

Ilkley Concert Club



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KITTY WHATELY mezzosoprano
JOSEPH MIDDLETON piano



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PROGRAMME

Clara Schumann

Lorelei

Brahms

Von ewige Liebe, op 43 no. 1

Johanna Müller-Hermann

Wie eine Vollmondnacht, op 20 no. 4

Die Letzte Abend, op 2 no. 4

Strauss

Auf ein kind, op 47 no. 1

Befreit, op 39 no. 4

Margarete Schweikert

Wolke I

Unser Haus

Die Entschlafenen

Strauss

Allerseelen, op 10 no. 8 *

INTERVAL

John Ireland

Earth's Call

Rebecca Clarke

Down by the Salley Gardens

The Seal Man

Grace Williams

The Lament of the Border Widow

Vaughan Williams

Silent Noon **

Elizabeth Maconchy

Come away death

King Stephen

Ophelia's song

Madeleine Dring

Take, oh take those lips away

It was a lover and his lass

All first performances at ICC except

* (21/04/1999)

** (12/09/1951)

PROGRAMME NOTES

GERMAN LIEDER

Clara Schumann (1819-1896): Lorelei, 1843

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897): Von ewige Liebe (*Eternal love*)
op 43 no. 1, 1864

Johanna Müller-Hermann (1878-1941): Wie eine Vollmondnacht
(*Like a night in full moon*) op 20 no. 4, ©1940 ; Die letzte Abend (*The last evening*), op 2 no. 4, 1907

Richard Strauss (1864-1949): Auf ein Kind (*To a child*) TrV 200,
no.1, 1900 ; Befreit (*Released*), TrV 189, no.4, 1898

Margarete Schweikert (1887-1957): Wolke I (*Cloud I*) 193- ;
Unser Haus (*Our house*) 191- ; Die Entschlafenen (*The departed*)
1912

Richard Strauss: Allerseelen (*All Souls Day*) TrV 141 no. 8, 1885.

Lied is one of the two German terms for ‘song’ - the other being ‘*Gesang*’ - and while its origins are in the late medieval period, the lied with which we are now familiar developed in the early nineteenth century, at the same time as a renaissance of German lyric poetry. This felicitous juxtaposition of music and Romantic verse facilitated an art form in which musical ideas suggested by the texts were illuminated by their settings for voice and piano. The piano accompaniment increased in importance as the century progressed until the vocal and piano parts became interdependent, with the song’s impact reliant on an equality between the two.

Tonight’s programme reflects the increasing contemporary interest in the part played by women in the history of music, represented here by three female lieder composers.

Although **Clara Schumann** has hitherto been chiefly known as a virtuoso pianist, her compositions are now increasingly frequently performed. *Lorelei* recounts the famous German legend of a Rhine

maiden enticing a sailor to his death and, from a straightforward beginning, builds to a passionate conclusion.

The Austrian composer **Johanna Müller-Hermann** began studying music seriously after her marriage in 1893. The three songs on tonight's programme show her embedded in the tradition of early Romantic *lieder* with vocal settings and accompaniments sensitively interwoven to suit the rather flowery texts.

Margarete Schweikert, by contrast, was encouraged to pursue music from an early age. She was a prolific composer, a critic and a noted pioneer in female musical education. The songs featured tonight span her output between 1912 and 1935.

Johannes Brahms and **Richard Strauss** are in the first rank of Romantic *lieder* composers. They both left about 200 songs and both famously chose the *lieder* genre for their last works. Both men considered the literary quality of their chosen texts to be of secondary importance to the musical ideas that the texts inspired and Strauss spoke for both composers when he wrote - '...the creative urge has to be channelled into some... poem which lends itself to music.' Although Brahms was a lifelong composer of *lieder*, the majority of Strauss's output was written between 1894-1908, chiefly for his wife, a professional singer. Many of his songs are also well-known through his orchestral arrangements. Central European folksong exerted a profound influence on Brahms, perhaps reflected in the rustic nature of the boy-girl relationship in *Von ewiger Liebe*, with its wonderfully effective central pause and key change from minor to major as the girl replies to the boy's misgivings.

Duration: approx. 35 minutes

INTERVAL

(Coffee, tea and bar facilities and CD Stall available in the Winter Garden)

ENGLISH SONG

John Ireland (1879-1962): *Earth's call*, 1918

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979): *Down by the Salley Gardens*, 19- ;
The Seal Man 1921/22

Grace Williams (1906-1977): *The lament of the Border widow*

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958): *Silent Noon*, 1903

Elizabeth Maconchy (1907-1994): *Come away death and King Stephen*, 1965 ; *Ophelia's song*, 1983

Madeleine Dring (1923-1977): *Take, oh take those lips away and It was a lover and his lass*, 1944/1949.

Despite the German musicologist Oscar Schmitz's nineteenth-century barb that England is '*Das Land ohne Musik*', the long history of vocal music throughout the British Isles, from carols to folk songs to ballads to art songs, is as distinguished as any in Europe. Modern composers continue this tradition and tonight's programme shows the influence of all these genres in songs by two of the twentieth century's leading composers – John Ireland and Ralph Vaughan Williams – and in the work of four women composers who are considered by many to have been unjustifiably neglected. Elizabeth Maconchy herself felt very deeply that there was a definite bias against women composers.

