



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS INTERNATIONAL CONCERT SERIES

Friday 10 February 2023
Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall

Jennifer Johnston
Joseph Middleton

One Life Stand

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Programme

Jonathan Dove – My Love is mine

Benjamin Britten – Ca' the yowes

Benjamin Britten – O can ye sew cushions?

Benjamin Britten – The Birds

Benjamin Britten – I Wonder as I Wander

Benjamin Britten – At the mid hour of night

Benjamin Britten – The last rose of summer

Benjamin Britten – O waly, waly

Cheryl Frances-Hoad – Two Shakespeare Songs

Joseph Horowitz – Lady Macbeth

Interval

Ned Rorem – Look down fair moon

Ned Rorem – I will always love you

Ned Rorem – Jeanie with the light brown hair

Ned Rorem – Ferry me across the water

Ned Rorem – Stopping by the woods on a snowy evening

Samuel Barber – The desire for hermitage

Samuel Barber – St Ita's Vision

Samuel Barber – The monk and his cat

Samuel Barber – A green lowland of pianos

Samuel Barber – Sure on this shining night

Samuel Barber – Solitary Hotel

Cheryl Frances-Hoad – One Life Stand

Programme Notes

Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)

My Love is mine

The composer has written: 'This unaccompanied song, with words from the Song of Songs I wrote My Love is Mine as a wedding-present for Elizabeth Gorla and Rick Allen. Elizabeth and Rick were married in January 1998, in a Quaker meeting-house which, naturally, had no piano or organ. So I wrote an unaccompanied setting of this text from the Song of Songs, in Miles Coverdale's translation. I asked Nuala Willis, my friend and collaborator for many years, to sing it at the wedding, because she also had a connection with Elizabeth: three years earlier, Elizabeth had directed Nuala as Mother Fen, a role I wrote for her in a community opera called In Search of Angels.'

Benjamin Britten (1913-96)

Ca' the yowes

O can ye sew cushions?

The Birds

I Wonder as I Wander

At the mid hour of night

The last rose of summer

O waly, waly

"Ca' the yowes to the knowes" ("Call the ewes to the hills") is a Scots poem now thought to be by the Ayrshire poet Isabel Fagan, revised by Robert Burns. Burns was not aware of the original author and said that 'this song is in the true Scottish taste, yet I do not know that either air or words were ever in print before'. The tune is typical of Scots airs, using large melodic intervals and a moderate tempo. It was arranged by Britten in 1951. "O can ye sew cushions?" is a Scots song sung as a lullaby to a child by its mother - her husband is at sea. The words of 'baby-talk' may be garbled Gaelic words mixed with Lowlands. Robert Burns included the song in a 1796 collection but with a different tune (or 'air'). It was arranged by Britten in 1940 and included in the first volume of his folk song arrangements. Britten set Hilaire Belloc's poem 'When Jesus Christ was four years old' as 'The Birds' in 1929, and it was published in 1935. Originally for soprano and strings,

he revised it for voice and piano. It was dedicated to Britten's mother and was sung at her funeral; it was also sung at the wedding of Britten's sister Beth. Britten had problems finishing the song and his teacher Frank Bridge helped him. He said that he 'had a terrible struggle with this before finding what has been called "the right ending in the wrong key".' By this he meant the final modulation away to underline the word 'Paradise'. The words for 'I Wonder as I Wander' are supposed to be taken from an Appalachian folk song transcribed by Jacob Niles, but Niles said that he himself composed the words in 1933. Most of this song is unaccompanied – the piano plays a birdsong between the stanzas. 'At the mid hour of night' comes from Thomas Moore's Irish Melodies, first published in 1813; Britten's setting, in his fourth volume of folk song settings, dates from 1957. The singer sings of his dead love, but while he sings of the sky and the 'regions of air', the piano part remains fixed on earth-bound pedal notes. 'The last rose of summer' uses an older tune sometimes called 'The groves of Blarney', or alternatively "The Young Man's Dream", a very popular tune often arranged for instruments in the 19th century – it is also referred to in novels by James Joyce and George Eliot. The singer casts the petals of the last rose in order that it does not live alone. 'O waly, waly' originated as a Scottish folk song, but there are many versions – that with the more recent words 'the water is wide' was so named by Cecil Sharp, and was the source for Britten's setting. Typically, Britten uses a single idea to provide the piano part – in this case, three chords with the rhythm short-short-long.

