



Weekend of Song – ‘Rediscovering Lieder’

Friday 21 October, 7.30pm

The Venue, Leeds Conservatoire

Kitty Whately mezzo-soprano

Joseph Middleton piano



BIOGRAPHIES

Kitty Whately mezzo-soprano

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, and was part of the prestigious Verbier Festival Academy where she appeared as Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and in Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*. 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.

Current engagements include Hansel *Hansel and Gretel* and Donna Elvira *Don Giovanni* (Scottish Opera), Hermia *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Opéra de Rouen), Kate Owen *Wingrave* (Grange Park Opera), Annina *Der Rosenkavalier* (Garsington Opera), Dog/Forester's Wife/Woodpecker/Owl *The Cunning Little Vixen* with the CBSO in Birmingham, Paris, Hamburg and Dortmund and her usual assortment of recitals.

Recent opera highlights include Isabella *Wuthering Heights* and Kate Owen *Wingrave* (Opera National de Lorraine, Nancy), Paquette *Candide* (Bergen National Opera, following a concert performance of the role at The Grange Festival), Mother/Other Mother in the world première of Mark-Anthony Turnage's latest opera *Coraline* (Barbican, produced by the Royal Opera House), Meg *Little Women* and Dorabella *Così fan tutte* (Opera Holland Park), Dorabella and Nancy *Albert Herring* (The Grange Festival) and as Hermia *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Aix-en-Provence Festival and in Beijing). Kitty also performed in the world première of Vasco Mendonça's *The House Taken Over* directed by Katie Mitchell, with performances in Antwerp, Strasbourg, Luxembourg, Bruges and Lisbon. Other operatic roles include Rosina *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Stewardess in Jonathan Dove's *Flight* (Opera Holland Park); Hermia *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bergen National Opera); Dorabella *Così fan tutte* (English Touring Opera) and Ippolita/Pallade Cavalli's *Elena* in Montpellier and Versailles for the Aix-en-Provence Festival.

Kitty is in high demand as a recitalist and concert artist. She made her début with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, singing Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as a recital alongside Malcolm Martineau at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Recent concert performances include Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde* at the Mizmorim Festival in Basel, *The Dream of Gerontius* with Crouch End Festival Chorus at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, and recitals of English song at Wigmore Hall and the Salisbury International Festival. She has given performances with most of the UK's major orchestras, including Duruflé's *Requiem* and Mozart's *Requiem* (in Oslo with the Dunedin Consort and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra), Bach's *B Minor Mass* (Royal Northern Sinfonia and Scottish Chamber Orchestra), Beethoven's *Mass in C Major* (Philharmonia Orchestra), Haydn's *Nelson Mass* (Britten Sinfonia on tour in Spain and the Netherlands), Bach's *Magnificat* (Britten Sinfonia and Choir of King's College Cambridge), Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* at St John's Smith

Square and Queen Elizabeth Hall, and Handel's *Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall. Kitty has given recitals at the Edinburgh International, Salisbury International, Oxford Lieder, Leeds Lieder and Buxton festivals, working regularly with renowned accompanists including James Baillieu, Julius Drake, Graham Johnson, Simon Lepper, Malcolm Martineau, Gary Matthewman, Joseph Middleton, Anna Tilbrook and Roger Vignoles. In December, Kitty and William Vann will perform their 'House of Life' programme as part of the Music at Oxford concert series.

Kitty made her BBC Proms debut in Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' *Suite from Act II of Caroline Mathilde*, and also appeared in a Chamber Music Prom singing the music of Stephen Sondheim. Her frequent performances with the BBC orchestras include De Falla's *The Three Cornered Hat* (BBC National Orchestra of Wales) and Nancy in a concert performance of Britten's *Albert Herring* (BBC Symphony Orchestra), as well as recordings of Ravel's *Sheherazade* (BBC Philharmonic Orchestra), Canteloube's *Songs of the Auvergne* (BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra), and songs by Rodgers & Hammerstein, Jerome Kern and Cole Porter (BBC Concert Orchestra).

In 2017 Kitty released her second album, *Nights not spent alone*, to critical acclaim. Recorded in a coproduction 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.

Joseph Middleton piano

Pianist Joseph Middleton specializes in the art of song accompaniment and chamber music and has been highly acclaimed 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 labeled 'the cream of the new generation' by The Times. He is Director of Leeds Lieder, Musician in Residence and a Bye-Fellow at Pembroke College, Cambridge and a Fellow of his alma mater, the Royal Academy of Music, where he is also a Professor. He was the first accompanist to win the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Artist Award.

Joseph is a frequent guest at major music centres including London's Wigmore Hall (where he has been a featured artist), Royal Opera House and Royal Festival Hall, New York's Alice Tully Hall and Park Avenue Armory, Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Konzerthaus and Musikverein Vienna, Zürich Tonhalle, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, Berlin BoulezSaal, Kölner Philharmonie, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, Lille and Gothenburg Opera Houses, Baden-Baden, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Musée d'Orsay Paris, Oji Hall Tokyo and Festivals in Aix-en-Provence, Aldeburgh, Barcelona, Schloss Elmau, Edinburgh, Munich, Ravinia, San Francisco, Schubertiade Hohenems and Schwarzenberg, deSingel, Soeul, Stuttgart, Toronto and Vancouver. He made his BBC Proms debut in 2016 alongside Iestyn Davies and Carolyn Sampson and returned in 2018 alongside Dame Sarah Connolly where they premièred recently discovered songs by Benjamin Britten.

