce *Birdsong*, a fascinating cross-gender exploration of art songs associated with the female voice by baritone **Roderick Williams**, accompanied by pianist **Andrew West**.

The recital features signature songs from the height of Romanticism by **Brahms** and **Clara** and **Robert Schumann** alongside a more recent quartet of sensual songs by **Sally Beamish**.

In his revealing foreword, Williams recalls having his choice of Brahms's *Sapphische Ode* refused by competition organisers because it was "a woman's song". Returning recently to the work prompted him to question why some songs are considered gender specific. *Birdsong* is his response.

In his informative booklet notes, **Richard Stokes** notes that Brahms's songs "betrays his own essentially melancholic nature" and his difficulty in "sustaining emotional relationships with the women in his life". His nine songs here include the bittersweet *An die Nachtigall*, the moving innocent ardency of *Das Mädchen spricht* and the quiet, earnest longing of *Sapphische Ode*.

Clara Schumann's *Liebst du um Schönheit* provides an authentic female perspective on courtship, as does Sally Beamish's *Four Songs from Hafez* (for which she provides her own notes), taking inspiration from the Iranian-born, Glasgow-based Jila Peacock's evocative translations and artistic rendering of the 14th-century Persian Sufi poet's texts.

An intimate exploration of a young woman's feelings towards an older man of higher birth, Robert Schumann's *Frauenliebe und-leben* acquires new facets when heard in Williams' characterful baritone.

Previous SOMM releases by the powerhouse Williams-West partnership include the acclaimed three-volume set of Parry's *English Lyrics* (SOMMCD 257, 270, 272) and *Songs of Faith, Love and Nonsense* by Stanford (SOMMCD 0627), which *Gramophone* hailed as "a hugely enjoyable anthology" and praised "the commanding partnership of Roderick Williams and Andrew West".



MP3 Recording:

<https://soundcloud.com/siva-oke/12-brahms-vergebliches-standchen-roderick-williams-andrew-west>
<https://soundcloud.com/siva-oke/08-no-1-nightingale-four-songs-from-hafez-by-sally-beamish>