



Tilford Bach Society

(CIO)

Poetry, Prose & Music



Graham Fawcett



Elizabeth Cooney



Grace Mo

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



16 March 2018
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Programme

D H Lawrence (1885-1930), 'Piano' (1918)

John Field (1782-1837), Nocturne No.5 in B flat major (1918)

This evening's first centenary marks Lawrence's 42-poem collection *New Poems* of 1918 and singles out his once-read never-forgotten early portrait - in word, picture and sound - of Lawrence's mother at the piano. Tender it certainly is. At the same time, words like 'betrays' and 'manhood is cast down' show him aware of the precipice over which nostalgia can pitch into regression, the mother seen by him as 'a woman' as both her voice and the piano's together remind him now of their power over his smallness then.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), 'The Windhover' (1877)

Olivier Messaien (1908-1992), Theme and Variations for violin and piano (1932)

Early on in his journal, Hopkins defined poetry as "speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above the interest of meaning . . ." So we can float as we read him, his abilities as a painter and a composer of music alive here too as he shapes the poetic impulse in the poem he believed to be his best, "The Windhover".

John Keats, from 'Endymion' (Burford Bridge, Dorking in 1818)

Franz Liszt, Liebesträume No. 3 (1850)

In October 1818, Keats wrote to his heroic publishers Taylor and Hessey: 'In *Endymion*, I leaped headlong into the Sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the Soundings, the quicksands, & the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea & comfortable advice. -- I was never afraid of failure; for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest.'

Guillaume Apollinaire (died 1918) Two Poems: 'The Little Car' (La Petite Auto) and 'What's Going On' (Qu'est-ce qui se passe)

Maurice Ravel, Sonata No. 2 in G major for violin & piano (1923-27)

Guillaume Apollinaire saw action at the front in World War I, sustaining a shrapnel injury to his skull. "There was laughter in his tears", said his friend Fernand Fleuret. "He was cunning and gullible, realist and refined, sceptical and credulous, virile and weak - he was the people of Paris, the People itself". By the time he died, of influenza, in 1918, he had taken Paris by storm as a scintillating new poet, literary and art critic, and eye-catching innovator who soaked up into his verse the rhythms, shapes and improvisatory freedoms of cubism, jazz, and blues (so did Ravel, as in the second movement *Blues* of this Violin Sonata). Honegger and Poulenc set his poems. He invented the word 'surrealist' and used the words of his poems to create shapes such as the motor vehicle in the first of his two poems tonight, 'The Little Car'.

Interval

Drinks are free but donations to costs are much appreciated

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), from 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' (1875, published 1918)

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741), Storm, from 'Summer' (The Four Seasons, composed c.1720)

On 11th May 1868, Gerard Manley Hopkins, then aged 24, set fire to his early poems. Having decided to be a priest, he took it into his head that writing poetry was in conflict with his duty to God. Years passed, and he resisted the desire to write. Then a fellow-priest showed him a chilling newspaper account of the shipwreck of five Franciscan nuns, and said: "I wish someone would write a poem about it" The news would shock Hopkins back into poetry; the result, 'The Wreck of the Deutschland', marked the re-birth of his poetry-writing life and is his masterpiece. The poem is also about himself: his ebullient father being in marine insurance and so had to deal with shipwrecks, and his mother, as a young woman, having once survived sailing the same sea-route from Hamburg, brought Hopkins into a new dramatic closeness with both of them.

W B Yeats (1865-1939), 'The White Birds' (1892)

Robert Schumann, Träumerei (Kinderszenen Op 15 No. 7, 1838)

The opening W B Yeats poem tonight was the first one he sent to Maud. They were out walking on the Hill of Howth near Dublin in July 1891, the year of his first proposal, when Maud told him that if she could be a bird, it would be a seagull. It sounds as though Yeats suddenly wanted to be one too. Shape-shifting happens often in his work: in his verse play *The Shadowy Waters*, the souls of the dead are human-headed seabirds. This poem's theme may be a longing for eternal togetherness through bodily transformation, but the wish struggles rather desperately to sound remotely like a belief.

