
MAX
RICHTER
from SLEEP
Deutsche Grammophon



1 DREAM 3 (in the midst of my life) *10:04*
2 PATH 5 (delta) *11:14*
3 SPACE 11 (invisible pages over) *5:16*
4 DREAM 13 (minus even) *8:53*
5 SPACE 21 (petrichor) *4:48*
6 PATH 19 (yet frailest) *7:51*
7 DREAM 8 (late and soon) *11:53*

MAX RICHTER
Piano, Organ, Synthesisers, Electronics

American Contemporary Music Ensemble:
BEN RUSSELL /
YUKI NUMATA RESNICK *Violin*
CALEB BURHANS *Viola*
CLARICE JENSEN /
BRIAN SNOW *Cello*

GRACE DAVIDSON *Soprano*

All works composed by Max Richter



Even a soul
submerged in sleep
is hard at work
and helps
make something
of the world.

Heraclitus, (fl. c. 500 BC), *Fragments*

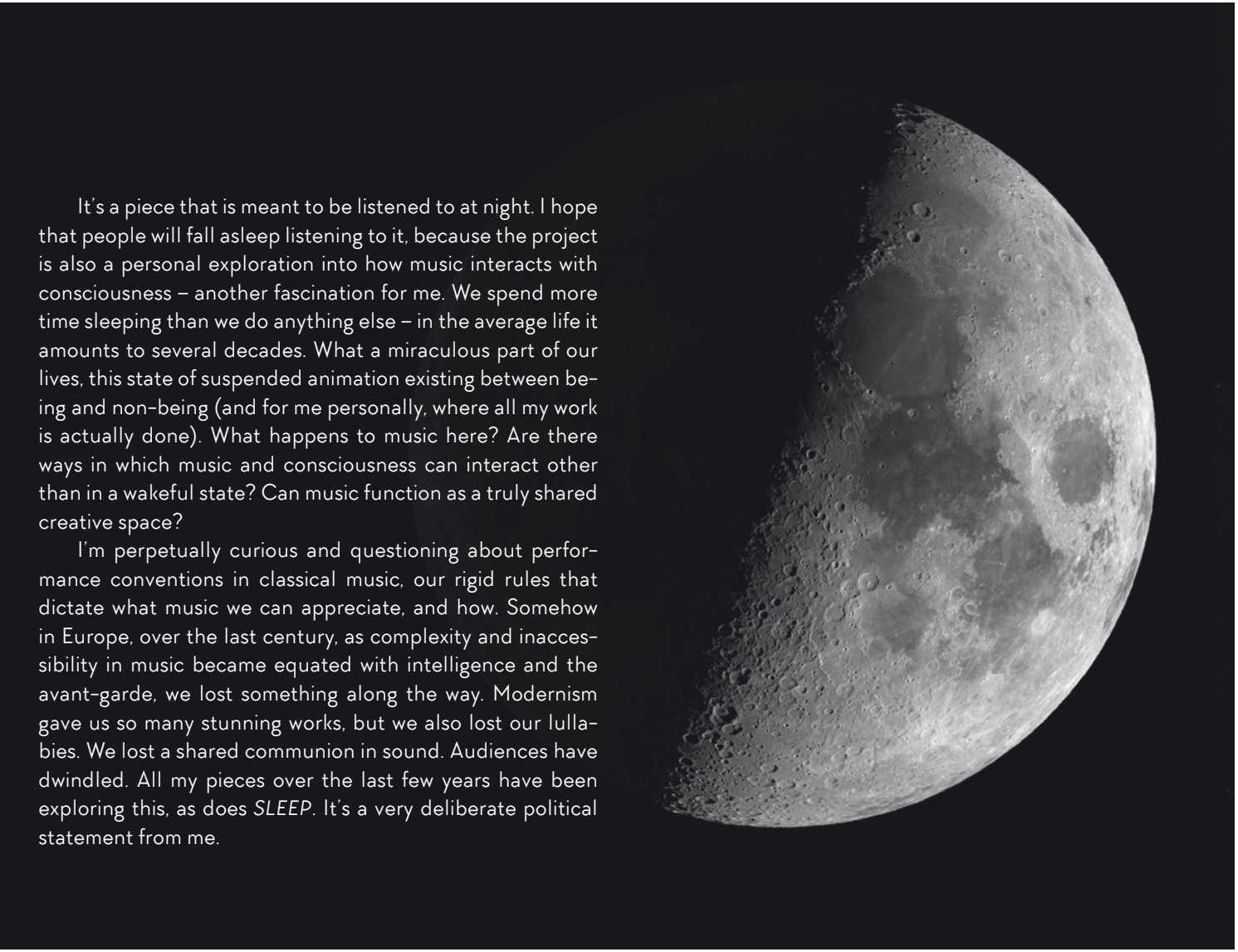
Sleep is an eight-hour lullaby.

