



SWAP'ra presents

The Rebecca Clarke Song Competition

Celebrating 150 years of British women composers in song

Semifinal and
Final Programme

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**Programme notes are all provided by competing duos*

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Foreword

Kitty Whately - SWAP'ra Co-Founder



The Rebecca Clarke Song Competition is the culmination of a journey that began for me during the lockdowns of 2021, when SWAP'ra launched Forgotten Voices — an online project created to rediscover and share songs by women composers who had too often been absent from recital programmes. What began as a response to a moment of enforced stillness quickly became something much larger: a way of giving performers the tools, recordings and confidence to explore a repertoire that had been hidden for generations.

As a singer deeply committed to English song, I have come to believe that the health of our recital culture depends not only on interpretation, but on curiosity — on asking what else is there and why haven't we heard it? Forgotten Voices was conceived to answer those questions practically, by making this repertoire visible and accessible, and by encouraging artists to programme it for themselves, whether for concerts, auditions, or competitions. Even for those who never appeared on screen, the act of discovering, researching and shaping programmes around these composers was itself a vital and lasting outcome.

That work continued through an ongoing collaboration between SWAP'ra and the Oxford International Song Festival, where Forgotten Voices – Women in Song has developed into a living resource of biographies, recordings and contextual material. Alongside this, I have been privileged to curate lecture-recitals, workshops and performances exploring women composers' songs, working closely with artists at different stages of their careers. These projects have reinforced my belief in the importance of mentorship — not only in refining performance, but in empowering artists to take ownership of repertoire choices and to advocate for music they believe in.

The Rebecca Clarke Song Competition was born directly from this ethos. It exists not to "discover" artists, but to celebrate composers — and to give performers the space, incentive and permission to engage deeply with repertoire that deserves to be heard more often. The decision to place no upper age limit on the competition reflects this belief: that insight, imagination and musical authority develop over time, and that the richness of this repertoire demands performers with depth of experience as well as technical command. Entrants were invited to propose programmes that reflect thoughtful engagement with the repertoire, whether or not they ultimately progressed to the live rounds; in every case, the act of researching and curating such programmes will have enriched their artistic practice and will contribute to a broader culture of repertory exploration.

We are proud to name the Competition after Rebecca Clarke in a year that has marked the culmination of a series of Clarke-focused projects I have led as part of my own work — including performances, recordings and educational events celebrating her music — this Competition run by SWAP'ra forming the final chapter of that exploration. Clarke's life and work embody everything this Competition stands for: artistic excellence, individuality, resilience, and a voice that was overlooked for far too long. Her songs are extraordinary — subtle, powerful and emotionally direct — and they reward performers and audiences in equal measure.

For audiences, these live rounds offer a rare opportunity to encounter an astonishing breadth of English and Irish song, much of it unfamiliar, brought vividly to life by outstanding artists. For performers, they represent a collective act of advocacy. I hope that what you hear over the coming days not only delights and moves you, but also leaves you curious — eager to explore further, to programme differently, and to carry these composers' voices forward into the future.



The Rebecca Clarke Song Competition

**Celebrating 150 years of British
women composers in song**

Information

Prizes

A range of significant prizes supports the artistic development of both singers and pianists and offers valuable professional opportunities:

First Prize for Singers

£5,000 and a Lunchtime Recital in the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra Concert Series

The Morison Prize is generously donated by the friends and family of Humphrey Morison in his memory

First Prize for Pianists

£5,000 and a Recital in the London Song Festival

All pianists competing in the semi-final and final rounds are eligible for this award.

The Winship Prize is generously donated by the Winship Foundation.

Second Prize for Singers

£1,000

Second Prize for Pianists

£1,000

Both Second Prizes are generously donated by Christopher Johnson in memory of Rebecca Clarke.

Prize for the Best Performance of a Song by a Living Composer

£1,000

The Stanford Prize may be awarded to any duo competing in the semi-final or final rounds. This prize is generously donated by the Stanford Society.

Professional Publicity Videos

All finalists receive professionally recorded videos of their performances from the Evening Final on 24 January.

These recordings are made possible through the generous support of Adriana Turpin, in memory of Humphrey Morison.



The Rebecca Clarke Song Competition

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Information

Requirements

Eligibility

- The Competition is open to professional singer and pianist duos who are based full-time in the UK or the Republic of Ireland.
- There is no upper age limit.

Repertoire

Competitors must perform English song repertoire by British women composers written within the past 150 years. All duos must include works by Rebecca Clarke, selected from a prescribed set list, alongside songs by other British women composers, including at least one living composer in each round.

Semi-Final Performance Requirements:

Public performance at the Royal Over-Seas League, 19 January 2026

- 10–12 minute programme
- At least two songs by Rebecca Clarke from the set list
- At least one song by a living British female composer
- Repertoire from the recorded submission round may be repeated

Live Final Performance requirements:

Public performance at the Royal Over-Seas League, 24 January 2026, 7.00pm

- 17–20 minute programme
- At least three songs by Rebecca Clarke from the set list
- At least one song by a living British female composer
- A maximum of two songs may be repeated from earlier rounds
- (The song by a living composer may be repeated throughout the Competition)

All repertoire must date from post-1875, where dates of composition or publication are known.

Many in the audience will know and love Rebecca Clarke's *The Seal Man*, her most famous and celebrated song - but it is not included in the Competition programme. By setting this restriction, we hope to shine a light on the wider range of Clarke's work and on other British women composers, giving performers and audiences the chance to encounter fresh, lesser-known repertoire and discover new favourites.

Special thanks to...

- Catherine Carby
- Sophie Dand
- Nigel Foster
- The Finzi Trust
- Sophie Gilpin
- The Golsoncott Foundation
- Christopher Johnson
- Natasha Loges
- Friends and family donating in memory of Humphrey Morrison
- Geoff Parkin and ROSL Arts
- Madeleine Pierard
- Hannah Sandison
- Sandra Parr and the RLPO
- Richard Stokes
- The Stanford Society
- Anna Tilbrook
- Adriana Turpin
- Julien Van Mellearts
- Ellly Morison
- Louise Winter
- The Winship Foundation
- The members of the SWAP'ra board of trustees
- All the artists who entered the competition
- The publishers who offered discounts for applicants - Presto Music, Oxford University Press
- All the music colleges, institutions, opera companies and organisations which helped us to publicise the competition.
- and to Kitty Whately, from the rest of the SWAP'ra Team, for her incredible dedication and passion for this project

About SWAP'ra

Supporting Women and Parents in Opera



SWAP'ra was established in 2018 to redress unconscious gender bias and to provide a supportive platform to effect positive change for women and parents in opera. We aim to be a catalyst for change by opening a significant dialogue with artists and administrators at both grassroots and organisational level.

We amplify marginalised voices by: Celebrating and publicising women's professional achievements; Advocating for family-friendly working practices; Challenging the enduring negative assumptions about the compatibility of parenthood and a career, and Providing a friendly and non-judgmental community that offers peer-support and a forum in which to explore practical issues

By focusing on three key pillars of activity: Advocacy and Research; Mentoring and Peer Support, and Performance, our projects over the past few years have included:

- **Forgotten Voices** – a research and performance project with the goal of rediscovering and celebrating women composers of the past – in association with The Oxford Lieder Festival.
- **SWAP'ra Café** – online meetings for Opera parents and carers during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- **The SWAP'ra Retreat 2023** in Association with Glyndebourne Opera, and **The SWAP'ra Retreat 2025** in association with Britten-Pears at Snape Maltings – fully funded long-weekend retreats that provides physical, psychological, and career support to a group of singing mothers with small children.

We are thrilled to begin 2026 with **The Rebecca Clarke Song Competition** – a national competition for classical singers and pianists with no age-limit shining a spotlight on British women composers of the past 150 years, and providing performance opportunity and prizes in support of all genders and all ages.

Looking ahead, we are excited to hold **The SWAP'ra Bootcamp** – a day of career goal setting and performance psychology for all applicants to **The SWAP'ra Retreat's 2023/2025**, and launch the **The SWAP'ra Podcast** – a multiple series podcast on topics such as juggling an operatic career alongside caring responsibilities, singing through pregnancy and after childbirth, and exploring the mindset of women in decision-making roles and positions of power in the industry.

We could not do the work we do without the generosity of certain individual volunteers, donors, funding bodies, and charities – a heart-felt thanks to all of those who have supported our various projects over the past eight years. We are so excited for the future of SWAP'ra, and we couldn't do any of this without that vital support.

If you would like to donate to support our future projects please do so at

<https://www.swap-ra.org/donate>

SWAP'ra Senior Management Team:

Sophie Gilpin
Kitty Whately
Madeleine Pierard
Hannah Sandison

SWAP'ra Board:

Sarah Holford (Chair)
Catherine Carby
Natasha Loges
Mary Miller
Sarah Noble

Our Adjudicators

Sophie Dand
Nigel Foster
Julien Van Mellaerts
Anna Tilbrook
Kitty Whately

Semi-Final Programme

The semi-final is open throughout the afternoon, and audience members are welcome to attend for as much or as little of the event as they wish, coming and going between performances. Please do not leave/enter during a set.

Group 1 Duos - 1:00pm - 2:30pm

Abbie Ward & Ben Cook
Daisy Bevan & Rose McLachlan
Lucy Gibbs & Jack Redman
Jonathan Eyers & Ilan Kurtser
Tiana Oberoi & Rebekah Yinuo Tan*
Archie Inns & Alfred Fardell

Tea Break — 2:30pm–2:55pm

We regret that refreshments cannot be purchased at ROSL as it is a private members club. Water will be available in the foyer, or there is a Pret A Manger 5 minutes walk from here on Piccadilly, as well as other shops and cafes. The Pret postcode is W1J 8HY. Wine will be served on the night of the final round on January 24th.

Group 2 Duos - 2:55pm–4:25pm

Angharad Rowlands and Daniel Peter Silcock
Emily Jennings and Roelof Temmingh
Nancy Holt and Daniel Peter Silcock
Miro Trehearne and Curtis Vetter
Fiona Hymns and Panaretos Kyriatzidis
Peter Edge and Ella O'Neill

Tea Break — 4:25pm–4:55pm

Group 3 Duos - 4:55pm–6:10pm

Sebastian Maclaine & Samuel Mitchell*
Rachel Munro & Jia Ning Ng
Katy Thomson & Rustam Khanmurzin
Gabriella Noble & Jasmin Allpress
Beth Moxon & Christopher Pulley

*pianist not competing for prizes

Abbie Ward (mezzo-soprano) & Ben Cook (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

What Shall I Sing? - Errollyn Wallen

Up-Hill - Rebecca Clarke

Shy One - Rebecca Clarke

The Lake Isle of Innisfree - Muriel Herbert

Programme Note:

What Shall I Sing? This question, pondered by so many singers - and not just classically trained ones - is the transcription of one of Errollyn Wallen's songs. She intended for these to be enjoyed in almost any setting, without the label of style. Wallen describes these works as deeply personal to her, but expresses how important it is that each artist also puts their own stamp on it.

Up-Hill continues this line of simple questioning with a slightly longer stream of questions posed by a naive traveller, all answered by a seemingly wiser being. Clarke helps the singer easily portray these two characters with their own distinct sound-world, although this is almost muddled by the end as the journey progresses.

A shift in gear takes us to two rather sentimental settings of poems by W.B. Yeats. *Shy One* is a simple and tender expression of adoration - no other inferences to the adjective 'shy' here, and Clarke reflects that warmth and fondness in her writing. We then expand on Yeats's wish to take this person to a lake island with a vivid description of *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*, nostalgically set by Muriel Herbert, with an accompaniment of continuous rolling waves.

Final Programme:

June Twilight - Rebecca Clarke

The Clown - from *Three Songs* - Ethel Smyth

The Cloths of Heaven - Dilys Elwyn-Edwards

The Cherry-Blossom Wand - Rebecca Clarke

Down by the Salley Gardens - Rebecca Clarke

#nofilter -from *Musae* - Zoë Martlew

What Shall I Sing? - Errollyn Wallen

Programme Note:

A slowly setting sun brings *June Twilight* (the lesser known of just two Clarke settings of John Masefield's poetry) and stories of night. One them is that of *The Clown* who's stuck behind bars, dancing for his freedom in Ethel Smyth's rather jaunty setting.

A triptych of songs paints the arc of a relationship next: fragility in *The Cloths of Heaven* by Dilys Elwyn-Edwards, foreshadowing in *The Cherry-Blossom Wand* and ultimately fulfilment in *Down by the Salley Gardens*, both wonderfully simple settings by Rebecca Clarke with remarkable counterpoint between the vocal and piano lines.

The regret in *Salley Gardens* is continued, if slightly updated, in our next song, *#nofilter*. Words and music both by Zoë Martlew, it's the first time we've come across emojis in a score!

Ultimately, Errollyn Wallen reminds us that choosing to sing overcomes all these adversities, but... *What Shall I Sing?*

Daisy Bevan (soprano) & Rose McLachlan (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's Day - from *Two Shakespeare Songs* - Cheryl Frances-Hoad

Greeting - Rebecca Clarke

Eight O'clock - Rebecca Clarke

She weeps over Rahoon - Muriel Herbert

Lady Isobel and the Elf Knight -from *Scotch Minstrelsy* - Judith Weir

Programme Note:

We begin our semi final recital with Frances-Hoad's beautiful setting of Ophelia's song from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Woe betide the listener taken in by the whimsy of the song; it is a dire warning of the results of loving too easily.

Clarke's languid setting of Young's *Greeting* follows, evoking yearning for lost love over the vast winds of time. Time is kept by the next song, Clarke's savage setting of Housman's *Eight O'Clock* in which we count the approach of death alongside the hanged man.

Herbert's heartrending setting of Joyce's poem *She weeps over Rahoon* follows. Our love is buried beneath nettles and black mould, where we will one day join him.

But the listener should remember the warning given to us by Frances-Hoad... We seek revenge by way of Judith Weir's *Lady Isobel and the Elf Knight* from her *Scotch Minstrelsy*. We will never be damsels in distress, subject to misery and fated to yearn over our lost love. Never again will we be underestimated by those who seek to take advantage of us!

Final Programme:

A bay in Anglesey -from *Five Betjeman Songs* - Madeleine Dring

Song of a nightclub proprietress -from *Five Betjeman Songs* - Madeleine Dring

June Twilight - Rebecca Clarke

A dream - Rebecca Clarke

Shy one - Rebecca Clarke

I dare not ask a kiss - Muriel Herbert

I think on thee in the night - Muriel Herbert

Lady Isobel and the Elf Knight -from *Scotch Minstrelsy* - Judith Weir

Programme Note:

Whilst there is no theme to this recital as such, each of these songs and composers have been chosen because we felt a connection to them whilst choosing them together. The mark of a great song is its ability to speak to us separately and yet to bring us together.

Rose and I are over a decade apart yet we find so much common ground in these songs. They speak to us of the differences and similarities that can arise between two people; *June Twilight* and *A Bay in Anglesey* put us in mind of the carefree and sunlit uplands of one's twenties. *A Nightclub Proprietress* and *A Dream* put us in the wearied autumn of this woman's life – wearied, vice-ridden yet full of wisdom and experience. *Shy One* and *I dare not ask a Kiss* both put us in mind of the timidity one can feel as a young person, whereas *I think on thee in the night* and *Lady Isobel* speak of experience and tenacity.

These few words are just a glimpse into what can be interpreted from these songs, and the joy of performing them is knowing that the listener hears something completely new and contrasting.

Lucy Gibbs (mezzo-soprano) & Jack Redman (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

Down by the Salley Gardens - Rebecca Clarke

My Grief on the Sea - Joan Trimble

Rubbish at Adultery -from *One Life Stand (2011)* - Cheryl Frances Hoad

Lethe - Rebecca Clarke

Programme Note:

These four songs chart a whirlwind journey of romance versus the reality of love. Rebecca Clarke's setting of W.B. Yeats's famous *Down by the Salley Gardens*, campaigns for love to follow nature's slow course rather than to rush in through desire, which leads to anguish and tears. A simple two-part composition with a string-like piano line highlights the folklore aspects of Yeats's poem.

Irish composer Joan Trimble's song *My Grief on the Sea* showcases the initial torment of two lovers separated by the Atlantic Ocean, leading to the ebb and flow of intense emotion, disorientation and passion. The last stanza paints an imagined vision of tenderness between the pair.

Harsh reality hits in *Rubbish at Adultery*, taken from Cheryl Frances-Hoad's song cycle *One Life Stand*: any passion and fun is running thin between these two lovers as all the narrator's frustrations are vented out loud.

An antidote to their troubles is presented in Clarke's song *Lethe*, drinking the water from one of the rivers of the underworld to erase any memory and leave behind the beauty of ignorance: "*the taker away of pain, the giver back of beauty*". And the cycle of love can begin again.

Final Programme:

Girl's Song - Joan Trimble

The Lost Water - Ina Boyle

The Cloths of Heaven - Rebecca Clarke

Down by the Salley Gardens - Rebecca Clarke

My Grief on the Sea - Joan Trimble

A Dream - Rebecca Clarke

Rubbish at Adultery -from *One Life Stand (2011)* - Cheryl Frances Hoad

Programme Note:

This program centres around the collaboration of Rebecca Clarke and W.B. Yeats: love begins innocently but can succumb to life's troubles.

