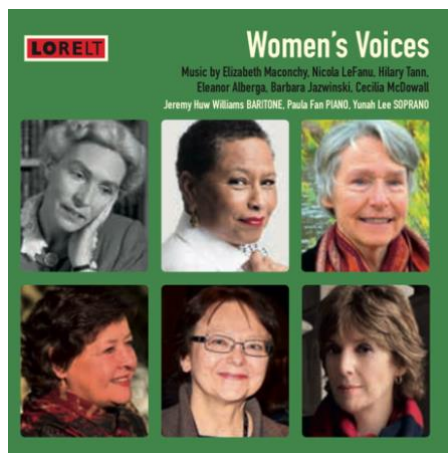


LORELT releases *Women's Voices*: vocal music by Maconchy, Lefanu, McDowall, Alberga, Tann and Jazwinski



Friday 24 April 2020

LORELT | LNT143

Elizabeth Maconchy *Four Shakespeare Songs*

Nicola Lefanu *The Swan*

Hilary Tann *Melangell Variations*

Eleanor Alberga *The Soul's Expression*

Barbara Jazwinski *The Girl by The Ocean*

Cecilia McDowall *If I touched the earth*

Jeremy Huw Williams baritone

Yunah Lee soprano **Paula Fan** piano

Lauren Rustad Roth, Timothy Kantor violin

Molly Gebrian viola **Theodore Buchholz** cello

LORELT champions women composers on disc with *Women's Voices*, released on **Friday 24 April 2020**. The disc offers the first recordings of five recent song cycles by trailblazing women composers born in the 1940s/50s – Eleanor Alberga, Barbara Jazwinski, Nicola LeFanu, Cecilia McDowall, and Hilary Tann – paired with a cycle by Elizabeth Maconchy, who was a supporter of LORELT and attended the label's first recording sessions in 1992, near the end of her life.

The works are sung by baritone **Jeremy Huw Williams**, soprano **Yunah Lee**, accompanied by pianist **Paula Fan** and a string quartet (Lauren Rustad Roth, Timothy Kantor, Molly Gebrian and Theodore Buchholz). The LORELT (Lontano Records Ltd) label was founded by composer and conductor **Odaline de la Martinez** in 1992 to promote the neglected repertoire of 20/21st century composers, women composers and Latin American classical music.

Irish composer **Elizabeth Maconchy** (1907-1994) studied at the Royal College of Music from 16 and her work was performed at Henry Wood's Promenade Concerts in 1930. Despite a career stunted by tuberculosis, war, prejudice, and the pressures of raising her family, she was frequently commissioned by festivals and leading performers across England and Ireland. Her *Four Shakespeare Songs* were first performed in 1965, and set songs from *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Othello*.

Following in her mother Maconchy's footsteps, **Nicola LeFanu** (b. 1947) has composed eight operas and celebrated her seventieth birthday in 2017. Her scena *The Swan*, first performed the same year, was commissioned by baritone Jeremy Huw Williams, and draws on the image of a migrating swan as an allegory of the soul's journey. The text is a mediaeval sequence weaving Latin with English poetry by Fleur Adcock.

Welsh-born composer **Hilary Tann** (b. 1947) has a deep interest in the traditional music of Japan and is a published haiku poet. Setting poetry by former Welsh poet laureate, Gwyneth Lewis, her *Melangell Variations* tell the ancient story of Saint Melangell, a young female hermit who shelters a hare in her robes while keeping a hunter's hounds at bay. The three variations were commissioned by Jeremy Huw Williams and the Welsh Chamber Orchestra.

A four-song cycle by **Eleanor Alberga** (b. 1949), *The Soul's Expression* sets poetry on the human soul's perceptions by George Eliot, Emily Brontë and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who, like Alberga, grew up in Jamaica. Polish composer **Barbara Jazwinski** (b. 1950) is currently Head of Composition at Tulane University, New Orleans. *The Girl*

by the Ocean was composed in 2015 to a text by the composer's daughter, Maria Jazwinski.

Cecilia McDowall's (b. 1951) setting of three poems by the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, *If I touched the earth*, melds dream-like imagery, maturing and the seasons. *If I touched the earth* was commissioned for the centenary of Dylan Thomas in 2014 by Jeremy Huw Williams and the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust.

Jeremy Huw Williams



The Welsh baritone **Jeremy Huw Williams** studied at St John's College, Cambridge, at the National Opera Studio, and with April Cantelo. He made his debut with Welsh National Opera as Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) and has since appeared in more than sixty operatic roles. He has given performances at major venues in North and South America, Australia, China, India and most European countries.

He has given recitals at the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room, and at many major music festivals. He has appeared with the BBCCO, BBCNOW, BBCSO, BBCSSO, BBC Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, CBSO, Hallé, LPO, LSO, Philharmonia, RLPO, and the Ulster Orchestra. He has made many recordings for BBC Radio 3, and more than thirty commercial recordings, including more than ten solo discs of songs.

He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by Glyndŵr University in 2009 for services to music in Wales, and received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music from the University of Aberdeen in 2011.

Paula Fan



Pianist **Paula Fan** has performed on five continents, recorded over twenty-five albums, and has broadcast for the BBC, NPR, Radio Television China, and international stations from Bosnia to Australia. One of the first recipients of the doctorate in Collaborative Piano, she has lectured on the subject worldwide. She was Regents' Professor at the University of Arizona and performed as Principal Keyboardist with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra for over 30 seasons. She has also served as Visiting Professor at the Eastman School of Music, and at conservatories throughout China.

A founder of the Confluentcenter for Creative Inquiry, she has created numerous musical presentations marrying disciplines from Hospice Care to Cookery with art song, based on her belief that there is classical music for everything. With her brother Michael, she produced shows on solar energy, performed on the National Mall in Washington DC on solar powered instruments. Now a Confluentcenter Senior Fellow, she continues to tour internationally as pianist and lecturer.

Yunah Lee

Yunah Lee (soprano) made her solo recital debut at Carnegie Hall and the Ho-Am Recital Hall in Seoul, Korea followed by a national tour in five cities in South Korea.

Her first recording of "Four Seasons in Korea" with I Musici was released in 2004. She performs extensively in the U.S., Europe and Asia in opera, oratorio and as recitalist. She has performed her signature role of Cio-Cio San (*Madama Butterfly*) with many major companies, including the Metropolitan Opera, the New York City Opera, the Austin Lyric Opera, the Washington National Opera, the Boston Lyric Opera.

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The award-winning Cuban American composer-conductor **Odaline de la Martinez** co-founded **Lontano**, her chamber ensemble, in 1976 whilst studying composition at the Royal Academy of Music, and the ensemble's impact on the perception of new music has been profound and enduring. With Lontano she commissions, produces, performs and records with the primary aim of bringing to the fore the work of living contemporary composers, female composers from all periods, and Latin American classical music. The ensemble's sphere of activity includes contemporary opera, music theatre, concerts, workshops, education projects, tours, broadcasts and recordings.

Always at the front of music innovation, Lontano was one of the first ensembles to form its own record company when in 1992 it established the **LORELT** label (Lontano Records Ltd). Now with a catalogue of 43 recordings, LORELT features soloists as well as other ensembles and is noted for its archive of important and often neglected composers.

lorelt.co.uk

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