Composers writing English songs are spoiled for choice so far as texts are concerned, for they have at their disposal what is arguably the world's finest poetic tradition including, of course, Shakespeare (1564-1616). All the songs tonight reflect this heritage, with five texts taken from Shakespeare alone. Apart from one anonymous Scottish text, the other poets represented are Harold Monro (1870-1932), W. B. Yeats (1865-1939) John Masefield (1878-1967) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882).

Both **John Ireland** and **Vaughan Williams** favoured modal styles of composition relating to English folk-song and were also influenced by early music. Ireland's most characteristic works are small-scale (piano, chamber, songs) impressionistic and rhapsodic: *Earth's Call* (text by Harold Monro) is indeed sub-titled *A sylvan*

rhapsody. Vaughan Williams wrote *Silent Noon*, one of his best-known songs, in 1903. It is the second song in his setting of the six sonnets in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 1881 cycle *The House of Life*. In both voice and piano Vaughan Williams beautifully evokes the atmosphere of a hot summer's day in rural England.

The Welsh composer **Grace Williams** also studied with and was influenced by Vaughan Williams, mainly through their mutual love of folk music, in her case chiefly that of Britain's Celtic heritage. *The Lament of the Border Widow* is based on a true story and originally appeared in print in 1802-3. Williams' setting is marked throughout by a sensitive musical appreciation of the Border dialect in which the melancholy text is written.

Madeleine Dring's group of 7 *Shakespeare songs* had a chequered history in common with much of her work. Three songs were first performed in 1944 but not published until 1949. Following a revival of interest in Dring in the early 1990s, four more songs were added to the original three, and the whole set was finally published in 1992.

Elizabeth Maconchy studied with Vaughan Williams. Her output is noted for chamber music but she also wrote many songs, including a set of 4 *Shakespeare songs* to texts from *Othello* and *Hamlet*, two of which we hear tonight together with a third, later, setting. The set was first performed in 1966, but, again, was not published until much later – in 2007. Her comments concerning women composers were obviously based on first-hand knowledge.

Rebecca Clarke was an early advocate of BBC music broadcasts, particularly in her favourite compositional genres of chamber music and songs and she set the lovely Yeats' poem *Down by the Salley Gardens* several times. *The Seal Man* is taken from a short story by John Masefield and caused an immediate and lasting impact at its premiere in 1924.

Duration: approx. 40 minutes

(c) E. A. Keith

KITTY WHATELY mezzosoprano

JOSEPH MIDDLETON piano

We welcome today's artists to Ilkley for the first time and look forward greatly to the recital ahead of us. From a review in Gramophone we are told 'Whately is a captivating live performer' and it is our opportunity this evening to experience for ourselves just what that entails. **Kitty Whately** trained at Chetham's School of Music, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Royal College of Music International Opera School. She won both the Kathleen Ferrier Award and the 59th Royal Overseas League Award in the same year, 2011, and made her Wigmore Hall debut in January 2015 accompanied by **Joseph Middleton**. **Kitty** was a BBC New Generation Artist from 2013-15 during which time she recorded her debut solo album *This Other Eden*, made recordings with the BBC orchestras, commissioned a new song cycle from Jonathan Dove and made several appearances at the Proms with her debut in Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' *Suite from Act 11 of Caroline Mathilde*. She has also appeared in a Chamber Music Prom singing the music of Stephen Sondheim and as Nancy in a concert performance of *Albert Herring*. Her frequent performances with the BBC orchestras include De Falla's *The Three Cornered Hat* with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Furthermore her recordings include Ravel's *Sheherazade* with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Canteloube's *Songs of the Auvergne* with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and songs by Rogers and Hammerstein, Jerome Kern and Cole Porter with the BBC Concert Orchestra.

Kitty is in high demand as a concert artist and has given performances with most of the UK's major orchestras, including Durufle's *Requiem* and Mozart's *Requiem* in Oslo with the Dunedin Consort and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Bach's B Minor Mass with the Royal Northern Sinfonia and Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Beethoven's Mass in C Major with the Philharmonia, Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Ulster Orchestra, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* with the Britten Sinfonia on tour in Spain and the Netherlands and also Bach's *Magnificat* with the Britten Sinfonia along with the Choir of King's College Cambridge. Further performances include Elgar *Dream of Gerontius* at St John's Smith Square and Handel *Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall. She has given recitals at Wigmore Hall, Leighton House, at the Edinburgh International, Salisbury International, Oxford Lieder, Leeds Lieder and Buxton Festivals, working regularly with renowned accompanists including Anna Tilbrook, Roger Vignoles, Graham Johnson, Malcolm Martineau, Gary Matthewman, James Ballieu and **Joseph Middleton**.