Cheryl Frances-Hoad (b. 1980)

Two Shakespeare Songs

Cheryl Frances-Hoad studied music at the Yehudi Menuhin School and won the BBC Young Composer Competition in 1996 at the age of 15. Her compositions have won numerous prizes, including the Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize in 2007. These songs were commissioned by Caroline MacPhie for her debut album, *Love Said to Me*, and first performed by her and Joseph Middleton at a private concert in London in 2013. 'Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's Day' and 'They bore him barefaced on the bier' set two of Ophelia's songs from *Hamlet* that have attracted many composers, including both Brahms and Richard Strauss. 'Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's Day' is an oddly whimsical evocation of a simple pastoral song in 6/8 time – the suggestion of birdsong may allude to the tradition that birds would choose their mates on that day. 'They bore him' opens

with an ambiguous repetitive figure in the piano part that never settles, while the voice floats above, similarly without direction and ends alone.

Joseph Horowitz (b. 1926)

Lady Macbeth

Joseph Horowitz studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris and has spent much of his career writing and conducting music for the stage, television and cinema. His works include ballets, operas, and works for brass band among many others. The scena Lady Macbeth was commissioned for a special Shakespeare evening at the Bergen festival in Norway in 1974. Horowitz himself wrote: 'I constructed the scena by selecting three scenes in which Lady Macbeth's speeches would portray the development of the character from early aspirations to grandeur, to later power and finally to guilt and madness. The scenes are taken from Acts 1, 2 and 5, forming a miniature operatic role. The dramatic implication is that the scena begins after Lady Macbeth has read her husband's report of his military victory at the start of the play.'

Ned Rorem (1923-2022)

Look down fair moon

I will always love you

Jeanie with the light brown hair

Ferry me across the water

Stopping by the woods on a snowy evening

Ned Rorem was an American composer born in Richmond, Indiana. He studied at Northwestern University, the Curtis Institute, and the Juilliard School – he also learned from Copland and Virgil Thomson. He was strongly influenced by French composers like Debussy and Ravel but also Les Six (Poulenc and Milhaud in particular). His music embodies French restraint and the refined setting of words. He wrote over 400 songs; his cycle Evidence of Things Not Seen sets 36 texts by 24 writers. 'Look Down, Fair Moon' is a setting of Walt Whitman dating from 1957. The poem was included in Whitman's collection Drum-Taps, a sequence of poems about the Civil War, and is the second in Rorem's song cycle Five Poems of Walt Whitman. 'I Will Always Love You' sets a poem by Frank O'Hara, a New York poet and art curator in the 50s and 60s. 'Jeanie with the light brown hair'

uses Stephen Foster's melody but accompanies it with a delicate ostinato evoking Britten. 'Ferry me across the water' sets a poem by Christina Rossetti from her collection *Sing-Song, A Nursery Rhyme Book* (1872) – the child-like simplicity is entirely without irony but is at the same time deceptively sophisticated right to the end of the final high note. 'Stopping by the woods on a snowy evening' is probably the most well-known American poem (Frost's 'The Road Not Taken' is the other obvious contender). Its final stanza is instantly recognisable. The poem was also set by Rorem's teacher Margaret Bonds and by Nadia Boulanger. (Rorem shared with Samuel Barber the distinction of being an American composer who did not study with Boulanger.) In Rorem's setting we hear the horse shake its bells as if impatient to move on, but the music has no such urgency – the final major key resolution almost suggests contentment in spite of the ambiguity of the words.

Samuel Barber (1910-81)

The desire for hermitage

St Ita's Vision

The monk and his cat

These three songs are from Barber's cycle of ten Hermit Songs, composed in 1953. The texts are by anonymous Irish monks from between the eighth and thirteenth centuries, translated from Latin into English by several different writers. 'The Desire for Hermitage' is the final song of Hermit Songs, and the text is translated by the Irish writer Seán Ó Faoláin. The solitary singer is beautifully evoked in the opening and closing lines, while the richness of the hermit's life is conjured up by the piano. St. Ita was an Irish nun who lived sometime during the 5th-6th century, also known as 'Brigid of Munster.' Here the translation is by Chester Kallman (who collaborated with Auden on opera libretti). She sings a lullaby to the infant Jesus. 'The Monk and his Cat' uses Auden's translation. The monk talks to his cat, Pangur, about their daily lives. The cat chases mice; the monk chases ideas.