Girl's Song by Irish composer Joan Trimble depicts W.W. Gibson's idyllic rural setting and brings out the humorous and light-hearted nature of the poem when a girl is infatuated with an oncoming carter. Fellow compatriot Ina Boyle creates a Schubertian waterscape with a rippling piano accompaniment for *The Lost Water*; a mystical allegory for the sacrifice of nature for human endeavour.

This hope runs through Clarke's *The Cloths of Heaven*, keenly felt through extended harmony at the most tender moment of Yeats' poem, "*I have spread my dreams under your feet*".

Down by the Salley Gardens is simpler, calling for love to follow nature's slow course. Trimble's *My Grief on the Sea* depicts the initial torment of two lovers separated by the Atlantic. Clarke's *A Dream* is a spookier affair. It tells of the fleeting nature of beauty as a beautiful woman is found dead, buried beneath two boards of wood under a cypress and yew tree. Finally, reality hits in Cheryl Frances-Hoad *Rubbish at Adultery*: any passion runs thin between these two lovers as the narrator vents her frustrations.

Jonathan Eyers (baritone) & Ilan Kurtser (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

For a garden -for *Everything Grows Extravagantly* - Cheryl Frances Hoad

Return of Spring- Rebecca Clarke

Requies - from *Three Moods of the Sea* - Ethyl Smyth

God made a Tree - Rebecca Clarke

Programme Note:

Commissioned to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Oxford Botanic Gardens, *Everything Grows Extravagantly* celebrates the wonders of gardening. Used as both the opening and closing song of the cycle, *For a Garden* encapsulates the vibrant beauty and inherent contradictions of cultivation, and how this relationship can benefit us as a whole.

This sense of renewal is taken further in one of Rebecca Clarke's earliest songs, *Return of Spring*, which is fervent in its expectation Mother Nature restoring the Earth with youthful colour and joy.

Having given up composition for two years to dedicate herself to the suffragette movement, Ethel Smyth wrote *Three Moods of the Sea* in 1913, and the first song, *Requies*, poses more questions than it answers. Set against gently rolling waves and stormy outbursts, the song becomes a meditation on humanity's place within the natural world, suggesting that there is something older and larger than all life, and that perhaps, by yielding to the gently lapping sea of time, we may find peace.

Written ten years after her penultimate composition, Clarke's *God Made a Tree* is more resoundingly direct in its message: despite humanity's corruption of the natural world, life will ultimately triumph over death.

Final Programme:

Eight o'clock - Rebecca Clarke

Tiger Tiger - Rebecca Clarke

Nightingale -from *Four Songs of Hafez* - Sally Beamish

The Lake of Innisfree - Muriel Herbert

June Twilight - Rebecca Clarke

The Throstle - Maude Valerie White

Programme Note:

One of only two compositions Clarke wrote in 1927, *Eight o'clock* is a gothic setting of Housman's poem of a condemned man, with each discordant bell ringing him closer to his doom. *Tiger, Tiger* was written and constantly revised over a period of five years, and published near the end of Clarke's tumultuous affair with a married man. Outwardly expressionistic, it seems to boil with a ferocious darkness and energy, elucidating Blake's industrial-age fears with her own personal anguish.

Beamish's *Four Songs from Hafez* sets texts by the Sufi poet to "describe separation from, and longing for, the Beloved". In *Nightingale*, we hear the bird singing its repeated phrase, eliciting memories of heartbreak in the listener.

Almost exclusively a composer of songs, Herbert set Yeats' *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* in 1928, which has an unmistakable Englishness in its pastoral positivity. Similarly revelling in the beauty of the natural world, Clarke's *June Twilight*, written two years previously, has an impressionist style, which shows why her writing was often compared to Debussy's.

One of the most successful Victorian songwriters, White was admired by Quilter and Vaughan Williams. Her *The Throstle* is a rapturous embodiment of the joys of life and love.

Tiana Oberoi (soprano) & Rebekah Yinuo Tan* (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

The Cherry-Blossom Wand - Rebecca Clarke
I Feed a Flame from Love and Time - Madeleine Dring
If There Are Angels - Cecilia McDowall
Return of Spring - Rebecca Clarke

Programme Note:

From longing to belonging, heartache to hope, restitution to redemption, love has many colours!

The Cherry Blossom Wand, with text by Anna Wickham, was the first Rebecca Clarke piece I heard. Her intimate writing creates a delicate yet emotionally complex soundscape. Beneath this sonic imagery lies the difficulty of opening oneself to love and the vulnerability of deep emotional connection. Clarke, who studied at the Royal College of Music while Vaughan Williams was teaching there, shows his influence in her harmonies while her voice is uniquely her own.

Madeleine Dring's *I Feed a Flame* follows, with text by J. Dryden from her set *Love and Time*. I chose this song because of its vivid storytelling of passionate longing, and for its fiery intensity and harmonies.

Cecilia McDowall's *If There Are Angels*, with text by Caroline Nazler, was a pleasant discovery for me. Her intricate musical writing around the text serves as a reminder that where there is love, there is hope too.

I conclude with Clarke's *Return of Spring*, text by Ssü-K'ung T'u, where her early fascination with Chinoiserie shines. This piece challenged and pushed my boundaries as a young singer. It celebrates optimism, resilience and rebirth through its expressive writing.

Final Programme:

Fountain Court - Muriel Herbert
June Twilight - Rebecca Clarke
Sevdalino, My Little One - from *Songs from the Exotic* - Judith Weir
Separation - from *Four Night Songs* - Madeleine Dring
Eight O'Clock - Rebecca Clarke
If There Are Angels - Cecilia McDowall
God Made a Tree - Rebecca Clarke

Programme Note:

June, death, and hope - not words one often hears together, yet central to the journey of this programme.

Muriel Herbert's *Fountain Court*, with text by A. Symons, and Rebecca Clarke's *June Twilight*, with text by J. Masefield, set the scene of a gentle summer afternoon fading into evening. I chose these pieces to take the audience on a journey, as if they are present in the scene, experiencing the warmth, stillness, and contemplative beauty of a June day.

This is followed by Judith Weir's *Sevdalino, My Little One*, a lively folk-inspired song in which the speaker calls out to a beloved with playful longing. Madeleine Dring's *Separation*, with text by M. Armstrong, expresses the ache of emotional distance and unfulfilled connections. Dring died before completing this work, and her husband, Roger Lord, helped finish it.

Next, Clarke's *Eight O'Clock* and *Tears*, with texts by A. E. Housman and Wang Seng-Ju, explore human experience, from a man's final moments before execution to grief and reflection of life's fragility.

Finally, Cecilia McDowall's *If There Are Angels* and Clarke's *God Made a Tree* offer hope, showing that even amid loss and human mistakes, beauty, resilience, and renewal can still be found.

*not competing for pianist prizes

Archie Inns (tenor) & Alfred Fardell (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

Mabel Walsh -from *The Magic Lantern Tales* - Cheryl Frances-Hoad

Crabbed Age and Youth Cannot Live - Madeleine Dring

Weep You No More Sad Fountains - Rebecca Clarke

Eight O'Clock - Rebecca Clarke

Programme Note:

The songs presented here describe the passing of time and its effects on the human condition in a variety of ways. *Crabbed Age and Youth* explores, through comic juxtaposition (reflected in major/minor musical juxtaposition), the propriety of love between old and young.

In *Eight O'Clock*, time's passing is presented altogether differently, as the bell motif in the accompaniment propels the narrative forward towards the untimely death of the protagonist. The “*ticking clock*” is presented literally in the piano part of the *Mabel Walsh*. Here, the dual possibilities of time are presented. Time is blind to the tragedies of human experience, as “*life goes by and takes no heed*”. Simultaneously and paradoxically, time can come to an abrupt and permanent halt in relation to one's life, as happened, heartbreakingly, to Mabel's fiancé in 1918.

Dowland's *Weep You No More, Sad Fountains*, has sometimes been interpreted as an elegy to Queen Elizabeth I (who died in the year of publication). As such, it reflects on grief in advance of a death. Clarke deploys a unique combination of Elizabethan and 20th Century harmony here. In this setting, therefore, a multitude of temporal realities are unified within one single artwork.

Final Programme:

Greeting - Rebecca Clarke

Ballad of Harry Holmes -from *The Magic Lantern Tales* - Cheryl Frances-Hoad

Weep You No More Sad Fountains - Rebecca Clarke

The Cherry Blossom Wand - Rebecca Clarke

Shy One - Rebecca Clarke

Programme Note:

This programme explores love sustained without fulfilment, shaped by distance, memory, and loss. As Shakespeare writes in Sonnet 116, love “*is not love which alters when it alteration finds*”: it persists even as circumstance changes.

Rebecca Clarke's *Greeting* opens with love projected across distance, where affection is sustained through imagination rather than physical presence. That same constancy underpins Cheryl Frances-Hoad's *The Ballad of Harry Holmes* from *The Magic Lantern Tales*, in which devotion is directed not towards a person but towards an idea of home — an England of chip shops, rolling hills, and familiar rituals. Marked by the lasting effects of war, Harry's longing becomes nostalgic and aspirational, rooted in memory rather than possibility.

Clarke's *Weep You No More, Sad Fountains* confronts love after death itself. Setting Dowland's text, Clarke offers consolation rather than passion, placing grief at the emotional centre of the programme, where love is tested most severely.

From this still point, the programme turns towards imagined fulfilment. *The Cherry Blossom Wand* presents love as a symbolic offering — fragile and idealised — while *Shy One* closes with a vision of quiet domestic intimacy. Here, love exists not through declaration or possession, but, to return to Shakespeare, it “*bears it out even to the edge of doom*,” enduring beyond time, loss, and change.

Angharad Rowlands (mezzo-soprano) & Daniel Peter Silcock (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

The Cloths of Heaven - Rebecca Clarke

Down By the Salley Gardens - Rebecca Clarke

About Here - Errollyn Wallen

So We'll Go No More A-Roving - Maude Valérie White

Programme Note:

These songs spoke to us because of their shared theme of stillness in which nature becomes a lens for contemplating time, restraint, and human transience.

We open with two Clarke settings of Yeats poems. In *The Cloths of Heaven*, the piano's opening bars weave the imagined cloths before us, culminating in the heartfelt plea, 'I have spread my dreams under your feet, tread softly', a raw vulnerability that resolves to calm. *Down by the Salley Gardens* reveals Clarke's affinity with folk songs. Flowing triplets evoke the gentle passage of time, mirroring the poem's cyclical images of leaves and grass as love and life unfold.

This stillness continues in Errollyn Wallen's *About Here*, for which she also wrote the words. Perched on a hilltop among redwoods and coyotes in Djerassi, California, the speaker waits to see 'a rare moon' or eclipse. In this moment, 'the world behind me pales', and time stands still.

Our programme closes with White's setting of Byron's *So We'll Go No More A-Roving*. Here, we feel the passage of time taking its toll on body and soul, yet the moon endures as a constant source of wonder and reflection.

Final Programme:

June Twilight - Rebecca Clarke

Tiger, Tiger - Rebecca Clarke

Rubbish at Adultery -from *One Life Stand (2011)* - Cheryl Frances Hoad

Ah, Moon of My Delight -from *In a Persian Garden* - Liza Lehmann

God Made a Tree - Rebecca Clarke

Programme Note:

We were drawn to these songs and their texts because they explore the tensions between transience and permanence. Together, they invite reflection on fragile moments of life and the enduring forces around them.

Clarke's *June Twilight* opens with a meditation on ephemerality, capturing a sense of unease on a summer evening as light begins to fade. In *Tiger, Tiger*, the fragility of life shifts from passive observation to vivid embodiment. The finite tiger is contrasted by its maker who exists beyond time. Here, Clarke depicts its dangerous beauty through tightly coiled musical energy as if the tiger's ready to pounce at any moment. This energy is paralleled in Frances-Hoad's *Rubbish at Adultery*, where similarly sharp rhythms and venomous vocal writing expose the futility of a transient and underwhelming affair.

In Lehmann's *Ah, Moon of My Delight*, the speaker pleads with love to conspire with fate to remould a failed relationship yet finds comfort in the permanence of the moon that 'knows no wane'. Finally, Clarke's *God Made a Tree* shifts us toward the spiritual, pointing to another enduring presence beyond finite humanity. The tree, rose and stone shaped, twisted and sealed by human hands gain significance that outlasts their earthly making.

Emily Jennings (soprano) & Roelof Temmingh (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

The Shawl - Dorothy Hogben

Shy One - Rebecca Clarke

Cloths of Heaven - Rebecca Clarke

Lady Isobel and the Elf Knight - from *Scotch Minstrelsy* - Judith Weir

Programme Note:

Written by four different composers and drawn from varied poetic and folk sources, the songs in this programme form a compelling narrative arc centred on women, vulnerability, and inner strength, moving from intimate longing to decisive self-assertion.

In Dorothy Hogben's *The Shawl* (text by Lawrence Atkinson), the narrative opens in a bleak world of shared labour and hardship; yet Hogben imbues the music with a mystical air, as if the threshold to Paradise lies right there, behind a veil. This holiness develops rhapsodically, suggesting love as a transformative force that elevates the beloved beyond the constraints of daily toil.

The two songs by Rebecca Clarke, both settings of W. B. Yeats turn inward. In *Shy One*, the focus is on quiet observation and restrained desire of a woman seen in domestic stillness. *The Cloths of Heaven* deepens this inward turn, replacing observation with direct emotional offering, placing dreams at their beloved's feet.

The programme's narrative reaches its dramatic culmination in *Lady Isobel and the Elf-Knight*, a stark traditional ballad retold with modern urgency. Lady Isobel begins in apparent innocence but ultimately survives through intelligence and resolve, reversing the power dynamic and saving herself.

Final Programme:

Winter Fragments - Jessica Dannheisser

God made a tree - Rebecca Clarke

The cherry-blossom wand - Rebecca Clarke

One that is ever kind - Rebecca Clarke

Why fearest thou - Imogen Holst

Shall I thus ever long - Imogen Holst

O! Let the solid ground - Poldowski

Programme Note:

This programme explores various ways in which we as humans relate to Nature. Jessica Dannheisser's evocative *Winter Fragments* depicts images in Nature in which we see our own (often morose) psyches mirrored.

We then turn to three Songs by Rebecca Clarke. *God made a tree*'s sharp message concerns how we ungratefully lay waste to the natural world God created around us. A slightly ironic link is created by segueing into *The cherry-blossom wand*, as it draws attention to how we use ("pluck") from nature symbols of human love, hinting that the temporal aspect of our emotions is also mirrored in a flower's ephemeral bloom. *One that is ever kind* addresses this issue more directly, perhaps more earnestly, pontificating that what is essential (one's soul) transcends the seasons of age.

Holst's *Why fearest thou* bleakly explores the notion that a thing's inevitable downfall lies within itself, and that this can be seen everywhere in the natural world. *Shall I thus ever long* harks back to the folk-theme of the beloved returning over stormy seas; that our fate is at the mercy of Nature.

We end this programme with the life-affirming *O! Let the solid ground*, which uses strong earthly images conveying its succinct message that finding love is our lives' ultimate goal.

Nancy Holt (mezzo-soprano) & Daniel Silcock (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

The Sick Rose - Emily Hazrati
Cradle song - Rebecca Clarke
Tiger, Tiger - Rebecca Clarke

Programme Note:

All of the songs in today's programme were based on poems by William Blake, often considered an early feminist and someone whose work was largely overlooked during his lifetime but has since risen to prominence. It is, perhaps, not too much of a leap to draw a comparison to Rebecca Clarke who, while internationally renowned as a violist, received a lack of attention for her compositions for a large part of her lifetime.

The first song, *The Sick Rose* by Emily Hazrati, was written in 2020 when she was only 22 years old, as part of a lockdown project called the Quarantine Song Project. The song paints a vivid image of the destruction of innocence and the loss of virginity. I first met Emily while studying at Guildhall, and was immediately captivated by her music. I have since gone on to perform a number of her songs.

The second song is *Cradle Song*. Perhaps the best known setting of this text is by Benjamin Britten, but I am delighted to be able to present Rebecca Clarke's interpretation today, advancing a female perspective of the poem. Our final song, also by Rebecca Clarke, is *Tiger, Tiger*. This powerful text questions how God could create both the innocent lamb and the fierce tiger - symbolising the coexistence of good and evil. - Nancy Holt

Final Programme:

Tiger, Tiger - Rebecca Clarke
June Twilight - Rebecca Clarke
The Clown -from 3 Songs - Ethyl Smyth
A cradle song - Rebecca Clarke
Jabberwocky - Emily Hazrati

Programme Note:

We start with *Tiger, Tiger*, this powerful text questions how God could create both the innocent lamb and the fierce tiger - symbolising the coexistence of good and evil. Followed by *June Twilight*, which offers a contrasting compositional style. This song tells of the peaceful transition from day to night, and concludes with a poignant reflective question.