W B Yeats (1865-1939), 'O Do Not Love Too Long' (1904)

Irish Folk Music for violin

During the years from 1895 to 1919 when Yeats had his first-floor London flat in Woburn Walk, behind St Pancras Church, the local children still out on the street one night were rapt by the appearance of a tall, elegant woman in a green evening dress and a gold torque round her neck alighting from a hansom cab. It was Maud Gonne. By 1905, Yeats had been in love with Maud ever since 'the troubling of my life began' on 30th January 1889 when he had opened the door of the family house in Chiswick to see, standing on the step, Maud, aged 22, already a famously beautiful golden-redhaired English recent debutante, Irish nationalist, and poetry lover. She, he wrote in his poem 'Friends', "took/All till my youth was gone/With scarce a pitying look".

W B Yeats (1865-1939), 'He Wishes For The Cloths of Heaven' (1889)

Gabriel Fauré, Après un rêve, from Trois Mélodies Op. 7 (1878)

Yeats proposed to Maud in 1891, 1899, 1900 and 1901, but she would not have him. He told her he was not happy without her. She answered: "Oh yes, you are, because you make beautiful poetry out of what you call your unhappiness and are happy in that. Marriage would be such a dull affair. Poets should never marry. The world should thank me for not marrying you." If she was right, then thank her it certainly has.

W B Yeats (1865-1939), 'Broken Dreams'

Trad., *The Last Rose of Summer* (c.1792)

Claude Debussy (1862-1918), *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1917)

In his notebooks for October and November 1915, more than 25 years since he first set eyes on her, Yeats was still drafting poems to Maud Gonne, among them this one, which more ruefully confronts the inevitability of being transformed in and by old age, even though when he wrote it, he was only fifty. So is this the ageing of a hope dashed over and over? Or is it the premature tiredness and infirmity and surrender which comes as a consequence of having been "stubborn with his passion" for too long?

Walt Whitman, 'There Was a Child' (1868)

Trad. Irish, An Chúilfhionn

Walt Whitman was born into a working-class family on a seaside farm on Long Island in 1819. When he was four he and his family moved house on the day of one of the most eagerly anticipated horse-races ever to be run in America, at the Island's race-track. Whitman never lost that sense of the teeming mass of humanity, of men and women coming towards him or moving about en masse, individuals he could pass by or meet, strangers he could un-stranger with the intensity of his tenderness towards them. This poem is full of that very intensity.

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Graham Fawcett

Graham studied Classics at Christ's Hospital, Horsham, where he was drawn to the teaching of verse composition from English poetry into Greek and Latin metres; so, his first real encounters with Shakespeare, Keats, Tennyson and others came in translating them. Graham talks about poetry to audiences in bookshops, art galleries, upstairs bars, restaurants and old houses in England, Italy, Spain and the U.S. He broadcast on Radio 3 for 25 years and taught at The Poetry School from 1998 to 2015. He runs lecture-performance evenings regularly in Farnham at the Bush Hotel assisted by Elizabeth Cooney <http://www.grahamfawcett.co.uk/>

Elizabeth Cooney

Elizabeth was raised in Cork, Ireland and is now living in Farnham. She won many solo and chamber music awards at the RCM becoming a Junior Fellow. She performs as soloist, chamber musician and in orchestras internationally and has been guest lead with the Welsh National Opera orchestra and the English Chamber Orchestra. She performs regularly with the dynamic Aurora Orchestra will perform with them at the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, playing Shostakovich's 9th Symphony by memory. Elizabeth loves playing chamber music and relishes the meeting of minds with Graham and Grace in their LitMus Ensemble. Living in Farnham with her husband Nick and daughter Sophia, she enjoys cinema, swimming and reading.

Grace Mo

Grace was born in Taiwan, raised in Canada, and now lives in London. She has studied at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. At the Guildhall, Grace held the Leverhulme Chamber Music Fellowship. In addition to her solo career, Grace is an active chamber musician and frequently collaborates with renowned musicians of world-class orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra. Besides performing, Grace is also a promoter of musical education through live performances.

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