This whirlwind of a life – so fast, so little time. When I look at my children I wonder where they will find rest. Those moments of being that they used to have as tiny babies, arms outstretched, trusting of the world.

I've long wanted to write something that might soothe them, so this is my personal lullaby for a frenetic world – a manifesto for a slower pace of existence.

It's a piece that is meant to be listened to at night. I hope that people will fall asleep listening to it, because the project is also a personal exploration into how music interacts with consciousness – another fascination for me. We spend more time sleeping than we do anything else – in the average life it amounts to several decades. What a miraculous part of our lives, this state of suspended animation existing between being and non-being (and for me personally, where all my work is actually done). What happens to music here? Are there ways in which music and consciousness can interact other than in a wakeful state? Can music function as a truly shared creative space?

I'm perpetually curious and questioning about performance conventions in classical music, our rigid rules that dictate what music we can appreciate, and how. Somehow in Europe, over the last century, as complexity and inaccessibility in music became equated with intelligence and the avant-garde, we lost something along the way. Modernism gave us so many stunning works, but we also lost our lullabies. We lost a shared communion in sound. Audiences have dwindled. All my pieces over the last few years have been exploring this, as does *SLEEP*. It's a very deliberate political statement from me.



I've structured *SLEEP* as a large set of variations – I love variation forms because they allow you to play with identity, memory and repetition – and in this case it echoes Bach's *Goldberg Variations* (BWV 988), which were supposedly written as a cure for the insomnia of the man who commissioned them. I'm always trying to pare back my sound to the bare minimum, and in *SLEEP* I've gone further than before, choosing just a string ensemble, voices, organ, piano and electronics to make up the bulk of the sound world – I don't want to jolt people out of their own journeys through the material.

We are used to music having a theme, the material being the subject of the work. In composing *SLEEP* I have tried to make the experience of the listener, whether sleeping or awake, the centre of the piece instead. So the theme of the work is the listener's experience of it, and the musical material is the landscape which he or she inhabits. For the same reason, the music emphasises the textural aspects of listening, connecting to the ambient electronic tradition and guitar-based drone music. Dreamscapes. Another strand in the material is my long-standing interest in the polyphonic music of the English Elizabethans. I see all these influences absorbed in my piece as though the work itself were dreaming about music.

Max Richter

MAX RICHTER – SLEEP

by Tim Cooper

"I have always been fascinated by the process of sleep," says Max Richter. "As a child, it was my absolute favourite activity. I often think of composing as a daydreaming activity and, if I could, I would sleep for 23 hours a day."

The complete version of *SLEEP* is an eight-hour work, intended to be heard – experienced – in one sitting, from start to finish, while the listener is asleep. Conversely, the one-hour recording, *from SLEEP*, is designed to be listened to while awake. "They are two separate objects," explains Richter.



SLEEP is in every way a ground-breaking piece of work, yet it fits musically into Richter's familiar frame of reference. Like most, but by no means all, of his compositions, its principal elements are piano and strings, with additional keyboards, electronics and a human voice. Like most, but not all, of his work, it also straddles the ever-blurring boundary between musical genres. It is at once soothingly familiar – as one would expect of a work intended to be heard while sleeping – yet disturbingly different.

"I love the sensation when my conscious/intentional mind goes on holiday and something else takes over," says Richter, whose work spans soundtracks for film and television, scores for opera and ballet, and a series of acclaimed solo albums. "This piece is an attempt to see whether that space can be a place for music to live – and, if so, how is that different from listening to a record or a performance consciously."

For him, the work is an "investigation" into the process of sleep: an experiment to see how we experience music in different states of consciousness – to discover, if possible, how we perceive it in both a wakeful and a sleeping state. "I'm curious to know whether, having slept through it, we will hear it or experience it differently," he says. "It's a set of questions. Is there a difference between 'listening' to music and 'hearing' it? Is there even such a thing as listening while you're sleeping, because we don't ascribe that sort of intentionality to sleep?"

During his preparations, Richter consulted the eminent American neuroscientist David Eagleman – with whom he had previously collaborated on the opera *Sum* at the Royal Opera House in London – about the mechanisms of the sleeping mind, and the ways in which music can interact with them. Other ideas that feed into the work, he says, include the concept of music designed to evoke a particular emotional, or even physiological, response, "like a channel from one state of consciousness to another". This would include gospel music, lullabies, ritual music, religious music, drone music, ambient music and even the trance music beloved of clubbers, although he did not listen specifically to any of these in preparation, saying he prefers to compose "with a clean slate".