The third piece is *The Clown* by Ethyl Smyth. Not only an important English composer, but also an active member of the suffragette movement. The words can easily be compared with the suffragettes' fight for freedom - particularly given that Ethyl and Emmeline Pankhurst were great friends and ended up jailed together.

The next piece is *Cradle Song*. Perhaps the best known setting of this text is by Benjamin Britten, but I am delighted to be able to present Rebecca Clarke's interpretation today, advancing a female perspective of the poem.

The final piece this evening is *Jabberwocky* by Emily Hazrati. I first met Emily while studying at Guildhall, and was immediately captivated by her music. It is a wonderful setting of Lewis Carroll's nonsense poem about a hero's quest to slay the fearsome Jabberwock! I thought it a fun piece to end this programme that has themes of fantasy, fairytale and mystery. - Nancy Holt

Miro Treharne (mezzo-soprano) & Curtis Vetter (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

Tiger, Tiger - Rebecca Clarke
Return of Spring - Rebecca Clarke
Violets - Muriel Herbert
Rain - Errollyn Wallen

Programme Note:

Inspired by the beauty and brilliance of nature, these pieces evoke a sense of wonder, awe, and joy which reflect our own fascination with the vastness and diversity of the natural world. Mirroring Blake's existential unease, Clarke uses dissonance and complex rhythms in *Tiger, Tiger* (1929) to create an atmosphere of unnerving tension. This conveys the speaker's emotional conflict between terror and awe of the 'deadly' creature.

The oscillating piano movement within Clarke's *Return of Spring* (1910) depicts a sense of vitality found within Ssü-K'ung T'u's text while simultaneously embodying a harmonic atmosphere evocative of his ancient China. Starting in a 'whispering' manner, the vocal line gradually ascends to a triumphant climax, celebrating the excitement of each year's renewal.

Herbert's *Violets* (1927) evokes the wafting fragrances and delicacy of the flower through the piano. Her syllabic setting of Meredith's poem reflects his simile of 'shy' yet coy human nature revealed through love.

Lastly, dedicated to Wallen's beloved friend Rory Allam, *Rain* (1994) captures the awe felt for unappreciated aspects of nature. With text by the composer, the ballad-style melody contrasted against rich and static harmony creates an arresting soundscape which urges the audience to appreciate the power of stillness.

Final Programme:

Rose kissed me today - from *Two Songs* - Muriel Herbert
The Cherry-Blossom Wand - Rebecca Clarke
Tiger, Tiger - Rebecca Clarke
Rain - Errollyn Wallen
Shy One - Rebecca Clarke
Five Betjeman Songs - Madeleine Dring (1923-1977)
i. *A Bay in Anglesey*
ii. *Song of a Nightclub Proprietress*

Programme Note:

Journeying from youthful flirtation, through an increasing curiosity about the world, to an eventual acceptance of life's journey, this programme explores the growth and maturation of human nature and connection over time. Herbert's *Rose kissed me today* (1919) and Clarke's *The Cherry-Blossom Wand* (1927) depict a playful attitude towards life and romance. Both pieces have a speech-like setting to capture the thrill and impermanence of young love.

Despite their contrasting harmonic languages and tempi, Clarke's *Tiger, Tiger* (1929) and Wallen's *Rain* (1994) convey a shift towards existential questioning while recognising the significance and beauty in mundane elements of life, such as rainfall.

Following the programme's initial frivolity, in Clarke's *Shy One* (1920) we find a sincerity and tenderness of emotion, created by the warmth of harmony and flowing vocal line. This mood of introspection is further explored within *A Bay in Anglesey* (1976). Led by the softly undulating piano, Dring's setting of Betjeman's poem mirrors the motion of the sea and expresses the quiet joy of being alone in nature.

To conclude, Dring's cabaret-style *Song of a Nightclub Proprietress* (1976) offers a humorous yet melancholy reflection of life as the speaker comes to terms with the outcomes of a misspent youth.

Fiona Hymns (soprano) & Panaretos Kyriatzidis (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

Return of Spring - Rebecca Clarke

Shy One - Rebecca Clarke

Business Girls -from *Five Betjeman Songs* - Madeleine Dring

The Pros and the Cons -from *One Life Stand* - Cheryl Frances-Hoad

Like a Drum -from *Crossing Faultlines* - Charlotte Bray

Programme Note:

Performers of art-song inevitably engage with historical portrayals of women that can feel distant from contemporary perspectives. With much of the core art-song repertoire drawn from poetry written by men, women often appear as idealised figures shaped by male desire and imagination. Such representations can feel complicated to perform – and even best avoided.

Assembling a programme for this competition presented an opportunity to confront these tensions. Should a song be judged solely on its artistic merits? And when a text reflects anachronistic social values, is it not the performer's responsibility to seek meaning and truth within the work as a self-contained statement?

The selected songs trace manifestations of the male gaze across time: from ninth-century poet Ssu-K'ung T'u's idealised young maiden, through Yeats's demure domestic femininity in Clarke's *Return of Spring* and *Shy One*, to Betjeman's patronising view of working women in Dring's *Business Girls*. These are answered by two 21st-century works—Frances-Hoad's *The Pros and the Cons* and Bray's *Like a Drum*—which reflect on how the male gaze continues to shape women's experiences.

The intention is not revisionism, but to meet each work on its own terms: uncovering its meaning and locating its universality to create a complete emotional world.

Final Programme:

Greeting - Rebecca Clarke

When I Am Dead My Dearest - Liza Lehmann

Give me my robe -from *Four Shakespeare Songs* - Cecilia McDowall

A Dream - Rebecca Clarke

Separation - from *Four Night Songs* - Madeleine Dring

Weep You No More, Sad Fountains - Rebecca Clarke

Like a Drum - from *Crossing Faultlines* - Charlotte Bray

The Pros and the Cons -from *One Life Stand* - Cheryl Frances-Hoad

Programme Note:

This programme highlights a selection of historic composers who have been unjustly neglected—among them Liza Lehmann, Madeleine Dring, and Rebecca Clarke—alongside selections from larger song cycles by living composers, who deserve wider recognition.

Each song tells the story of a woman at a pivotal moment of crisis or change. In Clarke's vibrant *Greeting*, a woman calls out to the waves, hopeful yet uncertain, poised on the edge of the unknown. Death is explored from contrasting perspectives in the next trio of songs. Starting with a tender personal reflection in Lehmann's emotive *When I am dead, my dearest*. McDowall's dramatic setting of Shakespeare's Cleopatra portrays her suicide not as a defeat but as an ennobling choice, while Clarke's *A Dream* presents an abstract vision, foreshadowing a mysterious unnamed death. Dring's *Separation* And Clarke's *Weep you no more, sad fountains* depict moments of personal crisis, from enduring absence to isolation within intimacy. The programme ends with two contemporary scenarios: Bray's *Like a Drum*, exposing the dark underbelly of workplace power dynamics, and Frances-Hoad's *The Pros and the Cons*, a witty portrait of anxious overthinking.

Together, these works trace a portrait of women navigating vulnerability, resilience, and self-determination across time and circumstance.

Peter Edge (baritone) & Ella O'Neill (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

Tiger, tiger - Rebecca Clarke

White eggs in the bush -from *The Voice of Desire* - Judith Weir

The cloths of heaven - Rebecca Clarke

It was a lover and his lass -from *7 Shakespeare Songs* - Madeleine Dring

Programme Note:

Our programme opens with Clarke's setting of William Blake's *The Tyger*, in which the poet questions how the same God that created the lamb could have created something so wicked as the tiger. The song emerges, as if from the shadows, with a swell of the piano's bass register, before the singer enters on a rising semitone - the same interval that John Williams would later use for his famous *Jaws* theme, and with similarly ominous effect.

This sense of unease continues into our second song, *White eggs in the bush*. The text - Ulli Beier's translation of a Yoruba hunter poem - is written from the perspective of a blue cuckoo, who (in Weir's own words) 'knows that the wars we blunder into will bring destruction'. With *The Cloths of Heaven*, we move from human brutality to vulnerability, as Yeats' text laments that instead of celestial cloths, he has only his dreams to offer his beloved, imploring her to tread carefully on them. The song encapsulates both the fragility and depth of human love. We finish with a lighter, more frivolous love song: Dring's setting of *It was a lover and his lass* from Shakespeare's *As you like it*.

Final Programme:

Weathers - Imogen Holst

God made a tree - Rebecca Clarke

The Man-in-the-Mune -from *A Suite O Bairnsangs (1953)* - Thea Musgrave

Thoughts have wings - Liza Lehmann

Down by the Salley Gardens - Rebecca Clarke

Up-hill - Rebecca Clarke

The Lake Isle of Innisfree - Muriel Herbert

At the wheel - from *Three Songs after Schubert* - Cecilia McDowall

Programme Note:

Weathers contrasts the vibrancy of spring with the sudden hostility of autumn, the protagonist's mood always mirroring the weather around him until, like a migrating bird, he flees homeward. The final chords are echoed almost exactly in the declamatory opening of *God Made a Tree*. Its crashing, bell-like ending gives way to playfulness in *The Man in the Moon* - a 'bairnsong', or 'childsong'. Perhaps the cantankerous man in the moon watches over as thoughts of adoration fly through the sky in *Thoughts have wings*.

We return to Clarke for *Down by the Salley Gardens*, a Yeats poem also set by Hughes, Gurney, Britten and Ireland. 'Salley' is from the Gaelic word for willow, symbolic of the woe our protagonist is feeling. One assumes from his reminiscence about being 'young and foolish' that he is now older, leading us onto *Up-hill*. This song explores the arduousness of life and inevitability of death, but the major tonality seems to suggest death as a source of comfort rather than dread.

Our final two songs transport us waterside. First, *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* - a small uninhabited island where the poet, Yeats, spent his early summers. The singer dreams of escaping urban life for the peace and simplicity of nature, while the gentle rise and fall of the piano evokes the lapping of the lake on the shore. Finally, *At the wheel* - a modern take on 'Mein' from Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin*, immediately recognisable in the constant, cyclical piano texture. Used by Schubert to represent the turning of the millwheel, here it becomes the wheels of a car: '...Schubert through his veins down the motorway'.

Sebastian Maclaine (tenor) & Samuel Mitchell* (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

In the Gloaming - Annie Fortesque Harrison

Shy One - Rebecca Clarke

Down by the Salley Gardens - Rebecca Clarke

Bonnie James Campbell -from *Scotch Minstrelsy* - Judith Weir

Lady Isobel and the Elf-Knight -from *Scotch Minstrelsy* - Judith Weir

Programme Note:

This programme traces the evolution of the art song over the past 150 years, from Victorian sentiment to modern psychological drama.

It opens with *In the Gloaming* by Annie Fortescue Harrison, 1877. Immensely popular in its day, the song is bound to a poignant love story: Harrison, unable to marry the widowed Lord Alfred Hill due to social convention, expressed her feelings by setting Meta Orred's poem. When Hill first heard the song, he was so moved that the couple were married within the year. Its melancholy typifies late-nineteenth-century song.

Next are two songs by Rebecca Clarke. *Shy One*, a setting of W. B. Yeats, was championed by the tenor Gervase Elwes in 1918, helping to establish Clarke's reputation. It portrays an intimate domestic scene, balancing sentimentality with emotional restraint through jazz-inflected harmony. This is followed by *Down by the Salley Gardens* (1924), whose folk-like simplicity and reflective tone reveal the influence of Vaughan Williams.

The programme concludes with two songs from *Scotch Minstrelsy* by Judith Weir, written in 1982. Juxtaposing lyricism with violent narrative, *Bonnie James Campbell* sets an expressive vocal line against a jagged accompaniment, while *Lady Isobel and the Elf-Knight* is reminiscent of the *Erlkönig*— but with a narrative twist.

Final Programme:

The Lake Isle of Innisfree - Muriel Herbert

Down by the Salley Gardens - Rebecca Clarke

Shy One - Rebecca Clarke

Cradle Song - Rebecca Clarke

Mabel Walsh - from *Magic Lantern Tales* - Cheryl Frances-Hoad

Lady Isobel and the Elf-Knight -from *Scotch Minstrelsy* - Judith Weir

Frosty Night - from *Four Night Songs* - Madeleine Dring

Separations - from *Four Night Songs* - Madeleine Dring

Programme Note:

This programme brings together songs reflecting on memory, love, and loss, opening with settings of W. B. Yeats. Muriel Herbert's *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* (1928) establishes a melancholic mood, shaped by the influence of her teachers and advocates, Stanford and Quilter. Two songs by Rebecca Clarke follow: *Down by the Salley Gardens*, (1924) with its folk-like simplicity, and *Shy One*, (1912) whose jazz-inflected harmonies suggest a more modern voice.

Clarke's setting of William Blake's *Cradle Song* (1929) evokes an infant being rocked to sleep through lilting rhythms and extended harmonies. *Mabel Walsh* from Cheryl Frances-Hoad's 2014 song cycle *Magic Lantern Tales* follows: Ian McMillan's text, based on an interview with the 104-year-old Walsh, reflects on a fiancé lost in the First World War and the life they might have shared.

Judith Weir's inventive setting of *Lady Isobel and the Elf Knight* (1982) recalls *Erlkönig*, though here the elf does not prevail. The programme concludes with two songs from Madeleine Dring's 1977 cycle *Night Songs*; *Frosty Night* and *Separations*. Sumptuous harmonies and Poulenc-esque wit are tinged with poignancy: Dring died suddenly while composing *Separations*, which was completed by her husband, Richard Lord. The final line Dring penned was: "Of all things in the world, I love you most."

*not competing for pianist prizes

Rachel Munro (soprano) & Jia Ning Ng (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

Greeting - Rebecca Clarke

A Dream - Rebecca Clarke

Separation - from *4 Night Songs* - Madeleine Dring

First Rehearse -from *Shakespeare Songs* - Cecilia McDowall

Evensong - Liza Lehmann

Programme Note:

Grief is something we all encounter in our lives, yet it is often difficult to articulate. For us, art offers a space to express what resists language, and song in particular allows emotion, text, and sound to meet in ways that feel deeply human. This programme grows from our shared desire to explore grief in its many forms, and to offer comfort to those left behind.

From a narrative perspective, the first part of the programme presents grief as it is first felt: intimate, unsettled, and deeply personal. These opening songs give voice to loss through memory, distance, and longing, allowing sorrow to exist without resolution. *First Rehearse* shifts the emotional focus, embodying a figure of strength and warmth—a matriarch whose wit, authority, and vulnerability provide reassurance in moments of grief. The programme closes with *Evensong*, shaped as a prayer that turns outward, asking for peace and solace for those who remain.

As a duo, we love telling stories through song and creating programmes with clear narrative flow that speak directly to our audience. Through this recital, we hope to offer not answers, but companionship, using music to inspire resilience, and offer quiet consolation.

Final Programme:

Down by the Salley Gardens - Rebecca Clarke

One that is ever kind - Rebecca Clarke

Moonrise - from *The Moon and I* - Rhian Samuel

The Wren - from *Bird Songs* - Liza Lehmann

Weep You No More, Sad Fountains - Rebecca Clarke

Come, oh Come my Life's Delight - Rebecca Clarke

The Lily of a Day - Liza Lehmann

Programme Note:

Loneliness can take many forms: isolation born of past choices, distance, stubbornness, or the devotion we pour into our art. We chose these songs because they speak to those inward moments, where thoughts loop, frustration simmers, and longing quietly gathers. They allow solitude to be felt honestly, through stillness, repetition, and the reflective lyricism of the text, without needing to be dramatised.

The Wren interrupts this inward gaze. Its song offers a small, living presence beyond our own solitude, reminding us of perspective and renewal. Listening and echoing it, we begin to sense the world beyond our own thoughts. In this simple act of attention, we glimpse the possibility of connection, inspiration, and the bigger picture beyond our inner focus.

The final songs flow with reflection and reassurance. They celebrate the moments we can hold, the connections we can nurture, and the beauty that exists even in fleeting experiences. Through this recital, we hope to hold space for both solitude and recognition, offering a quiet reminder that even in isolation, we are not alone.

Katy Thomson (soprano)

& Rustam Khanmurzin (pianist)

Semi-final Programme:

Greeting - Rebecca Clarke
The Weathers - Imogen Holst
June Twilight - Rebecca Clarke
The Crimson Rose - Muriel Herbert
Mother Love - Emily Hazrati

Programme Note:

Our programme is a series of dreams and incantations, deeply rooted in the natural world. Full of love and longing, each song is a gift, a message, a wish. The final song is perhaps better described as a dark night of the soul.

We worked with Emily Hazrati and Venetia Bridges on *Mother Love*, commissioned by Oxford Song for our Young Artist showcase recital in 2023, the programme for which was based on the Grimm fairytale *The Girl With No Hands*. This song is inspired by the point in the story when the King is called to war in a far-away land. He leaves the Queen and new child in the care of his Mother. But the Devil is waiting in the wings, and intercepts letters between the King and his Mother. In the letters, the “King” (the Devil) demands that the Mother kill the Queen and the child. The Mother refuses. The “King” (the Devil) insists, adding that she must cut out the Queen’s tongue as proof. Still, the Mother refuses. She sends the Queen and her child into the forest, assuring her of the compassion of the woodspeople. Mothers’ intuition.

