

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES SPRING · SUMMER 2011

Concerts at The University

Tuesday 8 February 2011

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Mhairi Lawson · soprano

Jan Waterfield · piano

Programme of works by Rossini, Fauré,
Ravel, Schubert, Francis George Scott,
William Sweeney and Beethoven .



Song Journey : Venice to Glasgow

La gita in gondola (from *Serate Musicali*)

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

Clair de lune

Barcarolle

Mandoline

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1929)

Ye Banks and Braes (Burns)

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Ellen's Gesang II (Scott/Lady of the Lake)

Ellens Gesang III (Scott/Lady of the Lake)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

My love's like a red red rose (Burns)

Milkwort and Bog-cotton (Hugh Macdiarmid)

Francis George Scott (1880-1958)

Three Poems from *Sangschaw* by Hugh Macdiarmid:

Bonnie Broukit Bairn, The Eemis Stane, The Watergaw

William Sweeney (b.1950)

The Lovely Lass of Inverness

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

It was a great pleasure and honour to sing Rossini's *La gita in gondola* and Fauré's *Clair de lune*, *Barcarolle* and *Mandoline* in Venice a couple of years ago; to perform songs written about the romance of the gondola and describing the characters of the commedia dell' arte seemed a good way to celebrate a visit there.

Robert Burns wrote *Ye banks and braes* for the publication *The Scots Musical Museum* (1787 - 1803) and it's one of his best-known and loved songs. Ravel's setting is perfectly weird and wonderful, however, somewhere between Ayrshire and Paris the original text was altered - I'll endeavour to sing Burns' intended words.

Schubert set to music translations of many of Sir Walter Scott's poems, and Ellen's Songs from *The Lady of the Lake* are amongst the most popular.

Francis George Scott was born in Hawick in the Scottish Borders on Robert Burns' birthday, January 25th. He was a teacher of English and, later on, a lecturer of Music. One of his pupils at Langholm Academy was a boy named Christopher Murray Grieve, who went on to publish poetry under the pseudonym Hugh MacDiarmid, whose poems in lowland Scots he set to music.

I first met the composer Bill Sweeney in 1990 when I took part in performances of his epic musical realisation of Hugh MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*. He gave me a copy of the Songs from *Sangschaw* and at last, I've learned them....

Jan Waterfield and I were fortunate to tour Scotland in January 2010, with members of the Mark Morris Dance Group, as part of the company which performed the Scottish Dance extravaganza 'Off Kilter'. Beethoven's *The Lovely Lass of Inverness* was included in our set of choreographed songs.

Mhairi Lawson

La gita in gondola (The gondola ride)

Fly, quick little boat, row, row, o boatman
now that my sweet Elvira is in my arms, defy the sea!
The lagoon shimmers in calm
Not a sail is in view
The pale moon crosses the sky
Everything invites our sighs.
Row, row, o boatman ...

If love invites you to a kiss
Don't be afraid my precious one,
You will realize that life exists
Only in the kiss of love.
But already a soft breeze
Sweetly ripples the sea
Come, Elvira, to my heart
Come and discover how it beats!

Row, row o boatman ...

Clair de lune (Moonlight)

Your soul is a chosen landscape
charmed by masquers and revellers
playing the lute and dancing and almost
sad beneath their fanciful disguises!

Even while singing, in a minor key,
of victorious love and fortunate living
they do not seem to believe in their happiness,
and their song mingles with the moonlight,

the calm moonlight, sad and beautiful,
which sets the birds in the trees dreaming,
and makes the fountains sob with ecstasy,
the tall slender fountains among the marble statues!

Barcarolle

I am a Gondolier of Rialto;
my castle is the lagoon,
and my garden is the Lido.
My curtains are the light of the moon.
I am a Gondolier of the Great Canal:
as a beacon I have the window
illuminated every night
by your dark eyes, my wife.
My gondola is for the happy,
and I take them out two by two;
and the light, fresh breezes
are discreet in my domain.
I have passed in my love
more intoxicated days and nights
than Venice has islands,
than even its streams have gondolas.