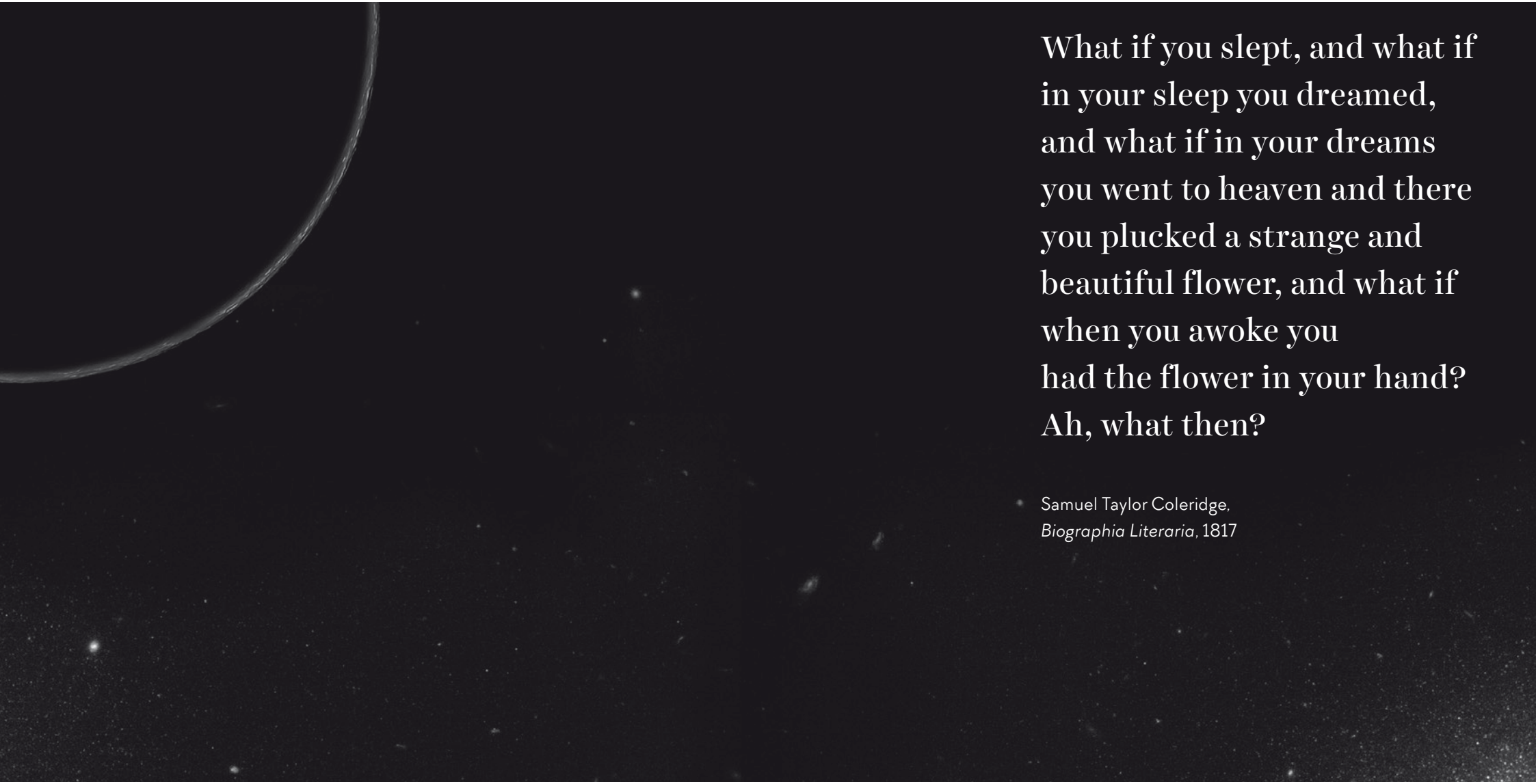
Another precedent is Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, supposedly commissioned by the Russian ambassador to the court of Saxony, Count Keyserlingk, to cure his insomnia. "It's a good story, although it's probably apocryphal. But I don't really mind if it's true or not," says Richter. "What interests me is Bach's idea of choosing a variation form – taking different trips through a known landscape. That's something I've always done in all my work. I've always been interested in variations."

The brain is a piece of hardware that can live in these two completely different modes. It can be a vacuum cleaner in one mode and a food processor in another mode, and it's actually a lot of work for the brain to switch things all the way over into the other mode. This is why, by the way, people can get caught half in one mode and half in the other, for example in sleepwalking, because it's a huge transition for the brain to switch all the way over…

The dream state is like you have switched the whole factory over, but there is still this window to the senses, so that the things you're hearing can get incorporated into your dream – we've all had this experience when, for example, your alarm clock goes off and it becomes part of your dream narrative. This is because the brain is such a good storyteller that whatever incoming signals there are, internal or external – and most of the internal things are really just noise – the brain imposes a narrative order on them.