Final Programme:

A dream - Rebecca Clarke
God made a tree - Rebecca Clarke
The Rights of Woman - Katy Lavinia Cooper
The Cloths of Heaven - Rebecca Clarke
Constellations - Yshani Perinpanayagam
Mother Love - Emily Hazrati
Kind Regards - Lillie Harris

Programme Note:

Inspired by dreams and incantations, this programme is a meditation on matriarchy, musical and otherwise. Covering topics of love, loss, faith, power and consent, these rich texts contain whole worlds of experience. They feel very much like conversations between mothers, daughters and sisters, whether blood relation or chosen family, across centuries. Both ageless and apposite. They are the conversations that we have had with the matriarchs and sisters in our lives. Discussing hopes, dreams and finding solace through the nightmares.

Song is such a powerful form a story-telling. We often ask, whose story do we want to tell? How can we spark conversations, provoke critical thinking? *Kind Regards*, Lillie Harris’ setting of Laura Attridge’s text, is a disarmingly humorous exploration of agency and consent in an everyday setting. We juxtapose this with a setting of Robert Burns, whose relationship with women was deeply questionable, a “womanizer” at best. How many of those women would have wanted to write the email being drafted in *Kind Regards*? How many of us have wanted to spread the “cloths of heaven” around those we love, to rise from a stone tomb?

Gabriella Noble (mezzo-soprano) **& Jasmin Allpress (pianist)**

Semi-final Programme:

Semi-Final programme title: 'Nature and Mankind'

God Made a Tree - Rebecca Clarke

'The Braes of Yarrow' - *Scotch Minstrelsy* - Judith Weir

The Cherry-blossom Wand - Rebecca Clarke

Tewkesbury Road - from *Two Songs* - Muriel Herbert

Epilogue: All the Harbour Could Not Hold - from *Isola* - Electra Perivolaris

Programme Note:

We are fascinated by how creators use the natural world to study human nature. *God Made a Tree* describes how, through misguided manipulation of the gifts of nature and of his own cerebral gifts, man rejects a creator God. Clarke's setting enhances the text's rhetoric through speech rhythms and 'senza espressione' markings, which convey the severity of man's error. An equally ambivalent portrayal of nature is offered in *The Braes of Yarrow*, where the landscape embodies the unrest of the persona, who dreams of their lover returning home 'headless'. With an angular melody and a restless ever-changing metre, Weir stokes the atmosphere of ill-ease.

The next two works capture the joy and enchantment of nature, which is used to manipulate the beloved into a short-lived liaison in *The Cherry-blossom Tree*. Clarke's modal harmony creates a fairy-tale atmosphere, which is followed by a virtuosic expression of unadorned joy in the opening piano flourish of Herbert's *Tewkesbury Road*. Our closing song - the Epilogue from Electra Perivolaris' *Isola* - explores the composer's diasporic identity and its connectedness to the natural landscape. We loved the aesthetic leanness of Electra's music and the influence of landscape photography on the writer-photographer's words.

Final Programme:

Final programme title: 'The Psyche'

Song of a Nightclub Proprietress - from *Five Betjeman Songs* - Madeleine Dring

Eight O'Clock - Rebecca Clarke

#nofilter - from *Musae* - Zoë Martlew

Tiger, Tiger - Rebecca Clarke

Up-Hill - Rebecca Clarke

My Feet May Take a Little While - Errollyn Wallen

Programme Note:

Our programme explores multiple facets of the psyche, beginning with the drunken, disturbed voice of Madeleine Dring's nightclub proprietress. There is a proximity to death here that returns in Rebecca Clarke's *Eight o'clock*, which plays on the onomatopoeic striking of the clock and the inescapable ticking of time.

We continue with *#nofilter* (from *Musae*) by Zoë Martlew, which follows a self-harming teenager's panicked response to an unflattering social-media post. One of five portraits of female archetypes, the song simultaneously comments on the superficiality of the digital world while exploring ideas of belonging, and the actions we take to be seen and accepted.

The next two songs by Rebecca Clarke share a sense of religious disquiet. *Tiger Tiger*, based on William Blake's poem, questions the existence of a Creator who could fashion such evil - He who created the lamb. *Uphill* takes the form of a question-and-answer dialogue, offering a meditation on life's struggles, uncertainty and faith, and ultimately expresses the idea of a collective place of rest. We conclude with Errollyn Wallen's *My Feet May Take a Little While*, which leaves us with an overarching sense of acceptance: finding peace in the acknowledgement of life as an unpredictable journey of wandering.

Beth Moxon (Mezzo-soprano) **& Christopher Pulleyn (Pianist)**

Semi-final Programme:

Infant Joy - Rebecca Clarke

Mister Sun - Avril Coleridge-Taylor

Constellations - Yshani Perinpanayagam

Edge - from *woman.life.song* - Judith Weir

The Cloths of Heaven - Rebecca Clarke

Programme Note:

This programme traces a journey through the stages of growing up as a girl, moving from childhood innocence to emotional awareness and maturity. Through these five songs we're presented with a sequence of perspectives shaped by curiosity, reflection, and transition. The journey begins with *Infant Joy* by Rebecca Clarke, a tender portrayal of early childhood, where simplicity and warmth suggest a world untouched by doubt. This sense of youthful brightness continues in *Mister Sun* by Avril Coleridge-Taylor, whose playful energy and radiant colour evoke imagination, freedom, and discovery.

As the programme deepens, *Constellations* by Yshani Perinpanayagam reflects adolescence as a period of introspection and questioning. Its expansive textures suggest looking outward to understand one's place within a vast and unfamiliar world.

At the emotional centre of the programme lies *Edge* by Judith Weir, which captures the fragile threshold between innocence and maturity. Moments of clarity are shadowed by unease, reflecting the loss of childhood certainty and the tension of transition. The programme concludes with *The Cloths of Heaven*, returning to Clarke for an intimate expression of emotional vulnerability and desire, marking the arrival of emotional maturity.

Final Programme:

The Lost Nightingale - Muriel Herbert

June Twilight - Rebecca Clarke

Green Rain - Joan Trimble

Close Season - from *Five Armitage Songs* - Alice Beckwith

In the Chill - from *One Life Stand* - Cheryl Frances-Hoad

Shy One - Rebecca Clarke

The Cherry-Blossom Wand - Rebecca Clarke

Renouncement - Muriel Herbert

Programme Note:

This programme explores how women are perceived, imagined, and represented in music, as expressed through the voices of women composers. Rather than idealised muses or passive figures, the women portrayed here are complex, inward, resilient, and self-aware, occupying a wide emotional and expressive spectrum. The programme opens and closes with songs by Muriel Herbert. *The Lost Nightingale* presents a fragile, almost silenced figure, while *Renouncement* offers a more resolute response shaped by emotional self-possession and resolve.

Several works explore states of quiet reflection. *June Twilight* and *Shy One* by Rebecca Clarke, alongside *Green Rain* by Joan Trimble, portray female impressions of emotional stillness, where longing, hesitation, and anticipation remain largely unspoken. *The Cherry-Blossom Wand* introduces a lighter, playful femininity underpinned by wit and control.

The fragility of female experience is explored through the personification of nature in *Close Season* by Alice Beckwith. Set against this, *In the Chill* by Cheryl Frances-Hoad moves into starker emotional territory, where vulnerability is expressed with precision and restraint. Collectively, these songs celebrate female presence and representation through a rich spectrum of narratives, voices, images and perspectives.

Artist Biographies

Jasmin Allpress - Pianist

Jasmin Allpress presents a modern and insightful take on the classical music scene. She has appeared at festivals such as the Leeds Chamber Festival, Festival dei Giovani musicisti di Mondovi and Lake Summer Music, and performed in venues including Wigmore Hall and Viennese Hall, Salzburg.



She has been awarded multiple prizes including the Patricia Cunliffe award, first prize in the Fergal O'Mahony competition and with the Larisa Piano Trio holds the prestigious St James's Prize, the Christopher Rowland Chamber Music Ensemble of the Year Award and the Weil Prize. She particularly enjoys collaborating with singers and as such received the Alexander Young Song Accompaniment prize at the Royal Northern College of Music.

Jasmin grew up in Bath and at the age of 16 she continued her studies at Chetham's School of Music. In 2016 she took up a place on the 'joint course' at the Royal Northern College of Music and the University of Manchester. After 7 years in Manchester she moved to London and is now working professionally, having completed a Masters at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where she held a Guildhall School Scholarship and a Help Musicians Postgraduate Award.

Daisy Bevan - Soprano



Daisy Bevan's career spans opera, concert performance & international touring. She was awarded a scholarship to study for her Master's degree at the Royal Northern College of Music where she trained with Sara Fulgoni & Mary Plazas. At RNCM she won the Dame Eva Turner Award in both 2020 and 2021, received generous support from the A&N Kendall & Dobie awards, & was awarded First Prize in the Frederic Cox Competition.

At RNCM Opera, Bevan performed the roles of Tina in Jonathan Dove's Flight (2021), Primadonna in Strauss's Ariadne auf Naxos (2021), & Countess Almaviva in Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro (2022). Her wider performance experience includes Bach's Weihnachts-Oratorium at Sydney Opera House, Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro at Cadogan Hall with the Mozartists, & Britten's Peter Grimes at Endellion Festival.

Recent highlights include Handel's Neun Deutsche Arien with Rachel Podger, Schubert's Shepherd on the Rock with Julian Bliss, and Messiah at the Sheldonian with the London Mozart Players. She also sings with the Bevan Family Consort, whose third Signum Records album has recently been released. Daisy is currently touring worldwide as the lead soloist in Mike Oldfield's Tubular Bells tour & was a 2025 Alvarez Emerging Artist at Garsington Opera.

Ben Cook - Pianist

Ben Cook is a London-based accompanist, recently graduated from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with a Masters degree and Concert Recital Diploma in Piano Accompaniment. He studied with Pamela Lidiard and Caroline Palmer. He has a passion for working with singers, especially within the highly varied repertoire of English art song.



Lunchtime recitals are Ben's main musical outlet, and recent venues include St. James's Piccadilly, St. George's Hannover Square, St Stephen's Walbrook and St. Mary le Strand - no chore for a fan of church architecture! He has been delighted to, on occasion, perform alongside singers Mark Padmore and Roderick Williams. He is the proud accompanist for Côr y Boro (The Borough Welsh Choir) and is often glad that playing the piano or organ excuses him from sight-singing hymns in Welsh... Together, Ben and Abbie very much enjoy exploring contemporary song cycles, and last year presented the world premiere of Paul Carr's *Old-Fashioned Love Songs*. When not at the piano, Ben is a full-time stage manager for several of the UK's leading opera companies.

Peter Edge - Baritone



Shropshire-born baritone Peter Edge is a Rising Star of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (2025–27) and Rising Star of Voice at the Edinburgh International Festival (2025), as well as a finalist in the 2025 London Handel Festival Singing Competition. He has appeared as a principal artist with many of the UK's leading opera companies, including English National Opera, English Touring Opera, The Grange Festival, Longborough Festival Opera, Opera North, and the Royal Ballet and Opera. A graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music (First Class Honours) and the Royal College of Music (Distinction), Peter has performed major roles such as Count Almaviva in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Guglielmo in Mozart's *Cosi Fan Tutte*, Ned Keene in Britten's *Peter Grimes*, and Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème*.

This season, Peter makes his Asian debut, performing Bach's *B Minor Mass* and Mozart's *Requiem* with the Constellation Choir and Orchestra, conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, his Royal Festival Hall debut performing Christus and Bass in Bach's *Johannes Passion* with the OAE and Johanna Soller, and, later in the year, Peter makes his European operatic debut as Nicandro in Handel's *Atalanta* at the Innsbrucker Festwochen Der Alten Musik.

Jonathan Eyers - Baritone

Jonathan Eyers is a baritone from the Bay of Plenty, New Zealand, based in London, UK. Recent operatic experience includes Fiorello II barbiere di Siviglia (Glyndebourne), King Eight Songs for a Mad King (MadSong Ensemble), Masetto Don Giovanni (Waterperry), Pirate King The Pirates of Penzance (Tarantara UK Tour), Papageno Die Zauberflöte (Nevill Holt Festival), Figaro II barbiere di Siviglia (Charles Court Opera), Perückenmacher and Harlekin (cover) Ariadne auf Naxos (Garsington Opera), Captain Corcoran (cover) HMS Pinafore (English National Opera), Don Lopes L'isola d'Alcina and Bonafede II mondo della luna (Bampton Classical Opera).



Jonathan was a finalist and prizewinner at the 2025 Cesti Competition, and was awarded Third Prize at the 2024 Wigmore Hall/Bollinger International Song Competition. He is an Oxford Song Young Artist, a City Music Foundation Artist, a Britten-Pears Young Artist, and a founding member of Whānau Voices. He has performed at the Oxford International Song, London Song, Aldeburgh, Glasperlenspiel, and Edinburgh International Festivals. Jonathan trained as a Young Artist on the Global Talent Programme at the National Opera Studio, and graduated from Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the University of Waikato.

Alfred Fardell - Pianist

Alfred Fardell is a pianist based in London, specialising in song and chamber music. He holds the Michael Gilsenan Award at the Royal Academy of Music where he studies Ensemble Piano under James Baillieu and Anna Tilbrook. Before joining the Academy, Alfred gained a First Class degree in Music from St Peter's College, Oxford. Competition success has included the Dorothy Richardson English Song Prize, a special prize in the Mendl-Schrama awards, and winning all the available prizes for song accompaniment at the Academy in his first year. He is a Samling Artist and his studies are supported by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.



Lucy Gibbs - Soprano



In 2024, British mezzo-soprano, Lucy Gibbs, made her international operatic debut as 'Diane' in Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* for Opera Ballet Vlaanderen. The same year, she performed with LaGeste in *Vake Poes; of hoe God verdween* at the Thalia Theater, Hamburg, directed by Lisaboa Houbrechts. Her recent performances include 'L'enfant' in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* for Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, 'Maman', 'La tasse chinoise', and 'La libellule' in the same opera for Festival Ravel, and 'Flora' in Dove's *The Enchanted Pig* with the International Opera Academy and SPECTRA ensemble.

Alongside her performances, Lucy has participated in masterclasses with Paul Daniel, Sasha Cooke, Anne Sophie von Otter, Dorothea Röschmann, and Véronique Gens. Alongside pianist Daniel Adipradhana, Lucy was a SongEasel young artist; a project to perform song in south-east London, curated by Jocelyn Freeman, and a 'Stipendiatin' at the 6. Internationale Opernwerkstatt Waiblingen.

After reading Music at Merton College, Oxford, Lucy graduated with distinction from the Royal College of Music in London, where she was gratefully supported by the Robert Lancaster scholarship and the Josephine Baker Trust. She graduated this year as a young artist from the International Opera Academy in Ghent.

Nancy Holt - Mezzo-soprano

Mezzo-soprano Nancy Holt recently completed the National Opera Studio 2024-25, having previously graduated from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama Opera Course. She is a 2024/25 Oxford International Song Festival Young Artist, a Britten Pears Young Artist 2025/26, Opera Prelude Young Artist 2026 and an Edinburgh International Festival Rising Star of Voice 2025. Nancy is the recipient of the 2024/25 Musicians' Company Salomon Seelig Award through which she made her debut recital at the Wigmore Hall in April. She won second prize at The Ashburnham English Song Awards 2025. She previously performed a Britten Pears Red House Recital: Britten's Birthday, and recently gave the recital 'Summer Nights' at the Oxford International Song Festival 2025 in October.

This season, Nancy made her debut at The Royal Ballet and Opera as Guest Singer in *Like Water for Chocolate*. She is also covering the role of Hebe in *HMS Pinafore* at English National Opera. Other recent highlights include being awarded the Simon Sandbach Award for her time at Garsington Opera 2024 as an Alvarez Young Artist. Nancy studies with John Evans and is also a trained dancer, having studied ballet, modern, and tap dance for over ten years.



Fiona Hymns - Soprano

Fiona has performed for companies including Grange Park Opera, Buxton Festival, Longborough Festival Opera and Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. Notable roles include Santuzza/Nedda (Verismo, Opera on Location) Adina (*L'Elisir d'Amore*, St Paul's Opera) Alcina (*Alcina*, Two Moors Festival), Countess Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*, Beechwood Opera) and Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*, City Music Services). In 2026 she will sing Rosita in *In Five Years' Time*, a new short opera by Edward Lambert, for The Music Troupe, and also Manon in *Manon Lescaut* for Rose Opera.

Fiona is in demand as a concert soloist. Recent performances include Handel *Dixit Dominus* and Alexander's Feast with London Lawyers Music, Rutter *Requiem* with the Purbeck Arts Club Choir and Faure *Requiem* with London Medical Orchestra. She was a Britten-Pears Young Artist studying Wolf Lieder and Britten Song, and has performed in masterclasses with international singers, most recently David Butt Philip and Rosalind Plowright.