Samuel Barber
A green lowland of pianos
Sure on this shining night
Solitary Hotel

'A green lowland of pianos' is the second of Barber's Three Songs op. 45, composed in 1972. It sets a poem by the Polish poet Jerzy Harasymowicz (1933–99), playing on the idea of herds of grand pianos being like cows in a field. 'Sure on this shining night' is rather earlier, from Barber's 1938 Four Songs. More classically lyrical than his later songs, it contains a vision of the natural world where all is whole with canonic imitation between piano and voice. It uses a text by James Agee, the author of the words from Barber's most well-known song 'Knoxville: Summer of 1915'. Barber also made versions of this song with orchestra and for choir. 'Solitary Hotel' is the fourth song in Barber's cycle *Despite and Still*, Op. 41. It is based on a passage from James Joyce's *Ulysses* (the 'Ithaca' section). The text is in fact an answer to a question (the whole 'Ithaca' section is structured in catechism format) 'What suggested scene was then constructed by Stephen?'. The fragmentary vocal line is offset against a tango from the piano.

Cheryl Frances-Hoad
One Life Stand

Using texts by Sophie Hannah, 'One Life Stand' is a response to Schumann's 1840 cycle *Frauenliebe und -Leben*. It is a decade since Johnston and Middleton gave the first performance of this cycle and it has had many subsequent performances. Jennifer Johnston had remarked that though she loved to sing Schumann's cycle, she found Chamisso's poems 'rather outdated' – to put it mildly – and suggested that Frances-Hoad should write an updated version. Frances-Hoad settled on a series of eight poems by the poet and crime-writer Sophie Hannah that, she said, 'form a narrative that is clear yet open to interpretation, and contains the whole gamut of complex emotions (both serious and humorous) that made the poems such a dream to set to music'. Many of the songs 'are based very closely on either the harmony and/or the motivic material of what in [her] view is the "corresponding" song in *Frauenliebe und Leben*', in particular the piano textures and the very varied relationship between voice and piano.

Biographies

Jennifer Johnston won the Royal Philharmonic Society's Singer Award 2021, in recognition of her "commitment and emotional force...from cherished performances as artist-in-residence with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra to her outstanding work supporting young musicians."

Jennifer is a former BBC New Generation Artist, and a graduate of Cambridge University and the Royal College of Music. She is particularly associated with the Bayerische Staatsoper where her roles have included Mrs Sedley / Peter Grimes, Brigitte / Die Todt Stadt, Second Norn / Götterdämmerung, Roßweise / Die Walküre, Floßhilde / Das Rheingold & Götterdämmerung, Hedwige / Guillaume Tell and La Ciesca / Gianni Schicci. She has also appeared in opera at the Teatro alla Scala (Mrs Grose / The Turn of the Screw, Gaia / CO2), Salzburg Festival (Carmi / La Betulia Liberata, Lady de Hautdesert / Gawain, Leda / Die Liebe Der Danae), and Festival d'Aix-en-Provence (Dido / Dido and Aeneas).

A prolific concert performer, she has performed with many of the world's greatest orchestras and conductors, including Jocaste in Stravinsky's Oedipus Rex (Sir John Eliot Gardiner/Berlin Philharmonic & London Symphony Orchestras, released as an LSO Live disc), Beethoven's Missa Solemnis (Gardiner/Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique at the BBC Proms, Carnegie Hall and on disc), Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Welser-Möst/Cleveland, Royal Concertgebouw & Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestras, Gardiner/ORR, Hindoyan/Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra), Waltraute in Wagner's Die Walküre (Sir Simon Rattle/Bayerische Rundfunks Symphony Orchestra and on disc), Wagner's Wesendonck Lieder (Hindoyan/Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Brabbins/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Dausgaard/BBC National Orchestra Of Wales), Mahler's Second Symphony (Rouvali/Philharmonia, Zinman/Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Hrusa/Philharmonia, V.Petrenko/RLPO, Lintu/Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, De la Parra/London Philharmonic Orchestra), Mahler's Third Symphony (Mäkelä/Oslo Philharmonic, Welser-Möst/Cleveland Orchestra, Zinman/Orchestre National de Lyon, V.Petrenko/RLPO), Mahler's Eighth Symphony (Welser-Möst/Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, K.Petrenko/Bayerische Staatsorchester), Mahler's Rückert Lieder (Zinman/Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Kalmar/RLPO, Sondergard/Royal Scottish National Orchestra), Mahler's Das Lied Von Der Erde (Pintscher/Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, Treviño/Euskadi Orkestra, Marin/Hamburger Symphoniker), Elgar's Sea Pictures (Tate/Hamburger

