Symposium Graz (Austria)

“Passionately intellectual, intellectually passionate”: Elizabeth Maconchy (1907 – 1994)

Friday 24 – Saturday 25 October 2014

Palais Meran, Florentinersaal, Leonhardstraße 15, A-8010 Graz

ORGANIZERS: CHRISTA BRÜSTLE | ANDREAS DORSCHEL

Zentrum für Genderforschung
Brandhofgasse 18, A-8010 Graz
phone +43 316 389 3558
genderforschung.kug.ac.at

Institut 14 – Musikästhetik
Leonhardstraße 15, A-8010 Graz
phone +43 316 389 3140
musikaesthetik.kug.ac.at
Dame Elizabeth Maconchy Le Fanu (1907 – 1994) is among the outstanding British composers of the 20th century. Initially a student of Vaughan Williams, she became fascinated early on – during the 1920s – by Bartók’s music. It set her on a Continental track, unlike some of her colleagues who at the time cultivated the splendid isolation of their Englishness. Conversely, Maconchy’s music gained strong resonances on the continent; by 1936 her works had been played in Eastern Europe, France, Germany, but also the US and Australia. (In this regard, sadly, World War II marked a break; from then on up until now, the reception of her work has become less international.)

It is widely assumed that chamber music forms the centre of Maconchy’s oeuvre. She herself called the thirteen string quartets she wrote between 1933 and 1984 “my best and most deeply-felt works”. However, the symposium is meant to explore a wider range of Maconchy’s compositions, including opera and orchestral works. We shall study Maconchy’s development, as reflected in the technical and spiritual aspects of her music. We shall also contextualize it both in the mostly male musical world of 20th century Britain, dominated by Elgar, Delius, Vaughan Williams, Walton, Tippett and Britten, and that of continental Europe. Vis-à-vis these contexts, Maconchy spoke a voice of her own. Her work matches the claim she once made: “Music should be passionately intellectual and intellectually passionate.”
Friday, 24 October 2014

10:00 – 10:30 hrs  *Words of Welcome*
   Elisabeth Freismuth, Rektorin KUG
   Christa Brüstle, Leiterin ZfG
   Andreas Dorschel, Vorstand Institut für Musikästhetik

10:30 – 11:15 hrs  Anna Dunlop, Norwich (UK), *Personal recollections of my mother*

11:15 – 12:15 hrs  Sophie Fuller, London (UK), *The correspondence between Elizabeth Maconchy and Grace Williams*

12:15 – 14:15 hrs  *** Midday break ***

14:15 – 15:30 hrs  Nicola Le Fanu, York (UK), *Elizabeth Maconchy – a life in music. An overview of the composer’s work*

15:30 – 16:30 hrs  Christa Brüstle, Graz (A), *Maconchy and Bartók*

16:30 – 17:00 hrs  *** Coffee break ***

17:00 – 18:00 hrs  Rhiannon Mathias, Caernarfon (UK), *Maconchy’s late string quartets (no.s 9 – 13)*

18:30 – 19:30 hrs  Konzert mit Kammermusik und Liedern von Elizabeth Maconchy
Saturday, 25 October 2014


10:30 – 11:30 hrs  Guido HELDT, Bristol (UK), *Concertante. Elizabeth Maconchy’s Orchestral Music and the Idea of Dialogue*

11:30 – 12:00 hrs  *** Coffee break ***

12:00 – 12:45 hrs  Danielle SOFER, Graz (A), “*But I hear nothing! Not a voice, Not a word*”: *The closing from Maconchy’s one-act opera The Departure*


13:15 – 13:30 hrs  Discussion: talk and screening *The Departure*
List of Contributors

Christa BRÜSTLE has led the Centre for Gender Studies of the University of Arts Graz since 2011.

Andreas DORSCHEL has been head of the Institute for Music Aesthetics at the University of Arts Graz since 2002.

Anna DUNLOP, daughter of Elizabeth Maconchy, taught mathematics at Norwich (England).

Sophie FULLER is Acting Head of Postgraduate Studies at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance London (England).

Annika FORKERT completed her PhD in musicology at Royal Holloway, University of London (England) in 2014.

Guido HELDT has been Lecturer, then Senior Lecturer at the University of Bristol (England) since 2004.

Nicola LE FANU, daughter of Elizabeth Maconchy, composer, was Professor of Music at the University of York (England) from 1994 to 2008.

Rhiannon MATHIAS is Chair of the Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias Music Centre at Caernarfon (Wales).

Danielle SOFER, a graduate from SUNY, has been a PhD student at the Institute for Music Aesthetics at the University of Arts Graz since 2013.