Archie Inns - Tenor

Archie Inns is a tenor originally from Scotland and is currently in his first year studying for a Master's in Vocal Performance at the Royal College of Music, where he is supported in full by the Drapers' de Turckheim Scholarship and Mason Award. Alongside this, Archie is supported by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, the Sir James Caird Trust, who awarded him the 2025 Wiseman Prize, the Elizabeth Izatt Trust, and the Kathleen Trust. At the Royal College of Music, Archie is taught by Miranda Wright and Nicky Spence. In the sphere of song, Archie made his debut at the Oxford International Song Festival in 2024 alongside James Gilchrist and has performed at the Holywell Music Room. He is the recipient of the Luxon Amit Folkestone-on-Song Bursary Award and Song Prize, the Mendl-Schrama Prize, the Oxford and Cambridge Club Music Prize, and the Dorothy Richardson English Song Prize. Archie holds a degree in Philosophy and Theology from Christ Church, Oxford, where he was a Choral Scholar, and he spent his gap year singing at St John's College, Cambridge under Andrew Nethsingha.



Emily Jennings - Soprano

Emily is a Britten Pears Young Artist (Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Award-holder), a SongEasel Young Artist, a Cincinnati Song Initiative Fellow and graduate of the RCM London, where she was awarded first prize in the Brooks Van Der Pump English Song Competition. She was awarded 2nd Prize in the 2024 Association of English Singers and Speakers' English Song Competition and 2nd Prize in the 2024 London Choral Sinfonia's Leach Award for Singing Competition. Emily was also selected to perform in the live rounds of the 2024 Wigmore Hall International Song competition.

Emily is a passionate performer of art song with a particular fondness for folksongs and storytelling. She has performed at Wigmore Hall, the Britten Studio at Snape Maltings and the Cadogan Hall amongst many of the UK's celebrated recital platforms. Emily has a long love of traditional folk music and frequently performs at some of the most exciting UK contemporary arts festivals including Glastonbury. On the concert platform Emily has performed with many of the UK's premier ensembles including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Academy of Ancient Music and the Britten Sinfonia as part of events such as the BBC Proms, the Salzburger Festspiele and the Aldeburgh Festival.

Rustam Khanmurzin - Pianist

Rustam Khanmurzin is a rising pianist who is gaining recognition as both a soloist and collaborative artist across Eurasia. He was previously a Junior Fellow at the Royal College of Music, and a Young Artist of The Musicians' Company of the City of London. Rustam has performed at major international festivals, including the El Lied Festival Victoria de los Ángeles, MusicFest Perugia, Festival d'Auvers-sur-Oise, Rheingau Musik Festival, Oxford Song Festival, St Endellion Festival in Cornwall. He has appeared on Radio France Musique and released two CDs with the Melodiya label.



Ilan Kurtser - Pianist



Ilan Kurtser is a Britten-Pears Young Artist, Samling Artist and Leeds Lieder Young Artist.

He won numerous prizes in competitions in the UK and abroad, including First Prize at the Copenhagen International Lied Duo Competition, Ferrier Awards Accompanist Prize, Bampton Opera Competition Accompanist Prize and Richard Lewis/Jean Shanks Prize. Ilan was a finalist at the Wigmore Hall International Song Competition 2024 together with baritone Jonathan Evers. Ilan was a Bicentenary Scholar at the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied Piano Accompaniment with Michael Dussek, James Baillieu and Malcolm Martineau.

Concert highlights have included recitals with Gweneth Ann Rand and Stephen Whitford at the Aldeburgh Festival, violist Paul Silverthorne in Museo del Violino in Cremona, Italy, mezzo-soprano Helen Charlston in Leeds Lieder Festival and performances at Wigmore Hall, International Lied Festival Zeist, Sage Gateshead, Leeds Victoria Hall and Jerusalem Music Centre. Ilan was a Fellow at the Royal Academy of Music where he curated over 20 concerts for the Academy Song Circle and Academy Voices concert series, teaching and coaching singers and pianists. Ilan is currently a répétiteur for the Royal Academy Opera.

Panaretos Kyriatzidis - Pianist

London-based pianist and conductor Panaretos Kyriatzidis is in demand as a collaborative performer, vocal coach and musical director. Panaretos has won the Gerald Moore Award, Emmy Destinn Awards Accompanist Prize and the London Song Festival duo prize, and has been a Britten Pears and Oxford Lieder young artist.

Panaretos completed his postgraduate studies with distinction at Trinity Laban. He has performed extensively across the UK and broadcast live on BBC Radio 3. His work in opera has garnered high praise, as well as an Olivier Award nomination and two Off West End Awards (Offies) for best opera production. He is co-founder and musical director of The Opera Makers. Panaretos (aka Pan) is a vocal coach at Trinity Laban and head of opera studies at Morley College. He hails from the Greek island of Thasos, holds a BA in Law and is an avid food lover.



Sebastian Maclaine - Tenor



Australian/British tenor Sebastian Maclaine completed his Bachelor of Music at the Queensland Conservatorium, appearing in numerous productions, including the title role in Britten's *Albert Herring*. He sang with The Ten Tenors, touring 16 countries and recording multiple albums.

He received an ABRSM scholarship to study at the Royal Northern College of Music, graduating with a Master of Music. The following year he made his Glyndebourne Festival debut, singing in the chorus and understudying the High Priest in *Saul*, before joining Theater für Niedersachsen in Hildesheim as a soloist and ensemble member.

After returning to Australia in 2020, he performed with Opera Queensland and joined its Young Artist Program, singing Gastone in *La traviata*. He also appeared with the Lisa Gasteen National Opera Program as Bastian (*Der Häusliche Krieg*) and Adolph (*Die Opernprobe*). Recent highlights include Bach cantatas with Ensemble Correspondances at the Royal Chapel of Versailles, *Aeneas* in *Dido and Aeneas*, and soloist and ensemble roles in Pinchgut Opera's *The Fairy Queen* and *Messiah*. Sebastian performs regularly with leading UK ensembles including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The Early Opera Company, and the Academy of Ancient Music.

Rose McLachlan - Pianist

Rose McLachlan comes from a family of musicians and began piano lessons with her father at the age of seven. She studied at Chetham's School of Music with Helen Krizos before entering the Royal Northern College of Music in 2020, and now continues her studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Charles Owen, Martin Roscoe and Ronan O'Hora.

Rose performs regularly as a soloist with orchestra. She made her debut aged 13 at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and has since appeared with the BBC Concert Orchestra under Barry Wordsworth, broadcast twice on BBC Radio 3, and with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra as winner of the PianoTexas Festival concerto competition. Recent highlights include Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals* with the Hallé at the Bridgewater Hall, and a 2024 performance of Mozart's Triple Concerto alongside Jean-Efflam Bavouzet and Andrea Nemecz, broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and to be released on the Chandos label. A prizewinner at numerous national and international competitions, Rose has received major awards including the Scottish International Youth Prize, the Yamaha Prize (EPTA UK), the RNCM Chopin Prize and the Musicians' Company Silver Medal. Her recordings appear on Divine Art and Naxos, and she is supported by The Caird Trust, the Leverhulme Trust and Talent Unlimited.



Samuel Mitchell - Pianist



Samuel Mitchell is an Australian pianist based in Oxford. He has performed throughout Europe, Australia, the USA, Asia, and Africa, with broadcasts on BBC Radio 3, ABC Classic FM, and New York's WNYC. A founding member of the contemporary music collective Nonsemble, Samuel has appeared at TEDx and been featured twice on the *I Care if You Listen* mixtape. A committed advocate for new music, he has given national and world premieres by composers including Connor D'Netto, Chris Perren, Nico Muhly, and Piers Connor Kennedy, and regularly performs in the Dots+Loops series and with Orchestra VOX. Highlights include John Adams' *Phrygian Gates* at MONA, opening the 2019 Extended Play Festival at Sydney's City Recital Hall, and a two-piano recital at the Somerville Festival of Piano with Ian Tindale.

As a singer, he has performed with Tenebrae, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Ex Cathedra, the Norwegian Soloists' Choir, and The Song Company. Samuel is also a sought-after educator, teaching piano at St Helen and St Katharine and Radley College, and is an examiner for the ABRSM. He holds First-Class Honours and an MPhil from the University of Queensland, where his award-winning thesis focused on Benjamin Britten.

Beth Moxon - Mezzo-soprano

Yorkshire born mezzo soprano, Beth is a Samling Artist who studied at the Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music and the National Opera Studio. Since then she has sung roles in the UK and abroad including Penelope Il ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria at Opéra de Lyon and Opéra de Vichy, the title role in L'enfant et les sortilèges at Opéra de Lyon and Royal Opera House Muscat and in Hannah Kendall's The Knife of Dawn at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden where she has most recently covered the roles of Linda and Michelle in the world premier of Turnage's Festen.



On the concert platform, performances have included recitals at the Wigmore Hall and Salle Cortot in Paris, Vaughan Williams' Serenade to Music in the Throne Room of Buckingham Palace, Bach's St Matthew Passion in Southwark and Coventry Cathedrals, Handel's Messiah in Lincoln Cathedral, Elgar's The Music Makers in Guildford and Sheffield Cathedrals, Verdi's Requiem in Gloucester Cathedral and Mozart's Requiem at King's College Cambridge and Bristol Beacon. Upcoming engagements include Tessa in The Gondoliers for English Touring Opera, Britten's Phaedra with Skipton Camerata, Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle with Sussex Chorus, Wagner's Wesendonck Lieder recital at Howden Minster.

Rachel Munro - Soprano



Award-winning Scottish soprano Rachel Munro graduated with a Master of Music from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and a degree in Mathematics from the University of St Andrews, and currently studies with Wilma MacDougall. She recently won first prize at the prestigious North Aldborough New Voices Singing Competition, and was also a prize winner in the RCS's 2025 Governor's Recital, and Ye Cronies Opera Competitions.

During her time in St. Andrews she performed such roles as Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Mary Crawford (*Mansfield Park*) and Mélisande (*Pelléas and Mélisande*); upon graduating she was awarded the Cedric Thorpe Davie Prize for outstanding contribution to the musical life of the University. Further roles performed include: Lay Sister (*Suor Angelica*, Opera Bohemia 2025), Rosalinda (*Die Fledermaus*, Fife Opera 2024), Musetta (*La Bohème*, Fife Opera 2025), and cover Queen of the Night (*Die Zauberflöte*, RCS 2025). Upcoming solo engagements include, Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, as well as recitals at the 2026 Leeds International and North Aldborough Festivals.

Jia Ning Ng - Pianist

Singaporean pianist Jia Ning Ng is a concert and collaborative pianist based in Glasgow, where she is a Staff Accompanist at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS). A graduate of RCS with an Artist Diploma, Masters, and First-Class Honours Bachelor's in Piano Performance, she was appointed to the faculty shortly after completing her studies. In 2024, she was endorsed by Arts Council England under the Global Talent visa as an exceptional artist.



Jia Ning has performed extensively across Scotland and the UK, including a 2023 Scottish tour as part of the Governor's Recital Prize for Keyboard. She made her debut with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra after winning the RCS Concerto Competition and has received multiple accolades, such as the Philip Halstead Prize and Walcer Recital Prize. She is supported by the Inches Carr Trust and Craxton Memorial Trust. An active collaborative pianist, Jia Ning specializes in art song and chamber music. As a young artist in the Wigmore Hall French Song Exchange programme, she collaborated with esteemed figures like Dame Felicity Lott and François Le Roux, with performances at the Wigmore Hall and Salle Cortot in 2025. Together with soprano Rachel Munro, she has won international competitions and performs widely, including at the Oxford International Song Festival.



Gabriella Noble - Mezzo-soprano

Gabriella is a Mezzo-soprano from London. Following a career as an ensemble singer and conductor, which included a permanent post with the Flemish Radio Choir and a conducting post at London's St Martin-In-The-Fields, she decided to pursue a career as a soloist. Concert highlights include performing Mahler's Fourth Symphony at the Beijing Music Festival and oratorio appearances with The London Mozart Players (B Minor Mass) and Brandenburg Sinfonia. She was grateful to develop her craft as a recitalist on the Wigmore French Song Exchange, which culminated with appearances at Salle Cortot in Paris and at the Wigmore Hall in 2024.

Gabriella trained at the Guildhall opera school, where she is now in her final year. Last summer, she made her role debut as Cherubino with the Cumbria Opera Festival. She returns to the role in Oxford Opera's autumn production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. Gabriella loves performing early music and toured Europe performing Bach as a recipient of the Salvat Beca Bach award. She was awarded the 2023 Rodney Gibson prize for early music by the AESS and is grateful for the support of the Worshipful Company of Dyers and the Worshipful Company of Horners.

Tiana Oberoi - Soprano

20-year-old Tiana Esther Oberoi from Bangalore, India is a Big Give Scholar at the Royal College of Music, supported by Sir Alec and the Reed Foundation Trustees. She is a third-year undergraduate voice student studying with Sarah Tynan and Gary Mathewman. A semi-finalist in the Junior Ferrier Competition '24, she placed first in the National Association of Teachers of Singing National Student Auditions '23 in San Diego, the first Indian to do so. Recently, she sang in masterclasses with Louise Alder, Kitty Whately and Anna Tillbrook, focusing on the music of Rebecca Clarke.



Tiana's solo performances include singing at The Commonwealth Day celebrations at Westminster Abbey, at Musikverin and Ehrbar Saal in Vienna, the Royal Opera House in Mumbai, Deal Music Festival in Kent with The Purcell School, and with Chorleywood Orchestra. As a soloist with the award-winning youth choir, 'The Harmony Chorus', she performed on Indian national television, at Musiikkitalo in Helsinki, The Indian High Commission in London, St Giles Cathedral, Peel Centenary Centre in the Isle of Man, and Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, Russia. Committed to sharing joy through her singing, Tiana also sings to support lesser privileged children, and raise awareness of social and environmental causes.



Ella O'Neill - Pianist

Ella O'Neill is increasingly in demand across the UK and Europe as a collaborative pianist specialising in song. She was the 2024 winner of the biennial Royal Philharmonic Society Gerald Moore Award for outstanding piano accompanists, as well as the Accompanist's Prize in the 2019 Kathleen Ferrier Awards. [\(continued\)](#)

Ella O'Neill - Pianist (continued)

Recital venues for Ella have included the Zankel and Weill Recital Halls at Carnegie Hall as a SongStudio artist, Wigmore Hall, Snape Maltings Concert Hall, Cadogan Hall, the Royal Opera House Crush Room, Opera Holland Park, LIFE Victoria Barcelona, Heidelberger Frühling, Oxford International Song, Leeds Lieder and Brighton Festival, as well as regular performances on BBC Radio 3 InTune. Last year saw the release of Ella's debut album, Awakenings, with duo partner Laurence Kilsby, co-produced by Deutsche Grammophon, Avi Music and SWR Kultur.

Away from the concert platform, Ella works as a vocal coach both privately and, more recently, as a visiting professor at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. She is also a staff pianist at the Royal College of Music, Samling Institute for Young Artists and Oxenfoord International Summer School. Ella is a graduate of the Royal College of Music, where she studied predominantly with Simon Lepper.

Christopher Pulley - Pianist



Christopher Pulley is a collaborative pianist based in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, regularly working with many major arts organisations across the country including Opera North, Royal Northern College of Music, Leeds Conservatoire, University of York, Huddersfield Choral Society and Welsh National Opera. Chris is a passionate song pianist and chamber musician, performing regularly in festivals and concert series, including the Manchester Festival of Song, Manchester Midday Concerts, Buxton International Festival, Leeds Song, Thaxted Festival, Stoller Hall and the Leeds International Concert Series. In 2021 he was invited as a Momentum Young Artist to perform in a Leeds Lieder recital alongside Joseph Middleton and Sarah Connolly.

He is the Artistic Director of the &Piano Music Festival, established in 2018, which promotes vocal and instrumental chamber music to new and established audiences in and around West Yorkshire, with innovative programming and unique events in alternative spaces, celebrating exceptional artists from or based around the North of England. A recent festival highlight includes giving the premiere performance in 2024 of *Five Armitage Songs*, a new song cycle by Alice Beckwith setting poems by Simon Armitage and inspired by Madeleine Dring's *Five Betjeman Songs*.

Jack Redman - Pianist

Jack Redman is a British pianist, organist and composer. He is a regular repetiteur for Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Lyric Opera Ireland. He has accompanied a range of ensembles including The Sixteen choir, and he has played harpsichord and organ continuo for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Jack regularly performs and records with solo singers and instrumentalists. Recent venues Jack has played at include the Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall, and many churches and cathedrals across the UK including St Martin-in-the-Fields, where he was previously a singer.

Following studies at the Royal Academy of Music, Jack was a Young Artist at the Oxford and Leeds Song Festivals, the Georg Solti Accademia for opera in Venice, and with the City Music Foundation. He won the pianist prizes at the AECC English Song Competition and the John Kerr Award. Jack has had compositions commissioned and performed at Oxford Song, as well as airings on BBC Radio.



