

Tuesday 22nd February 2022
5.30pm-6.30pm

The Haldane Room
North Cloisters, Wilkins Building, Main Campus

Vaughan Williams, his pupils and friends

Ruth Gipps (1921-99) *The St Francis Window* for alto flute and piano, Op. 67 (1986)

Elizabeth Mooney – alto flute *Yvonne Cheng – piano*

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

A Birthday Gift (1904)
A Winter Piece for Genia (1943)
Pezzo Ostinato (1905)

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

Jig (1932)

Roger Beeson – piano

Ruth Gipps

Sonata for clarinet and piano, Op. 45 (1955)
ii. Andante con moto

Julia Föllmer – clarinet *Yvonne Cheng – piano*

Ralph Vaughan Williams

'Silent Noon' (1904)
'Dreamland' (1906)
'Linden Lea' (1901)

Rebecca Kilby-Smith – soprano *Zeynep Smith – mezzo-soprano* *Roger Beeson – piano*

Entry is free and open to the general public as well as those working and studying at UCL & associated institutions.

The next concert will take place on Thursday 3rd March at 1.10pm in the Haldane Room.
For full details of the Chamber Music Club's activities and to apply for membership please visit:
www.ucl.ac.uk/chamber-music

Ruth Gipps, *The St Francis Window*

Ruth Gipps was a talented pianist, oboist, composer and conductor whose musical life was constrained by discrimination, preventing her receiving the true recognition she deserved during her lifetime. She was a pioneer for women in many fields of music; at the age of 26 she became the youngest British woman to receive a doctorate in music and was appointed Chairwoman of the Composers' Guild of Great Britain in 1967. She founded two orchestras, one of which she conducted for free, and was considered Britain's most prolific female composer at the time of her death. Along with her five symphonies, seven concertos and numerous chamber and choral works, Gipps composed a diverse selection of pieces for wind instruments and piano with intriguing names such as *Honey Coloured Cow* for bassoon and piano, Op.3d, *The Kelpie of Corrievreckan* for clarinet and piano, Op.5b, and the *Sea Weed Song* for cor anglais and piano, Op.12c.

The atmospheric *The St Francis Window* was inspired by a stained glass window at the church of the Holy Trinity in East Sussex, depicting St Francis of Assisi and a monk surrounded by animals. The haunting opening by the piano, with suspended chords and running triplets in 4/4 and 3/4 time alternatively, sets the scene. The flute presents a series of phrases, like the individual pieces of glass, and the interplay between the flute and piano links these phrases to build the image in the window. The snippets of activity that punctuate the piece with a distinctive rhythm could portray the animals coming and going as they visit St Francis. The final flurry towards the end perhaps depicts the animals departing at the end of the day, and the piece finishes as calmly as it started with the flute fading away after the final chords.

Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Birthday Gifts*

The pieces were collected together by Ursula Vaughan Williams (Vaughan Williams's widow) and published in 1994 under the title *Birthday Gifts*. In a note she explained that the first and third were written as presents for Adeline (his first wife). Of the second piece's dedicatee: 'Genia Hornstein and her husband were Russians who had gone to Germany as refugees from the Revolution. When Hitler's Germany became intolerable they moved to England and settled in Dorking. Genia sang in The Leith Hill Music Festival concerts and the St Matthew Passion, and she became secretary of the Dorking Bach Choirs. All the concerts were conducted by Ralph Vaughan Williams, and she became a great friend of his and Adeline's'. The three pieces 'can be played separately, or performed together in this little suite of contrasting moods...'

Gustav Holst, *Jig*

Gustav Holst composed only a handful of solo piano pieces, of which the *Jig*, written for his daughter Imogen, was the last. He wrote to Imogen in the summer of 1932 in a characteristically self-deprecating tone: 'I realised that your next piano piece was long overdue so I set to work. I've done nothing else these two days and my idea was to get something down on paper and then ask you to rewrite it and make it sound more or less like music. But I've just crawled through it twice (Molto Adagio instead of Vivace) and it really isn't fit to be seen even by you. So I'll put it aside until I come back. It's a jig – probably.'

Unpretentious and not too serious, this short piece does however display various facets of Holst's musical personality, including the neo-Baroque, the 'folksy', and even, very briefly, the mystical.

Ralph Vaughan Williams, early songs

Silent Noon

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass,
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms,
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.
All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
Are golden king-cup fields with silver edge,
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn hedge.
'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-search'd growths the dragonfly
Hangs like a blue thread loosen'd from the sky:
So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above.
Oh! Clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
This close-companion'd inarticulate hour,
When twofold silence was the song of love.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82)

Dream-Land

Where sunless rivers weep
Their waves into the deep,
She sleeps a charmèd sleep:
Awake her not.
Led by a single star,
She came from very far
To seek, where shadows are,
Her pleasant lot.

She left the rosy morn,
She left the fields of corn,
For twilight cold and lorn
And water-springs.
Through sleep, as through a veil,
She sees the sky look pale,
And hears the nightingale
That sadly sings.

Rest, rest, a perfect rest
Shed over brow and breast;
Her face is toward the west,

The purple land.
She cannot see the grain
Ripening on hill and plain;
She cannot feel the rain
Upon her hand.

Rest, rest, for evermore
Upon a mossy shore;
Rest, rest at the heart's core
Till time shall cease:
Sleep that no pain shall wake;
Night that no morn shall break
Till joy shall overtake
Her perfect peace.

Christina Rossetti (1830-94)

Linden Lea

Within the woodlands, flow'ry gladed,
By the oak trees' mossy moot,
The shining grass blades, timber shaded,
Now do quiver under foot;
And birds do whistle overhead,
And water's bubbling in its bed;
And there for me,
The apple tree
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

When leaves, that lately were a-springing,
Now do fade within the copse,
And painted birds do hush their singing,
Up upon the timber tops;
And brown-leaved fruit's a-turning red,
In cloudless sunshine overhead,
With fruit for me,
The apple tree
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

Let other folk make money faster,
In the air of dark-room'd towns;
I don't dread a peevish master,
Though no man may heed my frowns.
I be free to go abroad,
Or take again my homeward road,
To where, for me,
The apple tree
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

William Barnes (1801-86)