



Tilford Bach Society (CIO)

Poetry, Prose & Music



Graham Fawcett



Elizabeth Cooney



Grace Mo

Graham Fawcett, reader
Elizabeth Cooney, violin
Grace Mo, piano



10 June 2017
www.tilbach.org.uk

Programme

John Keats – Ode to Autumn (Winchester, 1819)

Tchaikovsky – Song of Autumn for Violin and Piano

This great ode, one of Keats's finest poems, was written in Winchester during the course of a single autumn day, Sunday 9th September 1819. (He had by now already written the great Odes to a Nightingale, a Grecian Urn, Melancholy, Psyche and Indolence, earlier in the same year). The play of light and shadow here, in the energies of nature and the heart, may lead you to feel that Keats is gathering his strength to say goodbye to the summer of his life – he will actually have one more – and to prepare for its winter. The intensity of word and image, and the rise and fall of the poem's music, offer a listening experience on a par with that of hearing a short movement from a late quartet.

William Cobbett – from The Rural Rides (Hants. 1821)

Pugnani/Kreisler - Praeludium und Allegro for violin and piano

Two passages from an English classic written by an Englishman who loved his country and the country: the passion, candour and sheer detail of his style are as though Pepys and Defoe had been re-born to do for Surrey, Hampshire and Sussex what they had once done for London and journalism. Cobbett is Farnham's literary patron saint as Gilbert White is Selborne's, with the difference that Cobbett got out more. He is a crusader for English rural tradition. His eye is a connoisseur's, as clear and vigorous as Jonathan Swift's, his love of what he sees David Attenboroughesque. The first extract finds him reporting from Berghclere, which he locates as "near Newbury, Hampshire" (as it was in those days), on October 30, 1821, the same day, as it happened, that Dostoyevsky was born in Moscow!

Gilbert White – Natural History of Selborne (1789)

Sarasate - Caprice Basque

It was a good day for Selborne when Gilbert White's life came full circle back to the place where he was born, the vicarage of this village that then became his home again for more than forty years. White the bachelor curate's enduringly best-selling book has made Selborne's name ever since: a collection of letters he wrote from there to two kindred-spirit friends and filled with an early naturalist's genially precise observations and affectionate nature-loving thoughts. White was an early exponent of the art of watching birds rather than simply shooting them, and his writing conjures up what must have been a true picture of a peaceful rural idyll published in the same year as the outbreak of the French Revolution.

Persian Folk Song for Violin and Piano

Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, 1120 (trans Edward Fitzgerald, 1859)

We will hear the first 37 verses of this 75-verse poem, which became the most popular book after the Bible for Victorian households from the time when Fitzgerald's famous translation of it appeared in 1859. On 13 July 1895, England's Omar Khayyam Club held a literary dinner at the Burford Bridge Hotel near the foot of Box Hill. Among those Club members present was Thomas Hardy. 33 years later, in 1928 as he was dying, Hardy asked his wife Florence to read to him from the copy of the Rubaiyat which he had given her long before as an earnest of his love. They were the last words he ever heard.

Interval

Drinks are free but donations to costs are much appreciated

Ignace Pleyel – Rondo Favorit in E flat major, for Solo Piano

Jane Austen – Reading from 'Emma', 1815 (Set on Box Hill)

Picnicking under the sky was felt to be as romantic as the out-door English poetry of the time, a getting-back-to-nature forerunner of the special new passion among artists in the mid-19th for painting in the fresh air. Eating and 'picture-painting' combine in Austen's clever dramatic cameo – one of her greatest moments – of the outing to Box Hill, as the characters we have come to know and love re-appear before us again in a flash as though in newly discovered black-and-white footage: Emma Woodhouse, Mr Knightley, Miss Bates, Jane Fairfax, Mr and Mrs Elton, Harriet Smith, and Frank Churchill, here in a fluster as Emma invites him to join what will prove to be a wonderfully complicated picnic.