Angharad Rowlands - Mezzo-soprano



Praised for a voice of "great lyric beauty" (Gramophone), Welsh mezzo-soprano Angharad Rowlands is a Rising Star of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment for 2025-27. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, she is the winner of both the 2025 LCS Leach Award for Singing and 2022 Richard Lewis/Jean Shanks Award Song Prize, and a 2024 International Handel Singing Competition finalist.

This season, Angharad makes her house and role debut as Meg Page in Verdi's *Falstaff* at Teatru Manoel, Malta. At Royal Academy Opera, she performed the title role in Handel's *Ariodante*; Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*), and Florence Pike (*Albert Herring*). Other roles include 2nd Bridesmaid (*Le nozze di Figaro* – Royal Ballet & Opera); cover Juno (*Semele* – Opéra de Lille); cover Zweite Knappe (*Parsifal* – Glyndebourne), and Dido (*Dido & Aeneas* – Hurn Court Opera). Her concert highlights include Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with John Eliot Gardiner; Handel's *Solomon* with John Butt and the OAE; Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with Steven Layton and the Britten Sinfonia, and Bach's *St John Passion* with Philippe Herreweghe. In recital, she collaborates regularly with Sholto Kynoch at the Oxford International Song Festival, and has appeared at Leeds Song, International Lied Festival Zeist, and Wigmore Hall.

Daniel Silcock - Pianist

Daniel Peter Silcock is a Scottish pianist currently based in London, particularly active as a song accompanist. Recent seasons have seen Daniel perform at the world's top music centres, including New York's Carnegie Hall, and at Wigmore Hall in London. Daniel is a Samling Artist, a Britten-Pears Young Artist, and a pianist in Renée Fleming's SongStudio 2024; he was also an Art of Song fellow at Toronto Summer Music. Recent accompanist prizes include at the Bampton Classical Opera Competition, the Richard Leach Award, the Eastbourne Singing Competition, and the International Lied Competition, Bolko von Hochberg, in Görlitz, Germany.



Daniel made his concerto debut at the age of 15 playing Mendelssohn's First Piano Concerto with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Symphony Orchestra. He is currently on the Song Circle and Academy Voices fellowship at the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied with Joseph Middleton and won all the major prizes for song accompaniment. In 2025-2026, projects for Daniel include recitals in India, including at the Mumbai Opera House, and founding SongTide, a new series for song based in his hometown of Peterhead, on Scotland's North-East Coast. Daniel is also looking forward to the fellowship programme at the Cincinnati Song Initiative in May 2026.

Rebekah Yinuo Tan - Pianist



Rebekah Yinuo Tan is 19 and studies at Royal College of Music with Dmitri Alexeev. She gave her first public solo recital aged 13 in Shanghai, and performed Prokofiev's 3rd Piano Concerto in the Stoller Hall, aged 15. Rebekah has performed in the UK and abroad in many notable venues, including St Martin-in-the-Fields, Bridgewater Hall, and Shanghai Oriental Art Centre. She has had the privilege to work in masterclasses with esteemed pianists, such as Stephen Hough, Freddy Kempf, Roy Howat, and Piotr Paleczny.

Recently winning the Watford International Piano Competition 2025, Rebekah has participated in and won many prizes nationally and internationally. Rebekah is supported by Talent Unlimited and has been a Hattori Foundation and Junior Drake Calleja Scholar. Alongside her busy solo engagements, Rebekah is an avid chamber musician, performing regularly across London as part of Trio Musae. She also works regularly with singers and vocal ensembles in concerts, competitions, and opera scenes, and is grateful to have received guidance from artists such as James Baillieu and Audrey Hyland.

Roelof Temmingh - Pianist

South African pianist Roelof Temmingh enjoys a multi-faceted career comprising solo piano, chamber music, art song, orchestral piano, composition and arrangement, and working with other composers. This diverse career has taken him to sought-after stages including Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Carnegie Hall, Concertgebouw, Musikverein, Elbphilharmonie, as well as festivals such as Verbier, Buxton, Clifton, Amsterdam Grachtenfestival, and most recently, the World Orchestra Week in New York. He is a Young Artist of the Musicians' Company, who also supported his Constant/Kit Lambert Fellowship at the Royal College of Music.

As part of the Delphine Trio, he has recorded at Abbey Road Studios, as well as releasing the trio's debut album *Adrift* with the Dutch label TRPTK in 2024. The Trio won the ROSL Mixed Ensembles Category 2025. In 2025 he was awarded the Emily Hoh Pianist Prize at Grasmere Song, and is currently taking part in the Wigmore French Song Exchange 2025-26. His past piano teachers include Dina Parakhina, Nigel Clayton, Paul Guida, and his mother Zorada.



Katy Thomson - Soprano



Scottish Soprano Katy Thomson is a graduate of Durham University and The Royal College of Music. She was awarded the Worshipful Company of Musicians Silver Medal upon graduating from the Royal College of Music Opera Studio in September 2020, for her outstanding talent and contribution to life at the College. She was a Britten Pears Young Artist (2021-2022), Garsington Opera Alvarez Young Artist (2021 & 2022) and an Oxford Song Young Artist (2022-2023) with her duo partner, Rustam Khanmurzin. At Garsington Opera in 2021, she stepped-in to make her debut as the Marschallin in Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* ("...a graceful, wise and moving Marschallin..." – Neil Fisher) and won the Helen Clarke Award.

Katy regularly features at the Oxford International Song Festival and with Schubert & Co, curated by Sholto Kynoch. Passionate about contemporary music, Katy is known for her exceptional musicianship and creative curiosity. As a singing teacher and vocal coach, she facilitates workshops for schools and choirs across the country. Alongside performing and teaching, she is currently studying for an MSc in Performance Psychology. She lives in Ely with her husband and two-year old son. Katy is represented by ArteMIS Opera. For more information, visit www.katythomson.co.uk.

Miro Treharne - Mezzo-soprano

British mezzo-soprano Miro Treharne is a graduate from Trinity Laban Conservatoire (first-class honours) and is currently studying at The Royal Academy of Music on the Master of Arts course under Catherine Wyn-Rogers and Joseph Middleton where she is a member of the Academy Song Circle. She is financially supported by the Countess of Munster Trust as the 'Dame Janet Baker Scholar' (2025-2026) and is a Drake Calleja Scholar, generously supported by the Drake Calleja Trust. She has had a variety of professional engagements including performing as the Alto Soloist for Mozart's 'Requiem' alongside Ailish Tynan, Nick Pritchard and James Platt and has won numerous Song prizes such as The Elisabeth Schumann Lieder Competition and The Lillian Ashe French Song Competition (Trinity Laban).



With an immense passion for operatic performance, she looks forward to performing at Garsington Festival next season in 'La Traviata' and 'Der Rosenkavalier' as an Alvarez Emerging Artist 2026/2027. Roles include Second Woman 'Dido's Ghost', Penelope 'Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria' with Trinity Laban Opera and Tolomeo 'Giulio Cesare' with Saluzzo Opera Academy, supported by the Elizabeth Luxton Memorial Scholarship. Masterclasses comprise of Roderick Williams OBE, Andrew West, Sholto Kynoch, Sally Burgess, Ailish Tynan and Laura Claycomb.



Curtis Vetter - Pianist

Curtis Vetter is a British-German collaborative pianist and répétiteur based in London. Specialising in vocal accompaniment and chamber music, Curtis is an acclaimed recitalist who performs across the UK. He is currently undertaking postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music with James Baillieu and Joseph Middleton, where he is awarded the Sir Curtis Price Scholarship. His studies are generously supported by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust. Upcoming engagements include a concert at the Lighthouse, Poole and as a Leeds Song Young Artist. Curtis was also the Sam Hutchings Pianist Prize awardee at the Oxenfoord International Summer School, working with Malcolm Martineau. Curtis holds a First-Class Honours degree in Music from the University of Birmingham.

Abbie Ward - Soprano

Abbie is a 25-year-old mezzo-soprano from Essex and a recent graduate of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, having previously trained at the Royal Academy of Music. She studies with John Evans.



Her recent concert appearances include performing in the semi-chorus of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at the Barbican Concert Hall under the baton of Sir Antonio Pappano. Operatic highlights include playing Nerone in Hampstead Garden Opera's production of Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*.

Abbie was named a 2025 Alvarez Young Artist with Garsington Opera, where she appeared in three of their summer productions. Further operatic credits include the title role in Carmen (St Paul's Opera), Second Witch in Dido and Aeneas (Hampstead Garden Opera), and chorus work with British Youth Opera in Vaughan Williams' *Sir John in Love*. In 2024, Abbie toured with Wild Arts as Third Lady in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. She looks forward to rejoining them in 2026 to perform the role of Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Abbie immensely enjoys performing with Ben, most recently they performed their song recital 'Spectrum of Devotion' at Hannover Square. After long rehearsal sessions, they dabble in the odd musical theatre jam session!

Composer Biographies

Alice Beckwith (b. 1989)

Alice Beckwith is a British composer of orchestral, chamber, and vocal music. Originally from Halifax, West Yorkshire, Alice studied at the Junior RNCM, Lincoln College, Oxford, and undertook postgraduate composition studies. She is increasingly in demand and was awarded First Prize at the 2025 Charles Wood Festival Composers' Competition. Her work has been commissioned by the St Endellion Easter Festival and &Piano Music Festival, and she has collaborated on new works with The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge and The Carice Singers.



Alice's music is lyrical and contemporary, rooted in the sound world of the British Isles, with a strong emphasis on narrative and storytelling. She is a 2025/26 LSO Soundhub Associate Composer. Recent projects include Tomorrow, at dawn, commissioned for Choir & Organ's New Music Series 2025; The Phoenix for tenor and harp, first performed by Mark Padmore and Alis Huws at St Endellion; and Nightingale and Reflections, vocal settings of Heinrich Brookes commissioned by Endelienta Baroque.

Her song cycle Five Armitage Songs (2024), commissioned by the &Piano Music Festival, sets texts by Poet Laureate Simon Armitage. Alice's cantata The Golden Thread (2022) received its London premiere at the Tête-à-Tête Opera Festival in 2023. She was Composer-in-Residence with Lodge Moor Children's Choir (2020–22) and a participant in the Cheltenham Music Festival Composers' Academy. Alice is also a composer on Music Patron. - www.alicebeckwith.co.uk

Sally Beamish (b. 1956)



Sally Beamish OBE, FRSE was born in London and began her career as a viola player with the Raphael Ensemble, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, and London Sinfonietta. In 1990 she moved to Scotland to focus on composition. She was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2015 and of the Royal Swedish Academy in 2022. Beamish received the Award for Inspiration at the 2018 British Composer Awards, was appointed OBE in 2020, and in 2025 was awarded the Walter Wilson Cobbett Medal of The Musicians' Company for services to chamber music.

She has written three major oratorios: Knotgrass Elegy, premiered at the BBC Proms in 2001 and recently named by BBC Music Magazine among the top six oratorios of the 20th and 21st centuries; Equal Voices, premiered by the LSO in 2014; and The Judas Passion, commissioned by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and premiered in 2018.

Beamish is renowned for concertos written for leading soloists including Branford Marsalis, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Håkan Hardenberger, Steven Isserlis, and Tabea Zimmermann. Her harp concerto Hive was premiered at the BBC Proms in 2022 and shortlisted for a South Bank Sky Arts Award. Recent works include Distans, co-commissioned by major European orchestras and premiered between 2021 and 2024. She returned to performance in 2015 and remains active as a violist. A CD of her recent viola music will be released on Delphian in 2026. - www.sallybeamish.com

Ina Boyle (1889-1967)

Ina Boyle spent almost her entire life at her family home in Enniskerry, just south of Dublin. Despite a prolific output encompassing song, chamber music, choral and orchestral works, much of her music remained unpublished and unperformed during her lifetime. Only in recent decades has Boyle been recognised as one of the most significant Irish composers of the early twentieth century. Musically precocious, Boyle first studied with her father, Rev. William Foster Boyle, and her governess, learning violin and cello before beginning composition lessons in Dublin as a teenager. She received sustained encouragement from her cousin-in-law Charles Wood, and between 1923 and 1939 travelled regularly to London to study composition with Ralph Vaughan Williams, whose support proved formative.



Boyle's music blends late-Romantic lyricism with harmonic individuality and sensitive text-setting. Her orchestral rhapsody The Magic Harp made her the first woman to win a Carnegie Award in 1919, while her Symphony No. 1, Glencree (1927), demonstrates her assured orchestration and expressive depth. She composed around seventy songs, notable for their introspection, melodic clarity and expressive piano writing, often drawing on poetry by Edith Sitwell, W. B. Yeats, Walter de la Mare and others. The outbreak of war in 1939 curtailed Boyle's professional opportunities, and she lived her final years in quiet isolation, continuing to compose until her death in 1967. Her manuscripts are held at Trinity College Dublin, and ongoing scholarship has brought renewed attention to her remarkable legacy.

Charlotte Bray (b.1982)



Charlotte Bray is one of Britain's most distinguished and in-demand composers. Her music is vivid, ambitious and emotionally direct, marked by lyrical intensity and a powerful communicative drive. It has been championed by leading ensembles including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Aurora Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, and performed at major festivals such as Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, Tanglewood, Aix-en-Provence, Verbier and Kuhmo.

Recent and forthcoming commissions include *Mriya* for violin and piano for Wigmore Hall and Leila Josefowicz; her first full-scale opera *American Mother*, commissioned by Theatre Hagen with a libretto by Colum McCann; *A Sky Too Small* for Orchestre de Paris; and a new work for Ensemble intercontemporain for the Boulez Year celebrations in Paris. Her song cycle *Crossing Faultlines* premiered at the Oxford Lieder Festival, and chamber works such as *Ungrivable Lives* and *The Sun and Her Flowers* have received wide international acclaim. Bray has served as composer-in-residence with L'Orchestre de Chambre de Genève (2023–26) and numerous festivals. Awards include an Ivor Novello Award, the Lili Boulanger Prize, and a Critics' Circle Award. Her music is published by Birdsong, and she lives in Berlin. - www.charlottebray.co.uk

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)

Rebecca Clarke was an Anglo-American composer and violist, described by Gramophone as “one of the very best of her time.” Born in Harrow, London, she is best known for her instrumental music—most notably the *Viola Sonata* (1919)—though her substantial body of vocal music remains comparatively under-performed. Clarke composed over fifty works for solo voice, alongside duets, choral music and chamber pieces with voice.



After early violin studies, Clarke trained at the Royal Academy of Music and later became the first female composition student of C. V. Stanford at the Royal College of Music, studying viola with Lionel Tertis. Expelled from her family home in 1910, she forged a career as a professional violist, performing with leading musicians and becoming one of the first women employed by Henry Wood's Queen's Hall Orchestra.

During the 1910s and 1920s Clarke travelled widely in Britain and the United States. In 1919 she caused a sensation as runner-up in Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge's anonymous composition competition, when her identity was revealed. Alongside her instrumental success, Clarke developed a distinctive song style, combining lyrical, syllabic vocal writing with rich chromatic harmony and sensitive text-setting. Notable songs include *The Seal Man* (1922), *June Twilight* (1925) and her Yeats settings *Shy One* and *The Cloths of Heaven*. Although her output declined after her marriage to James Friskin in 1944, Clarke continued composing until her later years. Today her music is enjoying a renewed and growing presence in concert programmes.

Avril Coleridge-Taylor (1903-1998)



Avril Coleridge-Taylor was a British composer, conductor and pianist who forged a remarkable career despite persistent barriers of gender and race. Born in South Norwood, London, she was the daughter of the composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, whose death when she was nine profoundly shaped her early life. Musically gifted from childhood, she composed her first work at the age of twelve and won a scholarship to study piano and composition at Trinity College of Music.

Coleridge-Taylor became a pioneering figure on the podium. In 1933 she made her conducting debut at the Royal Albert Hall, later becoming the first woman to conduct the H.M.S. Royal Marines Band, and a frequent guest conductor with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and London Symphony Orchestra. She also founded the Coleridge-Taylor Symphony Orchestra, supporting professional musicians during the Great Depression.

After moving to East Sussex in 1939, she composed several works inspired by the landscape, including the tone poem *Sussex Landscape*, written at the outbreak of the Second World War. Far from pastoral idyll, the work conveys a stark and reflective wartime atmosphere and stands as a rare example of a female-composed “war work.”

Coleridge-Taylor toured internationally, though in 1952 she was barred from conducting in South Africa under apartheid laws. Later works increasingly celebrated her African heritage, including a Ceremonial March for Ghanaian independence. Despite lifelong discrimination, she composed over ninety works and remains a vital figure in British musical history.

Katy Lavinia Cooper (b.1979)

Katy is a conductor, arranger, composer and singer based in Glasgow. Katy is Director of Chapel Music at the University of Glasgow and also conducts Glasgow Madrigals and Scottish Opera's Community Choir. She is Head of marketing, and a tutor for Sing for Pleasure and has also tutored/lectured for Scotland Sings, Glasgow University, Aberdeen University and Strathclyde University.