Mandoline

The givers of serenades
And the lovely women who listen
Exchange insipid words
Under the singing branches.

There is Thyrsis and Amyntas
And there's the eternal Clytander,
And there's Damis who, for many a
Heartless woman, wrote many a tender verse.

Their short silk coats,
Their long dresses with trains,
Their elegance, their joy
And their soft blue shadows,

Whirl around in the ecstasy
Of a pink and grey moon,
And the mandolin prattles
Among the shivers from the breeze.

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chaunt, ye little birds,
And I'm sae weary fu' o' care?

Ye'll break my heart, ye warbling bird,
That warbles on the flowry thorn,
Ye mind me o' departed joys.
Departed never to return.

Oft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon,
By morning and by evening shine
To hear the birds sing o' their loves
As fondly once I sang o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I stretch'd my hand
And pu'd a rosebud from the tree.
But my fause lover stole the rose,
And left the thorn wi' me.

Ellen's Song II

"Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
while our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé".

Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
How thy gallant steed lay dying.

Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound reveillé.

Ellen's Song III

Ave, Maria! Maiden mild!
Oh listen to a maiden's prayer;
For thou canst hear tho' from the wild,
And Thou canst save amid despair.
Safe may we sleep beneath thy care
Tho' banish'd outcast and reviled,
Oh, Maiden hear a maidens prayer.
Oh Mother, hear a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave, Maria! Undefined!
The flinty couch we now must share,
Shall seem with down of eider piled
If Thy, if Thy protection hover there.
The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breath of Balm if thou hast smiled;
Then, Maiden hear a maiden's prayer.
Oh Mother, hear a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave, Maria! Stainless-styled!
Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee, shall flee before thy presence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care
Beneath Thy guidance reconciled,
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer;
And for a father bear a child!
Ave Maria!

A Red Red Rose

O my Luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
O my Luve's like the melodie,
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare-thee-weel, my only Luve!
And fare-thee-weel, a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' 'twere ten thousand mile!

Milkwort and Bog-Cotton Come away, eyes like milkwort and bog-cotton hair! I love you, earth, in this mood best of all, when the shy spirit like a low wind moves, and from the sky no shadow can fall, since there's nothing left to throw a shadow there over eyes like milkwort and milk-white cotton hair. Would that no leaf upon another wheeled a shadow either and no root need hide in sacrifice to let such beauty be! But deep surrounding darkness I discern is always the price of light. Would light revealed nothing but you, and night nought else concealed!

The Bonnie Broukit Bairn Mars is handsome in crimson, Venus in a green silk gown, the old moon shakes her golden feathers, their starry talk's pack of nonsense, none for thee spares the smallest thought, Earth, thou bonny neglected child! – *But weep, and in your tears you'll drown the entire collection!*

The Eemis Stane In the very dead of the cold harvest night, the world, like a loose tombstone, sways in the sky; and my awesome memories fall like a blizzard of snow. Like a blizzard so that I could not read the words cut out of the stone, had the moss of fame and the lichen of history not buried them.

The Watergaw One wet early evening in the cold weather after sheep-shearing I saw a rare thing, a faint rainbow with it's shivering light beyond the downpour; and I thought of the last wild look you gave before you died! There was no smoke in the lark's house that night – and none in mine; but I have thought of that foolish light ever since then; and I think that maybe at last I know what your look meant then.

The lovely lass of Inverness

The lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en and morn she cries, Alas!
And ay the saut tear blins her e'e:
Drumossie moor, Drumossie day,
A waefu' day it was to me;
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear and brethren three!

Their winding-sheet the bludy clay,
Their graves are growing green to see;
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's e'e!
Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bludy man I trow thou be;
For mony a heart thou has made sair
That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee!

While still a student at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, **Mhairi Lawson** won the International Early Music Network Young Artists Prize with the fortepianist Olga Tverskaya, which led to her first CD recording of Haydn's English and Scottish Songs (premiere recording on original instruments).