Symphoniker, Hill/Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra), Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* (Brabbins/BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Hill/Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra), Verdi's *Requiem* (Oramo/BBC Symphony Orchestra at the First Night of the Proms), Gardner/Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Slatkin/Orchestra National de Lyon), Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* (Gatti/Accademia Di Santa Cecilia), Schumann's *Faustszenen* (Harding/Gewandhausorchester and Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Schonwandt/Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra), Adès's *Totentanz* (Adès/Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Harding/Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra), Janacek's *Glagolitic Mass* (Kanellakis/BBC Symphony Orchestra at the First Night of the Proms, Letonja/Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra & on disc), Britten's *Phaedra*(Brabbins/RLPO, Gamba/Ulster Orchestra), Respighi's *Il Tramonto* (V.Petrenko/RLPO) and *Pasqualita* in Adams' *Doctor Atomic* (Adams/BBC Symphony Orchestra & on disc).

She makes regular appearances in recital on BBC Radio 3, most recently 'Woman: Interrupted' with Malcolm Martineau at Wigmore Hall, and 'All About The Girl' with James Baillieu at Glasgow's City Halls. Her extensive discography includes the release of her debut solo album 'A Love Letter To Liverpool' (Rubicon) and Payne's arrangement of Vaughan Williams' *Four Last Songs* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Brabbins for Albion Records, which she premiered at the BBC Proms (Vänska/BBCSO) and which was nominated for a Grammy Award.

Her engagements during the 2022/3 season include *Mrs Sedley / Peter Grimes* at the Bayerische Staatsoper, *Juno / Semele* at the Glyndebourne Festival, *Mahler 3* with Vänskä / Minnesota Orchestra & on disc, *Berio's Folksongs* with Paterson / Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, *Mahler 2 & 8* with Petrenko / Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, *Mozart Requiem* with DeBilly / Malmö Symphony Orchestra, *Elgar's Sea Pictures* with Slatkin / Irish National Symphony Orchestra, *Walker Mass* with Chauhan / BBC Symphony Orchestra, *Wagner's Wesendonck Lieder* with Madaras / Hallé Orchestra, and recitals at the Lammermuir Festival with Malcolm Martineau and *Leeds Lieder* with Joseph Middleton.

Pianist **Joseph Middleton** specialises in the art of song accompaniment and chamber music and has been internationally acclaimed within this field. Described in the 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 and 'a perfect accompanist' by Opera Now.

Joseph enjoys fruitful partnerships 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, James Newby, Mark Padmore, Mauro Peter, Miah Persson, Carolyn Sampson, and Roderick Williams. He collaborates with rising stars from the younger generation and regularly programmes his own series for BBC Radio 3.

Recent seasons have taken him to London's Wigmore Hall, Royal Opera House and Royal Festival Hall, the Vienna Konzerthaus, Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw, Köln Philharmonie, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, Lille and Gothenburg Opera Houses, Berlin Boulez Saal, Paris Musée d'Orsay, Zürich Tonhalle, deSingel Antwerp, Luxembourg Philharmonie, Bozar Brussels, Tokyo's Oji Hall and New York's Alice Tully Hall. He regularly appears at festivals in Aix-en-Provence, Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Munich, Schubertiade Schwarzenberg and Hohenems, Stuttgart, Heidelberger Frühling, Frankfurt, Ravinia, Japan, San Francisco, Toronto and Vancouver as well as the BBC Proms. His fast-growing discography on Harmonia Mundi, BIS, Chandos and Signum Records have won him a Diapason D'or, Edison Award, Prix Caecilia as well as numerous Gramophone and BBC Music Magazine Award nominations.

In 2022/23 he is Artist in Residence at the Life Victoria Festival Barcelona where he appears in recital with Dame Sarah Connolly, Louise Alder, and Benjamin Appl. He appears at the Schubertiade Hohenems and Schwarzenberg with Fatma Said, Louise Alder, Sophie Rennert amongst others, joins Marianne Crebassa on a European recital tour to London, Berlin, Madrid, Antwerp and Cologne, performs a 14 city ECHO tour with James Newby including appearances at Baden Baden, Palau de Musica, Musikverein Wien and Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie and returns to the Wigmore Hall for the London premiere of a major new work by Mark Anthony Turnage alongside Dame Sarah Connolly. With Carolyn Sampson he performs at Wigmore Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, and Japan's Oji Hall.

Joseph Middleton is Director of Leeds Lieder, Musician in Residence at, and a Bye-Fellow of Pembroke College Cambridge and a Professor and Fellow at his alma mater, the Royal Academy of Music. He was the recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Artist of the Year Award in 2017.