Katy's arrangements for choir have been published by Choral Music Publishing, Sing for Pleasure and Canasg. Recent commissions have included a multi-generational piece for RSNO Education (2025), a 12 movement work for Sing for Pleasure's 60th anniversary (2024), arrangements for Scottish Opera Community choir (2024, 2025), carols for Cavendish Singers and Lancaster Priory (2019), a work for upper voices and marimba for Scottish Voices (2019), and arrangements for the Lost Sound folk choir, Glasgow Madrigals, Muldoon's Picnic, Aberdeen Performing Arts and Sing for Pleasure. Katy has also completed new pieces and arrangements for feature film, documentary sound tracks and radio and TV broadcasts (BBC).

Originally from Bolton, Katy studied at the University of Glasgow. She completed her doctoral thesis focusing on seventeenth century Scottish vocal music in 2016. Katy won the Hands up for Trad Community Teacher of the Year award in 2018. Glasgow Madrigals were nominated for the RPS Inspiration award in 2024. - www.katylavinia.cooper.weebly.com



Jessica Dannheisser

Jessica Dannheisser is an award winning composer based in London. Her numerous film and television credits include 2025 critically-acclaimed feature documentary *The Last Musician of Auschwitz* for which she won 'best original composition for a feature length documentary' at the Music and Sound Awards. Other recent scores include the crime drama series *Whitstable Pearl*, BAFTA nominated sci-fi drama series *Silverpoint*, and the RTS winning BBC drama adaptation of *A Kind of Spark*.

Jessica received an Ivor Novello Award nomination for her cinematic score for *Blitz Spirit* with Lucy Worsley and 2024 saw her second collaboration with Wingspan Productions on the multi-award winning *The Battle To Beat Malaria*. Her work in interactive media includes Sky VR's groundbreaking virtual reality game *Hold The World* featuring Sir David Attenborough.

An accomplished pianist, Jessica trained at Oxford University and The London Film School, and has performed at The Royal Albert Hall, The Union Chapel and The Roundhouse with The Cinematic Orchestra. Her album *Orchestral Portraits: Seven Pioneering Women* was recorded at Abbey Road Studios, and she is a long-time collaborator with celebrated theatre company Theatre Rites, scoring several of their stage productions including *Something In The Air* and *The Incredible Tale of Robot Boy*.

Jessica is a member of BAFTA and The Ivors Academy, and is represented by COOL Music. - www.jessicadannheisser.com

Madeleine Dring (1923-1977)

She's been called a "British Gershwin" but perhaps a "British Poulenc" might more accurately describe the genial and graceful music of Madeleine Dring, a woman whose diverse and energetic creative life was cut short, when, at the age of 53, she died suddenly in 1977.

Madeleine Dring was born into a talented musical family in 1923, and she showed early promise. On her tenth birthday she won a scholarship to study at the Royal Conservatory of Music in London, and eventually studied composition with Herbert Howells, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Gordon Jacob. Dring was soon providing incidental music and songs for amateur and professional theatrics. She was also a gifted singer and actress, and performed occasionally on stage and television.

Dring married the British oboist, Roger Lord, and a number of her chamber works feature that instrument.

Six volumes of her songs were published after her death, largely through the persistence of her husband, and many of her other works have been published, performed, and recorded with increasing frequency, especially in the United States.

Sadly, Dring died just when women composers began to receive increasing attention from music historians, performers, and audiences worldwide. A British survey of her life and music was published in 2000.



Dilys Elwyn-Edwards (1918-2012)

Dilys Elwyn-Edwards was a Welsh composer whose work is rooted in a deep affinity for the human voice. Born in Dolgellau, she grew up in a musical household: her father was a precentor, choral conductor and euphonium player. Educated at Dr Williams School, she benefited from its strong musical tradition, developing an early interest in composers such as Delius, Holst and Vaughan Williams, and composing her first song while still a pupil.



Elwyn-Edwards was awarded scholarships to Girton College, Cambridge, and University College Cardiff, choosing the latter, where she studied composition with David Evans. During her studies her songs were broadcast by the BBC. After completing her BMus, she taught at Dr Williams School before winning an open scholarship in composition at the Royal College of Music, studying with Herbert Howells, and piano with Kathleen McQuitty.

Following her marriage to Elwyn Edwards in 1947, she returned to Wales, later teaching piano at the Normal College and University College Bangor. She was a regular adjudicator at eisteddfodau and a familiar voice on radio and television.

Although she composed some instrumental music, Elwyn-Edwards focused primarily on song and choral writing. Her lyrical, sensitively crafted settings form part of the mainstream of Welsh and British art song. Notable cycles include *Caneuon y Tri Aderyn* (1961), *Chwe Chân i Blant, Tymhorau* and *Hwiangerddi*, often setting texts by leading Welsh poets.

Lillie Harris (b.1994)

Lillie Harris is a British composer based in south-east London. Since 2017 she has also written the user manual for Steinberg's music notation software Dorico, drawing on extensive experience as a copyist and engraver for both recording sessions and live performance.

Harris graduated with First Class Honours from the Royal College of Music in 2016, where she studied composition with Haris Kittos and won the Elgar Memorial Prize for her final portfolio. A versatile musician, she plays piano, flute and classical guitar, and sings with the Covent Garden Chorus.

Her music is driven by a desire to communicate deep emotional narratives and connect meaningfully with listeners. This communicative focus is central to works such as *remiscipate*, an orchestral piece responding to the demolition of Glasgow's Red Road Flats. Her music has been performed by ensembles including the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, Echo Vocal Ensemble, Ensemble Recherche, and players from the London Symphony Orchestra and Royal Scottish National Orchestra, at venues such as York Minster, LSO St Luke's, King's Place, and Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. Recent commissions include the art song *Kind Regards*, written with Laura Attridge for the Royal Opera House's Jette Parker Young Artists Programme; choral works for York Minster and Covent Garden Chorus; and song cycles for children's voices commissioned by Glyndebourne and Warwick: A Singing Town.



Alongside composing, Harris works as a professional engraver, collaborating with composers including Steven Price and Cheryl Frances-Hoad, and preparing music for major live-in-concert productions. - www.lillieharris.com



Annie Fortescue Harrison (1848-1944)

Annie Jessie Fortescue Harrison, also known as Annie, Lady Hill, was an English composer best remembered for her songs and piano music. Although she composed operettas that were staged in London, her enduring reputation rests on the popular ballad *In the Gloaming* (1877), which achieved widespread success and was later adopted as the regimental march of the 2nd Middlesex Artillery Volunteers.

Born in Calcutta, then part of British India, Harrison showed precocious musical talent, composing piano pieces such as *The Elfin Waltzes* by the age of thirteen. After her family settled in Sussex, she continued to develop her career as a composer of songs and light stage works. *In the Gloaming*, with words by Meta Orred, became a defining work of the late Victorian ballad tradition and enjoyed extraordinary popularity in Britain and beyond.

In 1877 Harrison married Lord Arthur Hill, a military officer and widower, whose regiment adopted her song as its march. She subsequently composed two operettas: *The Ferry Girl* (1883), performed at St George's Hall, the Savoy Theatre, and the Gaiety Theatre, and *The Lost Husband* (1886), staged at the Opera Comique in London. Harrison lived a long life, continuing to compose into later years. She died in Berkshire in 1944, leaving a legacy rooted in Victorian song and popular musical theatre.

Emily Hazrati (b.1998)

Emily Hazrati is a composer and educator based in London. Her music explores themes of environment, place and belonging, drawing on natural soundscapes as well as ideas of breath, ritual and circularity. She has a strong affinity for narrative and text, and frequently works in collaborative and interdisciplinary contexts.

Hazrati is Associate Composer with Oxford Song (2024–26), with a major new work scheduled to premiere at the Oxford International Song Festival in 2026. Her first full festival commission was a song cycle for Soraya Mafi and Ian Tindale, with text by Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh, inspired by the *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings), which premieres in 2025. Other recent and forthcoming projects include new works for The Marian Consort through the Royal Philharmonic Society's Composers Programme, the London Symphony Orchestra as a Helen Hamlyn Panufnik Composer (2024–25), and a choral commission for St Martin's Voices. Her second chamber opera, *TIDE*, commissioned by Britten Pears Arts, received sold-out performances at the Aldeburgh Festival in 2022.

Hazrati's music has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, performed internationally, and released on Resonus Classics and NMC Recordings, receiving critical acclaim from BBC Music Magazine and The Observer. Alongside composing, she teaches at Centre for Young Musicians and leads composition workshops with London Sinfonietta. Her work has been supported by the PRS Foundation, Vaughan Williams Foundation, and other charitable trusts. - www.emilyhazrati.com



Muriel Herbert (1897–1984)

Muriel Herbert was born in Sheffield and raised in Liverpool. Her early musical promise was shaped by hardship: the death of her father when she was twelve left the family in poverty. A Liverpool Scholarship in Composition enabled her to study at the Royal College of Music from 1917, where her teachers included Charles Villiers Stanford.



With the encouragement of Roger Quilter, Herbert's songs began to be published in the 1920s. She married in 1925, but increasing family responsibilities and the breakdown of her marriage led to a decline in her compositional output from the 1940s onwards. Settling in Welwyn Garden City, she supported her family through teaching. In later years her musical legacy has been championed by her daughter, biographer Claire Tomalin, and by her former student Bill Lloyd; Herbert's manuscripts are held at the British Library.

Herbert composed over one hundred songs, distinguished by their ambition, expressive depth and sophisticated pianistic writing. These works transcend the modest parlour style often associated with English song of the period, standing confidently alongside music by Delius, Debussy, Ravel and Richard Strauss. Her songs range from lyrical intimacy to dramatic intensity, exemplified by *I cannot lose thee for a day* and her powerful setting of Joyce's *I hear an army*.

Her literary taste was wide-ranging and discerning, setting poets from Housman and Hardy to Joyce, Christina Rossetti and medieval writers, with a notably strong representation of women poets.

Dorothy Hogben (dates unknown - early-mid 20th century)

Dorothy Hogben is remembered today primarily for her contribution to English song and educational piano music. Although biographical information about her life remains scarce, her surviving works suggest a composer closely aligned with the English art-song tradition and with a special sensitivity to text and melody.

Hogben is best known for her song *The Shawl*, a lyrical setting of a poem by Lawrence Atkinson, which has been championed by performers including Dame Felicity Lott and continues to appear on recordings and recital programmes. The song exemplifies Hogben's gift for expressive, well-crafted vocal writing, combining a flowing vocal line with a supportive and characterful piano accompaniment.

Alongside her vocal music, Hogben composed a substantial body of piano music for children and amateurs, including collections such as *The Animal Book*, *Our Family* and *The Pirate Ship*, as well as piano duets and short character pieces. She also wrote choral works, often for women's or children's voices, reflecting a strong connection to educational and community music-making.



While much of Hogben's output has fallen from view, renewed interest in British women composers has brought fresh attention to her music. Her works reveal a composer of clarity, charm and emotional immediacy, deserving of rediscovery within the wider context of twentieth-century British musical life.



Imogen Holst (1907-1984)

Imogen Holst's influence on twentieth-century British musical life extended far beyond her own compositions. Born in Richmond, Surrey, she was educated at St Paul's Girls' School, where her father Gustav Holst was director of music. She later studied at the Royal College of Music, working with George Dyson, Gordon Jacob, Ralph Vaughan Williams and William H. Reed, and graduated in 1930 with several composition awards, including the Cobbett Prize.

Holst pursued a freelance career as a composer, arranger and teacher, and developed a parallel reputation as a writer, publishing an influential biography of her father in 1938. During the Second World War she played a major role in the government-supported Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, organising musical life across rural south-west England until exhaustion forced her resignation in 1942.

Her subsequent work at Dartington Hall led to the creation of a pioneering music school, where she proved an inspirational teacher. From 1952 she lived in Aldeburgh, working closely with Benjamin Britten as his assistant and as an artistic director of the Aldeburgh Festival. She also founded the Purcell Singers, championing repertoire from medieval to contemporary music.

From the 1960s Holst devoted herself to preserving and promoting Gustav Holst's legacy, preparing editions, recordings and a thematic catalogue, while continuing to compose and write. She died in Aldeburgh in 1984.

Liza Lehmann (1862–1918)

Liza Lehmann's contribution to the art song tradition was both influential and widely celebrated during her lifetime. Born into a cultured, middle-class family, she initially achieved success as a concert singer, making her debut in 1885 at London's St James's Hall. Her studies in Germany with Clara Schumann deepened her commitment to the art-song tradition, and in 1894 she withdrew from performance to focus on composition and teaching.

Lehmann went on to compose over 350 songs, ranging from intimate solo settings to ambitious multi-voice cycles. Her cosmopolitan upbringing and extensive travels informed a musical language that drew equally on German Lieder and English song. Among her most significant works is *In a Persian Garden* (1896), a pioneering English song cycle setting texts from Omar Khayyam, praised for its originality and expressive range. The tenor aria 'Ah, moon of my delight' remains her most frequently performed song.



Alongside more serious works, Lehmann also cultivated a lighter, humorous style in cycles such as *The Daisy Chain* and *Nonsense Songs from "Alice in Wonderland"*, which enjoyed immense popularity in Britain and the United States. Elected the first President of the Society of Women Musicians in 1911, she was a passionate advocate for singers' training and published an influential vocal treatise in 1913. Lehmann's final songs, including *Evensong* (1916), reveal a deeply personal and reflective voice shortly before her death in 1918.

Zoë Martlew (b.1968)



Zoë Martlew's music moves fluidly between contrasting worlds: crystalline and raw, comic and sacred, intimate and vast. Drawing on myth, language and archetype, her work weaves ancient resonances with futuristic soundscapes, creating music that feels both timeless and vividly alive. Her debut composer album *Album Z* (NMC Records) brings together works shaped by a lifelong engagement with performance, ritual and fearless artistic experimentation.

Martlew's music has been praised for its brilliance, wit and expressive range, and has been commissioned and performed at leading festivals and venues including Aldeburgh, Huddersfield, Tanglewood, Dark Music Days (Iceland), ISCM World Music Days, the BoulezSaal (Berlin), Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall and Zipper Hall (Los Angeles). Her work has been championed by ensembles such as the London Sinfonietta, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Camerata Pacifica, Grossman Ensemble, Riot Ensemble, and The Marian Consort, alongside many leading soloists.

A celebrated cellist, cabaret artist and presenter, Martlew's compositional voice is shaped by wide-ranging collaborations across contemporary music, theatre, film, dance and popular genres, including her solo show *Revue Z*. A familiar presence on BBC television and radio, she is also an experienced educator and mentor, working with young musicians internationally.

She studied at Clare College, Cambridge, the Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music, and the Chopin Academy in Warsaw. At the heart of her work lies a fascination with sound as transformation—music as a living, awakening force. - www.zoemartlew.com

Cecilia McDowall (b.1951)

Cecilia McDowall is one of the UK's leading composers of sacred and secular choral music. Her work is widely admired for its fluent melodic writing, rhythmic vitality and a harmonic language that combines clarity with moments of expressive dissonance. In 2014 she received the British Composer Award (Choral category) for *Night Flight*, and in 2020 was honoured with an Ivor Novello Award for a consistently excellent body of work.

McDowall's music has been commissioned and performed by many of the UK's foremost ensembles, including the City of London Sinfonia, London Mozart Players, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Chorus, BBC Singers, The Sixteen, Tenebrae, St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Cathedral, and collegiate choirs of Oxford and Cambridge, as well as internationally by the Kansas City Chorale. Her works are frequently featured at major festivals and are widely recorded.



Recent highlights include the release of her *Da Vinci Requiem* and the orchestral song cycle *Seventy Degrees Below Zero* on Signum Records (2023), performed by Roderick Williams, Kate Silver, Ben Hulett, Wimbledon Choral and the City of London Sinfonia, conducted by Neil Ferris. In 2021 she received the annual commission from King's College, Cambridge to write the Christmas Eve carol for the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols; *There is no rose* has since become widely performed and recorded.

McDowall's music has been praised for its rare communicative power and its ability to combine immediacy with depth and atmosphere. - www.ceciliamcdowall.co.uk



Thea Musgrave (b.1928)

Scottish-American composer. Thea Musgrave is celebrated for her rich, powerful musical language and a strong sense of drama that has made her one of the most respected figures in contemporary classical music. Born in Barnton, Edinburgh, she studied at the University of Edinburgh and then in Paris with Nadia Boulanger, and her works have since been performed in major concert halls and festivals across Europe and the United States.

Known for clarity of invention, imaginative orchestration and communicative depth, Musgrave frequently explores dramatic ideas that extend traditional forms. Her music often incorporates spatial and theatrical elements—for example, in concertos where soloists move around the orchestra to enhance dramatic impact.

Her catalogue spans orchestral works, chamber music, song cycles and ten large-scale operas, including *The Voice of Ariadne*, *Mary, Queen of Scots*, *Harriet, the Woman Called Moses*, and *Simón Bolívar*.

Musgrave has been widely honoured: she received two Guggenheim Fellowships, the Ivors Classical Music Award (2018), The Queen's Medal for Music, and was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2002.