As a soloist Mhairi has sung in theatres and concert halls worldwide with such companies as English National Opera, Les Arts Florissants, The Monteverdi Choir, The Early Opera Company, The Scottish Chamber Orchestra and The Academy of Ancient Music. She enjoys working in repertoire ranging from traditional folksong to Gilbert and Sullivan Opera and contemporary commissions, and has made many commercial recordings, most recently Haydn's *Creation* with the Choir of New College, Oxford, conducted by Edward Higginbottom, and Scottish Jacobite Songs on the Avison Ensemble's CD 'Rebellion'.

With the virtuoso baroque band La Serenissima, Mhairi has recorded many of Vivaldi's sacred and operatic works and with them has performed large-scale pieces including *La Senna Festeggiante* and *La fida ninfa* in Venice.

Mhairi has enjoyed working with the Gabrieli Consort and Players for many years and projects with them include Bach's *St John* and *St Matthew Passions*, the *B Minor Mass* and the *Wedding Cantata*, Handel's *Jephtha*, *Acis and Galatea* and *La resurrezione*, and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, *King Arthur* and *Fairy Queen*.

On the operatic stage Mhairi has sung the roles of Cupid, Honour and Venus in Purcell's *King Arthur* with the Mark Morris Dance Group's production at New York City Opera, conducted by Jane Glover, in which she appeared also at English National Opera and with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in Berkeley, California. In the Buxton Festival, she sang the role of Dorinda in Handel's *Orlando* conducted by Christian Curnyn, for Opera Theatre Company. Further roles at English National Opera include Drusilla in Monteverdi's *Coronation of Poppea* and Sister Genevieve in Puccini's *Suor Angelica*.

Forthcoming CD releases include two discs of Schubert Lieder, including the vocal tour de force *der Hirt auf dem Felsen*, with clarinettist Jane Booth and pianist Eugene Asti.

Jan Waterfield read music at Cambridge University and completed her postgraduate studies in harpsichord and piano at London's Royal Academy of Music.

As a continuo player, she plays mainly with the Gabrieli Consort and Players, both in the UK and in Europe, but also enjoys working with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Ludus Baroque closer to home.

As a pianist, her most recent projects have been song recitals with sopranos Lorna Anderson & Mhairi Lawson, and baritone Neal Davies.

As a harpsichord soloist, she has appeared at festivals in France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, Norway, Austria, Canada, USA, Japan and Taiwan. She has also worked on film soundtracks for Peter Greenaway and Carl Davis, theatre music for Alan Bennett and dance productions for Mark Morris.

Jan sometimes teaches harpsichord and coaches the baroque ensemble at the RSAMD in Glasgow.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS:

Friday 11 February

1.10pm

St. Cecilia's Hall, Niddry Street

Michael Tsalka · harpsichord

A Journey through five hundred years of Keyboard Music History

Including music by CABEZÓN, SCARLATTI, SEIXAS, J.S. BACH, MOZART, BARTÓK, FREDERICO IBARRA GROTH and LEONARDO CORAL.

ADMISSION FREE

Friday 11 to Sunday 13 February

Reid Concert Hall

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Friday 11 February

8.00pm

Scarborough Fair: Rob MacKay curator

Audio and visual work by Matt Barnard, Nick Del Nero, Alo Allik and Rob MacKay

Saturday 12 February

6.00pm

New work by the Scottish electroacoustic music collective InvisibleARTs.

Works by Nick Virgo, Alistair MacDonald, Robert Dow, Pippa Murphy and Louise Rossiter.

Saturday 12 February

8.00pm

Pete Stollery at 50: the composer Pete Stollery celebrates his 50th birthday with a retrospective of his work. Works by Pete Stollery, Robert Normandeau, Gilles Gobeil including a screening of the short film: "C'était un Rendez-vous" by Claude Lelouche.

Sunday 13 February

6.00pm

New work by students studying electroacoustic composition at the University of Edinburgh. Works by Linsey Rae, Gareth Sears, Louise Rossiter, Andy Connor, Tim Cooper (RSAMD) and Rob Bentall (Sheffield).

Tickets: £5.00 / £3.00 concessions available on the door

Weekend pass (all 4 concerts): £16.00 / £10.00 concessions

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