Robin Adair – Scottish Air for Violin and Piano

Schubert – The Bee for Violin and Piano

Alfred Lord Tennyson – from 'The Passing of Arthur' (living in Aldworth, Blackdown, near Haslemere)

Elgar – Chanson de Matin, Chanson de Nuit for Violin and Piano

It is 150 years ago this year that Tennyson, on 5 June 1867, first visited the site on Blackdown near Haslemere for what would become his new home on the Downs, Aldworth. One of Tennyson's first acts at Aldworth was to re-write a poem dating from 1833, his 'Morte d'Arthur'. But that poem had ended without a shred of consolation and now the older man set to work to add some. The result was 'The Passing of Arthur', published with Tennyson's Idylls of the King in 1869. We join it tonight as King Arthur, mortally wounded after his last battle with Sir Mordred, orders the knight Sir Bedivere to throw his trusty sword Excalibur into the lake, on whose shore he is now lying, thus restoring it to the lady of the lake who had originally gifted it to him.

Edward Thomas

The Lofty Sky, Haymaking and Aspens (Steep, Hants. 1915)

Vaughan Williams – The Lark Ascending for Violin and Piano

This year marks the centenary of the death of Edward Thomas on the battlefield at Arras in France on 9th April 1917. Thomas's best writing dates from the years when the village of Steep, near Petersfield, was his home, and it was here that he wrote all three of tonight's poems. Persuaded by the American poet Robert Frost during the summer of 1914 that he was actually a poet but had never believed it, Thomas finally started writing poems in December 1914, and in the two years and four months left of his life wrote 144 of them. When a plaque to Thomas and fifteen other poets of the First World War was dedicated in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner in 1985, the then Poet Laureate Ted Hughes paid tribute to him as 'the father of us all'. He meant us poets of nature.

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Graham Fawcett

Graham studied Classics at Christ's Hospital, where he was fortunate to coincide with a surviving decades-long era of teaching verse composition from English poetry into Greek and Latin metres, so that the first real encounters with Shakespeare, Keats, Tennyson and others came in translating them; read Archaeology & Anthropology and English at Cambridge, and has worked for Southern Arts, the British Institute of Florence, the Arvon Foundation, BBC Radios 3, 4, World Service and Italian Service. He has lived in Italy and French Catalonia and now lives in London. Graham runs reading evenings regularly in Farnham at the Bush Hotel assisted by Elizabeth Cooney. <http://www.grahamfawcett.co.uk/>

Elizabeth Cooney

Originally from Cork, Ireland, Elizabeth now lives in Farnham with her husband Nick and six year old daughter Sophia. She has been invited to guest lead orchestras such as the English Chamber Orchestra, the Welsh National Opera Orchestra and Aurora.

She studied on scholarship at RCM where she was awarded the highest marks obtainable on graduation. She subsequently held both the Mills Williams and the Phoebe Benham Junior Fellowships at the RCM. This summer will see her play at the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall again with the Aurora Orchestra performing Beethoven's Eroica Symphony by heart and she will tour with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Charles Dutoit.

The person who influenced her most in her career so far was Ida Haendel who gave her masterclasses on an intense violin course in Keshet Eilon, a kibbutz in northern Israel. Elizabeth was inspired by Haendel's legendary violin playing, her passion, warmth and humanity and her curiosity in Irish traditional music!

Her favourite music to listen to is Richard Strauss' epic Alpine Symphony, and her favourite composers include Bach, Beethoven, Dohnanyi and Prokofiev. Other music she listens to is Oscar Peterson, Bjork (she performed with her at the Royal Albert Hall) and Procol Harum.

Elizabeth is endeavouring to play more chamber music closer to home in Farnham and thinks it important to perform the music of living composers to new audiences and in unusual venues.

Grace Mo

Born in Taiwan, raised in Canada, and now lives in London, Grace Mo has established herself as a versatile musician, performing as a soloist. She has studied at the University of British Columbia and later at the Guildhall of School and Drama where she held both prestigious Leverhulme Chamber Music Fellowship and Piano Fellowship. The person who was the greatest influence on her career so far was her teacher and mentor, Joan Havill, who studied with Nadia Boulanger and Louise Kentner.

What attracted Grace most about a musical career is the power of expressions and emotions that serve as a major source of inspiration and energetic drive in her daily life. She finds touching people's lives with music a privilege – and a wonderfully fulfilling one. She is keen to reach out to audience in more remote parts of the country. Grace's fondness for Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and Ravel are reflected in their frequent appearances in her concert programmes. One can often find Grace relaxing and practising yoga on her mat. She also finds pleasure in paintings, calligraphy, travelling, and sports.

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