Joseph 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, Katarina Karnéus, Angelika Kirchschrager, Dame Felicity Lott, Christopher Maltman, John Mark Ainsley, Ann Murray DBE, James Newby, Mark Padmore, Mauro Peter, Miah Persson, Sophie Rennert, Ashley Riches, Dorothea Röschmann, 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 Gramophone, BBC Music Magazines and International Classical Music Awards. His interest in the furthering of the song repertoire has led Gramophone Magazine to describe him as 'the absolute king of programming'.

www.josephmiddleton.com

PROGRAMME

Anon arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

The Willow Song

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Three Songs from Shakespeare

Take, O take

When icicles hang by the wall

Orpheus with his lute

Elizabeth Maconchy (1907-44)

Ophelia's Song

From *Four Shakespeare Songs*

Come away, Death

King Stephen

Madeleine Dring (1923-77)

Take, O take those lips away

It was a lover

Grace Williams (1906-77)

The Lament of the Border Widow

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)

The Seal Man

The Salley Gardens

Ralph Vaughan Williams

The House of Life

Love Sight

Silent Noon

Love's Minstrels

Heart's Haven

Death in Love

Love's Last Gift

(with thanks to William Vann for the curation of the programme)

PROGRAMME NOTES

Anon arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

The Willow Song

Vaughan Williams took this anonymous setting of 'The Willow Song' from an early 17th century lute song manuscript now in the British Library and arranged it for piano and voice. The accompaniment is pianistic without much elaboration and stays close to the harmonic language of the original.

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Three Songs from Shakespeare

Take, O take those lips away

When icicles hang by the wall

Orpheus with his Lute

The only one of these song texts that is now seen as wholly Shakespearean is 'When icicles hang by the wall'; the other two are possibly by John Fletcher (especially 'Take O take those lips away' which is also used in a play by several writers including Fletcher, *The Bloody Brother, or, Rollo Duke of Normandy*). The *Three Songs from Shakespeare* were published in 1926, although 'Orpheus with his Lute' appears to date from 1901–3. Here Vaughan Williams's style is considerably simpler than in his earlier *House of Life* cycle later in this programme, but as Carol Kimball says, they are 'simple but not ordinary'. 'Take, O take' is quite short but touching (luckily RVW probably did not know the somewhat tasteless second stanza added by Fletcher). 'When icicles' is remarkably cheerful in its 6/8 metre (think *The Archers*) given that it was probably a realistic depiction of life in what is now called the 'little ice age'. 'Orpheus with his Lute' celebrates the power of music in a tradition that goes back to classical literature. This restrained setting avoids picturesque word-painting in favour of simplicity; 'simple but not ordinary' indeed.

Elizabeth Maconchy (1907–44)

Ophelia's Song

From *Four Shakespeare Songs*

Come away, Death

King Stephen

Elizabeth Maconchy was born in Hertfordshire but grew up near Dublin before moving to London aged sixteen to study at the Royal College of Music. She also studied in Prague having won a travelling scholarship – she was not awarded the Mendelssohn composition prize as the college director thought she would only get married and 'never write another note'. Her most influential teacher was Vaughan Williams, whose teaching she described as 'like turning on a light'. She was one of a group of gifted women composers at the RCM that included Elizabeth Lutyens,

Imogen Holst, and Grace Williams. After the war she was increasingly recognised as a composer and became the first woman to be the head of the Composers' Guild; after Britten's death she headed the Society for the Promotion of New Music. Her music is often angular with complex – though not atonal – harmony, and her vocal writing is highly expressive. 'Come away death' uses some material from her string quartet no. 7 and from her clarinet quintet.

Almost half of her 230 works are solo vocal and choral music. Many solo songs from the 1920s remain unpublished or lost. 'Ophelia's Song' composed in 1926 at the earliest stage of her career, was her first published vocal piece. It is stylistically less complex than her later works, but it has remained popular. Her *Four Shakespeare Songs* was not originally grouped as a set. 'Come away death' was written in 1956 while the remaining three including 'King Stephen' were written in 1965. The four songs were premiered in 1966 but only published for Maconchy's centenary in 2007.

Madeleine Dring (1923-77)

Take, O take those lips away
It was a lover and his lass

Madeleine Dring was born in London in the same year Maconchy entered the RCM. Her parents were amateur musicians. Dring played the violin and piano from a young age, and in 1933 won a scholarship to study at the RCM, later receiving a full scholarship in 1939. She stopped studying the violin when her teacher W. Reed, Elgar's friend and biographer, died, and concentrated on the piano. She studied composition and harmony with Herbert Howells and occasionally with Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gordon Jacob. Her first significant success as a composer came while still attending the RCM, with a good review for her music for a children's play. She received many more commissions for TV and radio programmes, intimate revues and cabaret. Dring admired the music of Chopin, Bruch, Prokofiev, Bax and Rachmaninov, and also enjoyed swing and jazz – jazz harmonies, which she called 'squishy notes', are often found in her music. About a third of her compositions are for voice and piano, and her earliest songs date from 1940. Her *Three Shakespeare Songs* were published in 1944, but the wistful 'Take, O take' and the jaunty 'It was a lover' were published posthumously in 1980 in a larger collection of seven Shakespeare songs.

