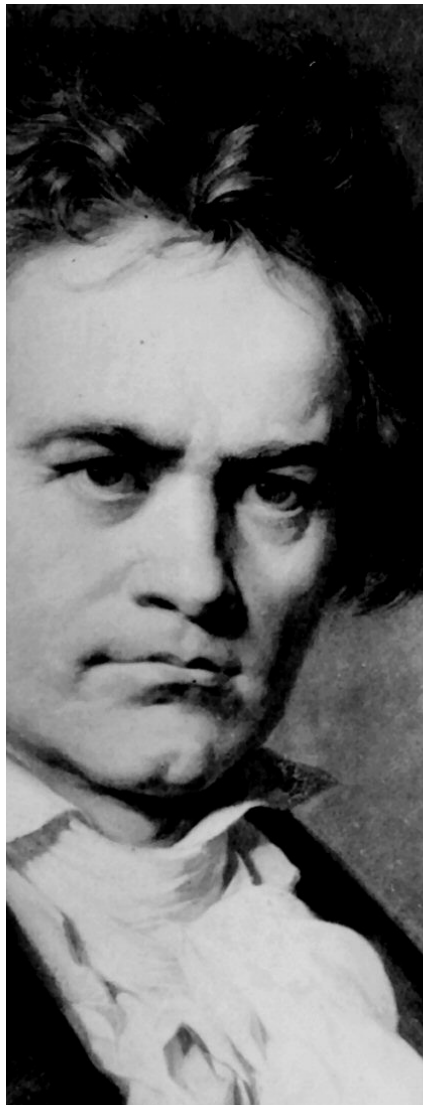
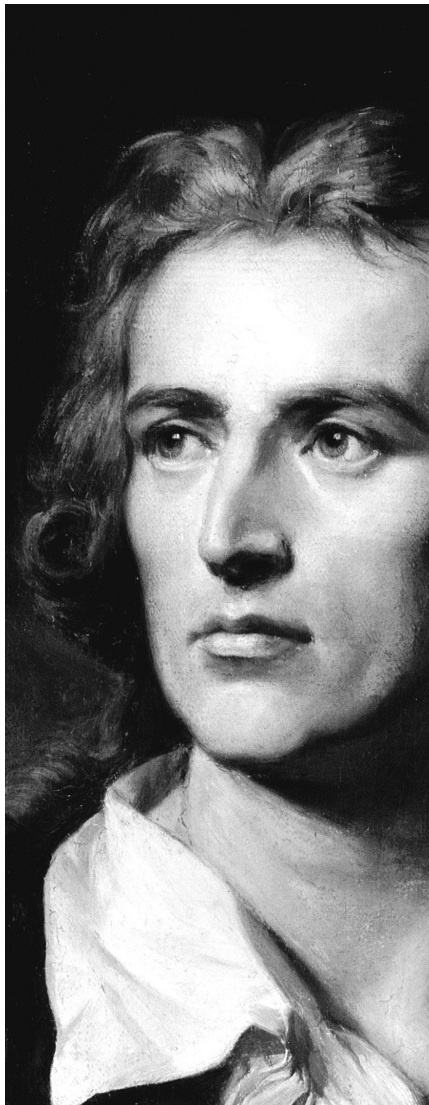




Beethoven



Schiller

POETRY in MUSIC

Class 5: October 7, 2025

POETRY in MUSIC

Class 5: Conversations Among the Arts

Poetry need not be set to music as song to have an impact on music, and music need not have words to be poetical. This class will consider various ways in which text, music, and sometimes other arts may enter into conversation with one another.

Most of the clips listed below and played in class are excerpts from longer works, all of which can be found on the website.

A. Close Encounters

If a poem set to music in a great song is the perfect marriage, what about abductions, flirtations, and ships that pass in the night?

- ***Ode to Joy***. The poem by FRIEDRICH SCHILLER as used by LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN in his *Symphony No. 9* (1824, the *Choral*). Eric Owens with the Chicago Symphony, conducted by Riccardo Muti.
- ***Song without Words***. The set of piano pieces by FELIX MENDELSSOHN is only one of numerous examples of 19th-century works whose titles and form reflect poetry or painting. *Duetto*, played by Emil Gilels.
- ***Sonata Mulattica***. Book-length collection by RITA DOVE speculating on the life of George Augustus Polgreen Bridgetower, the mulatto violin prodigy to whom BEETHOVEN originally dedicated his *Kreutzer Sonata*. Excerpt performed by Randall Goosby and Zhu Wang.
- ***Brahms' Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115***. Poem by JAN ZWICKY about the first of the late works that JOHANNES BRAHMS wrote for the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld. Charles Neidich with the Parker Quartet.
- **Grace Schulman: "Blue in Green."** Poem describing a track on the MILES DAVIS *Kind of Blue* LP (1959), with saxophone solo by JOHN COLTRANE; read by the author with added images by WILLIAM BAZIOTES.

B. Birdsong

A group of works—a concerto, some poems, and a ballet—linked by their description of birdsong, setting up other kinds of conversation between one art and another.

- **The Four Seasons.** This work by ANTONIO VIVALDI was published in 1725 with a set of sonnets, presumably by Vivaldi himself. Played by Janine Jansen with the Amsterdam Sinfonietta.
- **To a Skylark.** Poem by PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. Read by Tony Britton, Paul Pavan Keetley, and an anonymous LibriVox volunteer.
- **The Lark Ascending.** Romance for Violin and Orchestra by RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, based on a poem by GEORGE MEREDITH. Hilary Hahn with the Salzburg Sinfonia conducted by Louis Langrée.
- **To a Skylark.** Song for voices, harp, and strings by JULIE COOPER, based on the Shelley poem. Written for and sung by the mother-son duo of Grace and Joshua Davidson.
- **L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed il Moderato.** Two odes by JOHN MILTON, as set to music by GEORG FRIEDERIC HANDEL and subsequently choreographed by MARK MORRIS. Mark Morris Dance Company in Barcelona.

Artists Mentioned in the Class

William **Baziot** (1912–63, *American painter*), Ludwig van **Beethoven** (1770–1827, *German composer*), Johannes **Brahms** (1833–97, *German composer*), Julie **Cooper** (1964–, *British composer*), Miles **Davis** (1926–91, *American jazz musician*), Rita **Dove** (b.1952, *American poet*), Georg Frideric **Handel** (1685–1759, *German-born English composer*), Felix **Mendelssohn** (1809–47, *German composer*), George **Meredith** (1828–1909, *English poet*), John **Milton** (1608–74, *English poet*), Mark **Morris** (b.1956, *American choreographer*), Friedrich **Schiller** (1759–1805, *German poet*), Grace **Schulman** (b.1935, *American poet*), Percy Bysshe **Shelley** (1792–1822, *British poet*), Ralph **Vaughan Williams** (1872–1958, *British composer*), Antonio **Vivaldi** (1678–1741, *Italian composer*), Jan **Zwicky** (b.1955, *Canadian poet*)