In 2017 **Kitty** released her second album, *Nights not spent alone*, to critical acclaim. Recorded in a co-production between Champs Hill Records and the BBC, and accompanied by distinguished pianist Simon Lepper, the disc presents complete works for mezzo soprano by Jonathan Dove. It includes a song cycle of the same name dedicated to **Kitty** which she premiered at the Cheltenham Music Festival in 2015.

Pianist **Joseph Middleton** specializes in the art of song accompaniment and chamber music and has been internationally acclaimed as one of the finest musicians in this field. Described in Opera Magazine as *'the rightful heir to legendary accompanist Gerald Moore'*, by BBC Music Magazine as *'one of the brightest stars in the world of song and Lieder'*, he has also been labelled *'the cream of the new generation'*, by The Times. In 2017 **Joseph** was the first, and to date only accompanist to win the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Artist Award, the UK's most prestigious award to be bestowed upon a musician.

Joseph is a passionate advocate for the transformative power of music, and as well as performing and recording world-wide, he is a festival director and sought after pedagogue. Named *'the absolute King of programming'* by Gramophone Magazine, **Joseph** frequently devises series for BBC Radio 3, Wigmore Hall and the University of Cambridge. He is Musician in Residence at, and Bye-Fellow of, Pembroke College Cambridge where he curates a series of song recitals and directs the University's Lieder Scheme. He is a Fellow of his alma mater, the Royal Academy of Music where he is also a Professor of Ensemble Piano. He is Director of Leeds Lieder, a Festival recently praised in the Guardian for its *'World Class'* programming and lauded in the Times for bringing *'musical riches to Yorkshire through star performers, engaging new commissions and bold educational projects....a Northern powerhouse of song.'*

He enjoys recitals with internationally established singers including Sir Thomas Allen, Louise Alder, Mary Bevan, Ian Bostridge, Allan Clayton, Dame Sarah Connolly, Marianne Crebassa, Iestyn Davies, Fatma Said, Samuel Hasselhorn, Christiane Karg, Sir Simon Keenlyside, Angelika Kirchschrager, Katharina Konradi, Dame Felicity Lott, Christopher Maltman, John Mark Ainsley, Ann Murray DBE, James Newby, Mark Padmore, Mauro Peter, Miah Persson, Sophie Rennert, Ashley Riches, Dorothea Roschmann, Kate Royal, Carolyn Sampson, Nicky Spence and Roderick Williams. He has a special relationship with BBC Radio 3, frequently curating his own series and performing alongside the BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists.

His critically acclaimed and fast growing discography has seen him awarded a Diapason D'or, Edison Award and Priz Caecilia as well as receiving numerous nominations for ECHO, Opus-Klassic, Gramophone, BBC Music Magazine and International Classical Music Awards. His interest in the furthering of the song repertoire has led him to commission and give the premieres of major new works by important voices including Thomas Ades, Nico Muhly, Hannah Kendall, Cheryl Frances Hoad, Daniel Kidane, Mark Anthony Turnage, Errollyn Wallen, Helen Grime, Huw Watkins, Brian Elias, Judith Bingham, Ed Nesbitt, Deborah Pritchard, Kate Whitley, Robin Holloway, Michael Berkeley and Sally Beamish among others.

Recent seasons have taken him to Wigmore Hall, Royal Opera House and Royal Festival Hall, the Vienna Konzerthaus, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Koln Philharmonie, Tokyo's Oji Hall and New York's Alice Tully Hall amongst many others, including, tonight, Ilkley Concert Club !

CLUB NOTES

Balancing our programmes

It is sobering to acknowledge that it has taken until the 21st century for the music of many generations of talented women composers to be brought to the fore and regularly to be found in concert programmes, like tonight's. Some of these women were acknowledged and famous in their day and have been subsequently forgotten but for many, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries, society's pressures including the rise of the nuclear family put considerable obstructions in their way. We are particularly grateful to Kitty Whately for her researches which have helped in discovering the music of Johanna Müller-Hermann and Margarete Schweikert and championing it for us tonight.

In this and future seasons, Ilkley Concert Club intends to balance its programming better so that our members hear the music of under-represented groups as well as that of the overwhelming male 'mainstream'!

Welcome to new committee members

There are three new members joining the ICC Committee this season and I shall introduce them to members over the next few months.

Jo Simpson has taken over the job of honorary secretary from David Halpin. Jo lives in Ilkley where her daughters went to school and she and her husband enjoy all the amenities of our town and particularly its beautiful surrounding countryside. Jo learned the flute at school, went to Dartington College of Arts and played in all kinds of youth and student orchestras back in the 20th century. Since then work, bringing up a family and outdoor interests have taken her away from making music, but she's been enjoying our concerts for many years. Now she's on the inside helping to make them happen.

Chris Skidmore, Chair

NEXT CONCERT

WEDNESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2023

Concert 7:30pm

SEPTURA brass ensemble



Schütz

Das Wort ward Fleisch

J S Bach

Christmas Suite

Praetorius

Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen

Brahms

Chorale Prelude: Es ist ein Ros'
entsprungen

Humperdinck

Overture to Hansel and Gretel

Tchaikovsky

Nutcracker Suite

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Members

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