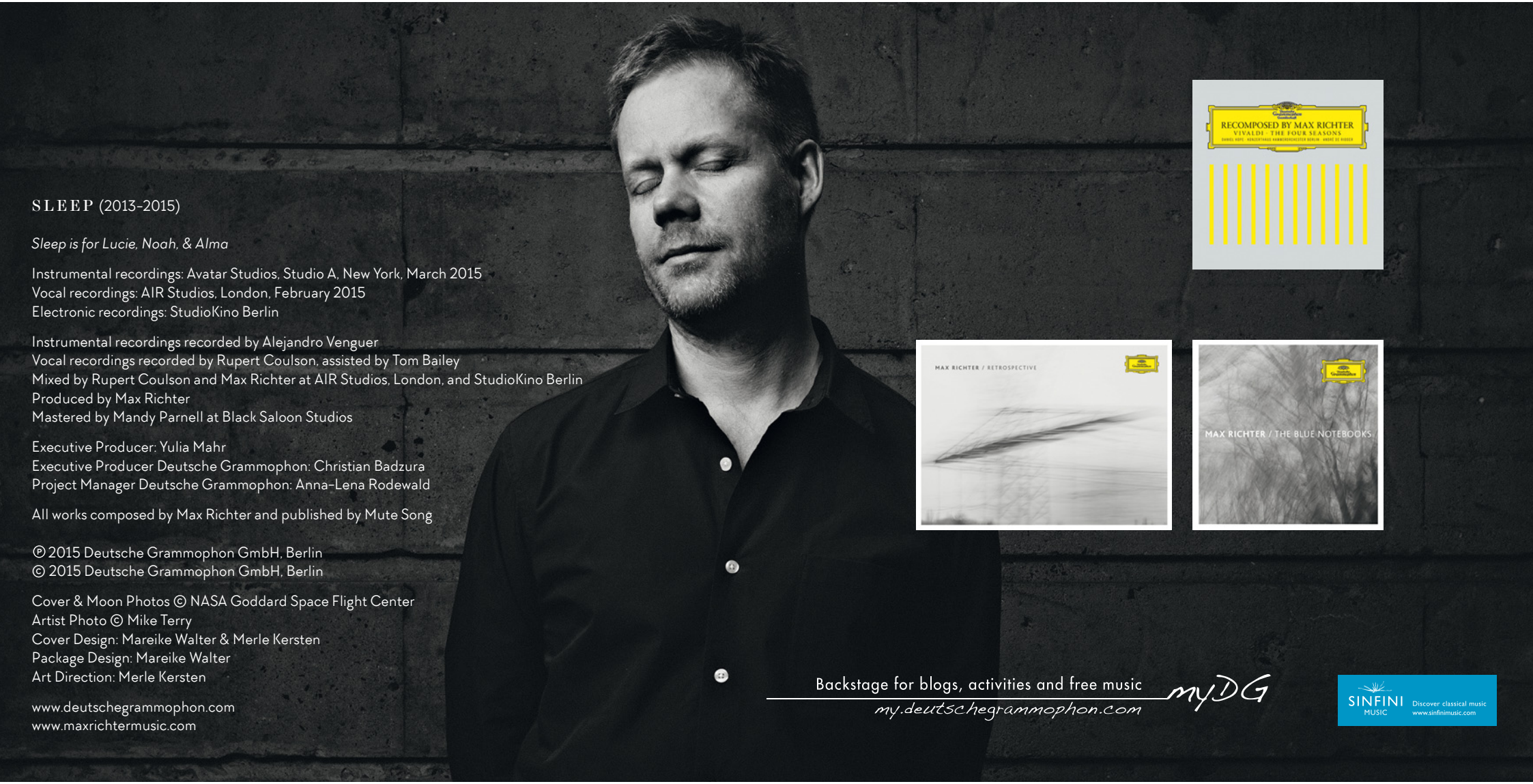
Neuroscientist David Eagleman
in conversation with Max Richter, 2015





What if you slept, and what if
in your sleep you dreamed,
and what if in your dreams
you went to heaven and there
you plucked a strange and
beautiful flower, and what if
when you awoke you
had the flower in your hand?
Ah, what then?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge,
Biographia Literaria, 1817



SLEEP (2013–2015)

Sleep is for Lucie, Noah, & Alma

Instrumental recordings: Avatar Studios, Studio A, New York, March 2015
Vocal recordings: AIR Studios, London, February 2015
Electronic recordings: StudioKino Berlin

Instrumental recordings recorded by Alejandro Venguer
Vocal recordings recorded by Rupert Coulson, assisted by Tom Bailey
Mixed by Rupert Coulson and Max Richter at AIR Studios, London, and StudioKino Berlin
Produced by Max Richter
Mastered by Mandy Parnell at Black Saloon Studios

Executive Producer: Yulia Mahr
Executive Producer Deutsche Grammophon: Christian Badzura
Project Manager Deutsche Grammophon: Anna-Lena Rodewald

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