Her music continues to be championed internationally, revealing a personal voice distinguished by dramatic pace, expressive range and technical mastery. - www.theamusgrave.com

Yshani Perinpanayagam (b.1983)

Yshani is a pianist, conductor, music director and composer whose work spans genres, disciplines and performance contexts. She has appeared at venues ranging from Wigmore Hall to the London Palladium, and at events including Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and All Your Bass Festival, collaborating with artists from the Philharmonia Orchestra to Kate Nash. As a composer, she has written works for the London Sinfonietta, Onyx Brass, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Multi-Story Orchestra and St Martin's Voices, and for a stage work about Fanny Mendelsohn. She is also a regular guest broadcaster on BBC Radio 3.

From podium to pit, Yshani is recognised internationally for her bold, collaborative and imaginative leadership. Her projects include *Street Scene* for Opéra de Paris; the West End production *Emilia; Ruination* for The Royal Ballet; *Passion* with the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra at Mighty Hoopla; and collaborations with Rambert Dance Company, Circa, New Movement Collective, and the Olivier Award-winning *Showstopper! The Improvised Musical*. She is currently music director and performer in *The F**gots and Their Friends Between Revolutions* by Philip Venables and Ted Huffman, touring internationally through 2025.

Yshani won the Yamaha Birmingham Accompanist of the Year Award and studied at the Royal College of Music and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. She is a founding composer of Music Patron and is represented by Rayfield Allied. - www.yshani.co.uk



Electra Perivolaris (b.1996)



Electra Perivolaris (b.1996) is a composer and pianist from Scotland of mixed British and Greek heritage, described as 'A Classical Star of the Future' by *BBC Introducing*, 'One of a new generation of female trailblazers' by BBC Radio 3, 'one of the most exciting composers emerging in Scotland today' by Sir James MacMillan and profiled as 'One to Watch' by *The Scotsman*.

Her music draws inspiration from her mixed Scottish and Greek island heritages, focusing on the natural world as a fragile living organism as seen from her home on the Scottish Isle of Arran and from her family's roots on the Greek Aegean island of Chios. Recent commissions have included works for the London Sinfonietta, BBC Singers, BBC Concert Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra Composers' Hub. Electra was a 2022-2023 Royal Philharmonic Society Composer and was awarded the Young Classical Artists Trust 2024-2025 Composer Fellowship in its inaugural year. - www.electraperivolaris.com

Poldowski (1879–1932)

Poldowski (born Régine Wieniawski) was a Belgian-born composer and pianist whose songs occupy a distinctive place in early twentieth-century repertoire. The daughter of the celebrated Polish violinist Henryk Wieniawski, she was raised in an international artistic milieu and performed her own music publicly from a young age. Her father's death when she was an infant, and later personal tragedies, cast a long shadow over her life and work.

In 1896 she moved to London with her mother, publishing early compositions under the name Irène Wieniawska. After her marriage to Sir Aubrey Dean Paul in 1901 and the subsequent breakdown of the relationship, she adopted the pseudonym Poldowski and continued her studies in Paris. Two of her most poignant songs, *Soir* and *Berceuse d'Armorique*, were written in response to the death of her first child.

During the 1910s and early 1920s Poldowski enjoyed considerable success as both composer and pianist. Her music was championed by performers including Gervase Elwes, Maggie Teyte and Jane Bathori, and by figures such as Sir Henry Wood. Her opera *Silence* was premiered in London in 1920, and she ran influential concert series in London and New York.



Poldowski is especially celebrated for her twenty-two settings of Verlaine, among the finest in the repertoire, alongside songs on texts by Blake, Yeats and Tennyson. Her refined harmonic language, French-inflected style and acute sensitivity to text mark her as a composer of striking individuality.



Rhian Samuel (b.1944)

Rhian Samuel's output spans orchestral, chamber, vocal and choral music. Born in Aberdare into a Welsh-speaking musical family, she has lived and worked in both Britain and the United States, experiences that continue to shape her artistic voice. Her large-scale orchestral works include *Elegy-Symphony* (premiered by the St Louis Symphony Orchestra under Leonard Slatkin), *Clytemnestra* for soprano and orchestra, and *Tirluniau / Landscapes*, first performed at the BBC Millennium Proms by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. *Clytemnestra* was released on disc in 2020 and shortlisted for a Gramophone Award.

Samuel has received numerous honours, including the ASCAP-Rudolph Nissim Award, the Glyndŵr Medal for services to the arts in Wales, an honorary doctorate from the University of Wales, and an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Over 140 of her works have been published.

Vocal music lies at the heart of Samuel's output, with more than twenty song cycles written for leading singers and choirs. She has worked extensively with ensembles including the BBC Singers and New College Choir, Oxford. Alongside her composing career, she is a distinguished scholar and co-editor of the New Grove/Norton Dictionary of Women Composers. Now Emeritus Professor of City, University of London, she composes full-time in mid-Wales and London. - www.rhiansamuel.com

Ethel Smyth (1858–1944)

As well as being a composer and conductor, Dame Ethel Mary Smyth is well-known as a leading figure in the Suffragette movement. Raised in Victorian England, she fiercely resisted the prevailing belief that women should not pursue professional careers. Determined to compose, publish and hear her music performed, Smyth carved out an extraordinary life in defiance of social convention.

Between 1880 and 1930 she produced a substantial body of work, including songs and lieder, chamber music, orchestral works, six operas, a Mass and a choral symphony, alongside numerous unpublished compositions. In later life she turned increasingly to writing, publishing ten volumes of memoirs and essays that vividly document her artistic and political convictions. (continued)



(Ethel Smyth - continued)

Smyth moved within international musical circles, counting among her acquaintances Brahms, Clara Schumann, Tchaikovsky and Grieg. She performed privately for Queen Victoria and formed close friendships with figures such as Winnaretta Singer, Virginia Woolf and Edith Somerville. Fiercely independent, she rejected marriage as incompatible with her career and emotional freedom.

Although her music fell into relative obscurity after her death, recent decades have seen a powerful revival of interest. Major performances of *The Wreckers* and *The Prison*, alongside recordings and renewed scholarship, have restored Smyth's reputation as a pioneering composer and an enduring symbol of artistic and social courage.

Joan Trimble (1915-2000)



Joan Trimble was born in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh. She studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and Trinity College in Dublin before going to the Royal College of Music in London to study piano with Arthur Benjamin and composition with Vaughan Williams and Herbert Howells.

Recognition as a composer came with the publication in 1938 of songs and two-piano music. These were followed in 1940 by her *Sonatina* for two pianos and her *Phantasy Trio*, which won the Cobbett Prize at the RCM. In 1938 she formed a piano duo with her sister, Valerie Trimble, and enjoyed a highly successful professional partnership for over thirty years.

In 1957 her opera, *Blind Raftery*, a BBC commission, was broadcast on television. This was her last major composition until 1990, when a seventy-fifth birthday commission from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland persuaded her to write a wind quintet. CDs of her music have been released on the Koch International Classics and Black Box labels. In 1999 a disc of her songs and chamber music was issued on the Marco Polo label. (credit: Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland)

Errollyn Wallen

Errollyn Wallen CBE is a multi-award-winning, Belize-born British composer and one of the world's most performed living classical composers. Her prolific output spans opera, orchestral, chamber and vocal music, with works regularly performed and broadcast internationally. She has written music for landmark national and global events, including the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Paralympic Games, the Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilees, COP26, and a re-imagining of *Jerusalem* for the Last Night of the Proms in 2020.

Wallen's music has been widely championed by the BBC, including a week-long Composer of the Week on BBC Radio 3. Her acclaimed opera *Dido's Ghost* premiered at the Barbican in 2021 and received its US première in San Francisco in 2023, with a new opera scheduled to premiere at Aldeburgh in 2026. Recent works include *Night Thoughts* for Dame Sarah Connolly and Joseph Middleton, *PARADE* for the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, and *Dances for Orchestra* for major European chamber orchestras. Beyond the concert hall, Wallen collaborated with artist Sonia Boyce on *Feeling Her Way*, winner of the Golden Lion at the 2022 Venice Biennale. Her book *Becoming a Composer* was published by Faber in 2023. In August 2024, Errollyn Wallen was appointed Master of the King's Music. www.errollynwallen.com



Judith Weir (b. 1954)



Judith Weir is one of Britain's most distinguished composers, celebrated particularly for her operatic, choral and orchestral works. Born into a Scottish family and raised near London, she was an oboist in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain before studying composition with John Tavener, Robin Holloway at Cambridge University, and Gunther Schuller at Tanglewood. Early in her career she worked extensively in music education, teaching in rural England and later in Scotland at Glasgow University and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Weir has written a remarkable series of operas, including *King Harald's Saga*, *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, *The Vanishing Bridegroom* and *Blond Eckbert*, performed widely across Europe and the United States. Her opera *Miss Fortune* premiered at Bregenz in 2011 and was staged at the Royal Opera House the following year. As resident composer with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in the 1990s, she produced major orchestral and choral works under Sir Simon Rattle.

Her music has been commissioned by leading ensembles including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra and London Sinfonietta, and written for singers such as Jessye Norman and Dawn Upshaw. In recent years, her choral music has gained wide international circulation.

In 2014, Weir was appointed Master of the Queen's Music, a role in which she has championed music education, amateur music-making and community projects across the UK. www.judithweir.com

Maude Valérie White (1855 - 1937)

In 1903 the critic J. A. Fuller Maitland wrote that Maude Valérie White's songs were "known and loved everywhere the English language is spoken." Passionate, emotionally direct and exquisitely sensitive to text, White was a central figure in the English Musical Renaissance and a formative influence on later composers including Roger Quilter and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Recent scholarship by Derek Hyde, Sophie Fuller and Eugene Gates has helped restore her importance to musical history.



Born in Normandy in 1855 to English parents, White's early exposure to literature and languages profoundly shaped her musical voice. Piano studies with Ernst Pauer introduced her to German Lieder, while harmony and counterpoint lessons led her to the Royal Academy of Music in 1876. Although encouraged to write orchestral music, White found her true expression in song, composing with an instinctive, improvisatory response to poetry.

White's output of nearly 250 songs reveals a distinctive fusion of Romantic lyricism and adventurous harmony. She set texts in several languages and absorbed musical influences from her extensive travels across Europe, Scandinavia and South America. Alongside song, she composed piano works, choral music, a ballet and incidental theatre music, and published literary translations and memoirs. Despite facing persistent gender prejudice, White maintained an independent career, organising concerts of her music until her death in 1937. Today she is rightly recognised as one of the most significant song composers of her generation.

Panel Biographies

Sophie Dand - Creative Consultant/Arts Management

Sophie Dand is Director of SR Creative Consultancy, a boutique, artist-centred classical music agency dedicated to forging meaningful, sustainable careers for artists. With over 15 years' experience in artist management, she has worked with many of the world's leading classical musicians, including Joyce DiDonato, Dame Sarah Connolly, Dame Felicity Lott, Sir Simon Keenlyside, Lucy Crowe, Sir Charles Mackerras and Thomas Adès. A First-Class Music graduate of King's College London, Sophie spent 13 years at Asknas Holt before founding SR Creative. Her work also encompasses major cultural and philanthropic initiatives, including international events for the Galileo Foundation at the Vatican and Blenheim Palace, collaborating with *Opera for Peace* and commissioning new music by Roxanna Panufnik. Sophie co-created Joyce DiDonato's global EDEN Engagement programme, working with youth choirs across four continents, and is Concerts Manager for the Bliss Song Series at Pembroke College, Cambridge. She also works closely with the Cambridge University Lieder Scheme as an advisor, audition panel member and project collaborator.



Nigel Foster - Pianist



Nigel Foster studied at the Royal Academy of Music and Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Roger Vignoles, Graham Johnson and Iain Burnside. He has since been appointed a Steinway Artist. An association with Sir Georg Solti led to work with Renée Fleming, Roberto Alagna and Angela Gheorghiu, and he has since played for singers including Dame Sarah Connolly, Roderick Williams, Nadine Benjamin, Lotte Betts-Dean and Nicky Spence. Nigel founded and directs the London Song Festival, which showcases the Song repertoire and provides a performance platform for young singers and pianists. He has performed in song recitals across Europe and in Asia, New Zealand and north and south America, and has given masterclasses and led workshops in the Song Repertoire in the UK, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, and the USA. His CD recordings include songs by Betty Roe with Robin Tritschler, Russian Romances with Iestyn Morris, and English and Welsh songs with Stephen Varcoe and Jeremy Huw Williams. He has broadcast on BBC Radio 3, appeared on television in several European countries and features on the soundtrack of the French film 'L'Homme est une Femme Comme les Autres'.

Julien Van Mellaerts - Baritone

for his "charisma and vocal elegance" by *Das Opernmagazin*, New Zealand baritone Julien Van Mellaerts is an internationally sought-after recitalist and opera singer. He is a winner of both the Wigmore Hall International Song Competition and the Kathleen Ferrier Awards, and represented New Zealand at BBC Cardiff Singer of the World in 2019. A graduate of the Royal College of Music International Opera School and recipient of the Tagore Gold Medal, he was named a Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation Laureate in 2024.



Van Mellaerts has appeared at major venues and festivals including the Verbier Festival, Salzburg Mozartwoche, Opéra National de Lorraine, Opera Holland Park and New Zealand Opera. Recent and forthcoming engagements include Renato (*Un ballo in maschera*), Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Petrucci (*Lucrezia Borgia*), and performances of *Carmina Burana* at the Royal Festival Hall. A committed recitalist, he records for Delphian Records and is co-director of *Opera in Song* at Opera Holland Park with pianist Dylan Perez.



Anna Tilbrook - Pianist

Pianist Anna Tilbrook has collaborated with many of today's leading singers and instrumentalists since her Wigmore Hall debut in 1999, and is a regular presence at major international concert halls and festivals. Performance highlights include appearances at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Carnegie Hall with Lucy Crowe, as well as Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith Square, de Singel Antwerp, Athanée Paris, Oper Frankfurt, Anima Mundi Pisa and Wrocław Cantans. Festival appearances include Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, Oxford Lieder and Savannah Music Festival. She is also a frequent broadcaster and curator for BBC Radio 3.

In 2022 Tilbrook and tenor James Gilchrist celebrated 25 years of their acclaimed duo partnership, with recordings spanning English song, Schubert and Schumann cycles, and Vaughan Williams chamber works. Recent releases include *Solitude* and *Under Alter'd Skies* by Jonathan Dove. A dedicated educator, Tilbrook is Professor of Ensemble Piano at the Royal Academy of Music, where she became a Fellow in 2025, and also teaches at the University of Oxford.

Kitty Whately - Mezzo-soprano

Mezzo-soprano Kitty Whately is widely admired for her characterful performances on the operatic stage and concert platform, and as a leading interpreter of contemporary opera and art song. She recently made her Royal Opera House debut as Michelle in the world premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Festen*, and future engagements include Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*) for Grange Park Opera, Irene (*Tamerlano*) for the London Handel Festival, and Margret (*Wozzeck*) with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.



Whately has performed roles in UK, European and world premiere's of operas by Turnage, Missy Mazzoli, Mark Adamo and Vasco Mendonça, and has inspired song cycles by composers including Jonathan Dove, Sally Beamish and Tarik O'Regan. A former Kathleen Ferrier Award winner and BBC New Generation Artist, she is also a distinguished recitalist and recording artist. She performs regularly with BBC orchestras, appears frequently on BBC Radio 3, and is a passionate advocate for women composers, reflected in her critically acclaimed discography. She teaches English song at RCM and GSMD and regularly gives masterclasses at conservatoires around the UK. As co-founder of SWAP'ra, she works as a mentor, fundraiser and advocate for greater equality and sustainability in the profession.

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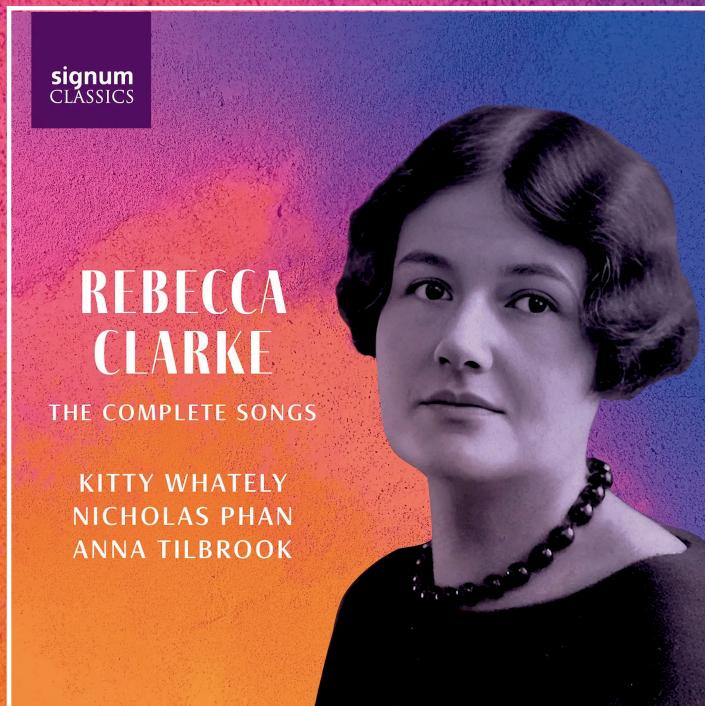


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