Grace Williams (1906-77)

The Lament of the Border Widow

Grace Williams was educated at Barry Grammar School and University College, Cardiff, after which she studied with Vaughan Williams and Gordon Jacob at the RCM. She was awarded a travelling scholarship to study in Vienna with Egon Wellesz, returning to teach in London. She returned to Wales in 1947, working as a freelance composer, often being commissioned by the BBC. Most of her music is for orchestra and for voice. Her music pre-1955 is influenced by Vaughan Williams, Elgar, and to an extent Strauss, but thereafter she found a more individual voice with her *Penillion for Orchestra* written for the National Youth Orchestra of Wales in 1955. Her later music has a strong Welsh element – like Janacek, while she does not quote Welsh folk melodies, her music is permeated with the rhythms and melodic shapes of Welsh poetry, and her balance of improvisation and repetition owes much

to Welsh ballads and the *penillion* form. Her songs use texts by Manley Hopkins, Scott, Tennyson, Milton and Browning. Her setting of the Scots ballad 'The Lament of the Border Widow' (1952), while not in true *penillion* form, owes something to it in the improvisatory vocal part in the third and fifth stanzas.

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)

The Seal Man

Down by the Salley Gardens

Rebecca Clarke was a notable British-American composer and a virtuoso viola player – her viola sonata is one of her finest works. She wrote nearly 60 songs, using texts by Goethe, Maeterlinck, Dehmel, Yeats, Blake, and many others. 'The Seal Man' sets a text by Masefield from his collection *A Mainsail Haul* first published in 1905. Clarke completed it early in 1922 but then revised it further until 1923 when it received its first performance by the American tenor Lawrence Strauss in San Francisco. Many other singers performed it, and it is now her most famous song. Its elements of recitative and drama mean that it is often sung by opera singers. Yeats described 'Down by the Salley Gardens' as 'an attempt to reconstruct an old song from three lines imperfectly remembered by an old peasant woman in the village of Ballisodare, Sligo, who often sings them to herself.' There are several settings, by Clarke, Gurney, Ireland, and Britten. Clarke's 1919 setting with a folk-like melody of her own, was published in two versions, one with piano and the other with a violin accompaniment.

Ralph Vaughan Williams

The House of Life

Love Sight

Silent Noon

Love's Minstrels

Heart's Haven

Death in Love

Love's Last Gift

Vaughan Williams was born in Gloucestershire but grew up in London – he always considered himself a Londoner. He was educated at the RCM, Cambridge, and again at the RCM, where his teachers included Parry, Wood, and Stanford. Later he studied with Bruch in Berlin and Ravel in Paris. His profound understanding of English folk song was only one facet of his overall commitment to music as a truly social activity carried out at every level. He had an international reputation by the late 1920s; between 1924 and 1931 works by Vaughan Williams were given at Salzburg, Venice, Prague, Geneva, and London, and in 1932 he lectured at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania. His reputation rests chiefly on his larger-scale works, symphonic and choral, but his first published work was a song ('Linden Lea' of 1901). At this time, he set poems by Christina Rossetti, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Tennyson. The romantic idiom of *The House of Life* (1904) gradually disappeared from RVW's language, but they remain among the finest English songs of their period. There is some remarkably simple writing in this cycle like the postlude of 'Love Sight', and the opening of 'Silent Noon'. But elsewhere there are signs of a more European late-romantic idiom in the alternation of D major-F minor-D major-B flat minor in 'Love's Minstrels'. The scale of 'Death in Love' is striking, with its

opening in a straightforward heroic C major but a chord of C flat over a bass F when Death announces himself. Any lingering echoes of English parlour song (as in 'Love's Last Gift') are swiftly brushed aside with an harmonic twist that is sometimes obvious but often subtle.

© George Kennaway

SAVE THE DATES

We are pleased to announce the following forthcoming Leeds Lieder concerts and events:

Recital: Jane Burnell (soprano), Morgana Warren-Jones (mezzo-soprano) and Christopher Pulleyn (piano)

Wednesday 16 November 2022, 1.05pm

The Venue, Leeds Conservatoire

Recital: Jennifer Johnston (mezzo-soprano) and Joseph Middleton (piano)

Friday 10 February 2023, 7.30pm

Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall, University of Leeds

Recital: Mary Bevan (soprano), Nicky Spence (tenor) and Joseph Middleton (piano)

Saturday 4 March 2023, 7.30pm

The Venue, Leeds Conservatoire

Leeds Lieder Festival 2023

Friday 9 June to Saturday 17 June 2023

Howard Assembly Room