

Zentrum für Genderforschung (ZfG)  
Institut 14 – Musikästhetik



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

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



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 DORSCHER, 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**

- 9:30 – 10:30 hrs Annika FORKERT, London (UK), *Beauty among Beasts? From Walton to Maconchy to Britten*
- 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*
- 12:45 – 13:15 hrs Screening: Elizabeth Maconchy, *The Departure* [1962], Independent Opera at Sadler's Wells London 2007. Director: Alessandro Talevi
- 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 DORSCHSEL 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.