Saturday 21st November, 2pm

The White Peacock
The life and songs of Charles Griffes (d 1920)

Rebecca Leggett – mezzo-soprano
Nigel Foster – piano
David Mildon – speaker

Programme devised by Nigel Foster

Songs (typed in black)
Readings (typed in grey)

Song 1 – Si mes vers avaient des ailes (Victor Hugo, 1802-1885)

Mes vers fuiraient, doux et frêles,
Vers votre jardin si beau,
Si mes vers avaient des ailes,
Comme l'oiseau!

Ils voleraient, étincelles,
Vers votre foyer qui rit,
Si mes vers avaient des ailes,
Comme l'esprit.

Près de vous, purs et fidèles,
Ils accourraient nuit et jour,
Si mes vers avaient des ailes,
Comme l'amour!

My verses would flee, sweet and frail,
To your garden so fair,
If my verses had wings
Like a bird!

They would fly like sparks
To your smiling hearth,
If my verses had wings
Like the mind.

Pure and faithful, to your side
They would hasten, night and day,
If my verses had wings
Like love.
Song 2 - Wohl lag ich einst in Gram und Schmerz (Emmanuel Geibel, 1815-1884) from Five German Songs

Wohl lag ich einst in Gram und Schmerz,  
Da weint' ich Nacht und Tag;  
Nun wein' ich wieder, weil mein Herz  
Sein Glück nicht fassen mag.

Mir ist's, als trüg' ich in der Brust  
Das ganze Himmelreich -  
O höchstes Leid, o höchste Lust,  
Wie seid ihr euch so gleich!

I once lay in grief and pain,  
And wept night and day.  
Now I weep again because my heart  
Cannot contain its happiness.

Song 3 - Nacht liegt auf den fremden Wegen (Heinrich Heine, 1797-1856) from Five German Songs

Nacht liegt auf den fremden Wegen,  
Krankes Herz und müde Glieder;  
Ach, da fließt, wie stiller Segen,  
Süsser Mond, dein Licht hernieder.

Süsser Mond, mit deinen Strahlen  
Scheuchest du das nächt'ge Grauen;  
Es zerrinnen meine Qualen,  
Und die Augen übertauen.

Night lies on the unfamiliar roads;  
Sick heart and tired limbs;  
Ah, let your light flow down,  
Sweet moon, like a quiet blessing.

Song 4 - Könnt'ich mit dir dort oben gehn (Julius Mosen, 1803-1867)

Könnt' ich mit dir dort oben gehn,  
Du träumerischer Mond,  
Ich könnte wohl hinübersehn  
Wo die Geliebte wohnt!

Zu glücklich ist die Nachtigall,  
Die in dem Lindenbaum  
Vor ihrem Haus mit süssem Schall  
Durchklinget ihren Traum!

If I could go up there with you,  
You dreamy moon,  
I could look down  
On where my beloved lives.

How happy is the nightingale  
Who, from the linden tree  
In front of her house, with a sweet sound  
Rings through her dreams!
Song 5 - The half-ring moon (John Tabb, 1845-1909)

Over the sea, over the sea.
My love he is gone to a far countrie;
But he brake a golden ring with me
The pledge of his faith to be.

Over the sea, over the sea
He comes no more from the far countrie;
But at night, where the new moon loved to be
Hangs the half of a ring for me.

Song 6 - La fuite de la lune (Oscar Wilde, 1854-1900) from Tone Images Op 3

To outer senses there is peace,
A dreamy peace on either hand,
Deep silence in the shadowy land,
Deep silence where the shadows cease.

Save for a cry that echoes shrill,
From some lone bird disconsolate;
A corncrake calling to its mate:
The answer from the misty hill.

And suddenly the moon withdraws
Her sickle from the light'ning skies,
And to her sombre cavern flies,
Wrapped in a veil of yellow gauze.

Song 7 - La mer (Oscar Wilde) from Four Impressions

A white mist drifts across the shrouds,
A wild moon in this wintry sky
Gleams like an angry lion's eye
Out of a mane of tawny clouds.

The muffled steersman at the wheel
Is but a shadow in the gloom;
And in the throbbing engine room
Leap the long rods of polished steel.

The shattered storm has left its trace
Upon this huge and heaving dome,
For the thin threads of yellow foam
Float on the waves like ravelled lace.

**Song 8 - Phantoms (John Tabb)**

Are ye the ghosts of fallen leaves,
O flakes of snow,
For which, through naked trees, the winds
A-mourning go?

Or are ye angels, bearing home
The host unseen
Of truant spirits, to be clad
Again in green?

**Song 9 - The White Peacock from Roman Sketches Op 7 (piano solo)**

**Song 10 - Les ballons (Oscar Wilde)**

Against these turbid turquoise skies
The light and luminous balloons
Dip and drift like satin moons,
Drift like silken butterflies;

Reel with every windy gust,
Rise and reel like dancing girls,
Float like strange transparent pearls,
Fall and float like silver dust.

Now to the low leaves they cling,
Each with coy fantastic pose,
Each a petal of a rose
Straining at a gossamer string.

Then to the tall trees they climb,
Like thin globes of amethyst,
Wandering opals keeping tryst
With the rubies of the lime.
Song 11 - Come, Love, across the sunlit land (Clinton Scollard, 1860-1932) from Two Rondels Op 4

Come, Love, across the sunlit land,
As blithe as dryad dancing free,

While time slips by like silvery sand
Within the glass of memory.
Ere Winter, in his reckless glee,
Blights all the bloom with ruthless hand,

Come, Love, across the sunlit land,
As blithe as dryad dancing free.

And all the years of life shall be
Like peaceful vales that wise expand
To meet a bright untroubled sea
By radiant azure arches spann'd;

Come, Love, across the sunlit land,
As blithe as dryad dancing free.

SHORT BREAK

Song 12 - Phantoms (Arturo Giovannitti, 1884-1959) from Three Poems Op 9

When in my night, like gaunt, gray phantoms, rise
The wild-eyed hours of brooding revery,
If in my heart a sudden anguish cries
That thou also hast passed away from me,

If I but think that one regretful sigh
Thy joyless love has breathed unaware,
I know not what a barren will to die
Dissolves my strength into a mute despair.

Oh, if upon thy breast I could then lay
My weary head and hear thee sing again
That old sweet song, and as it dies away
Exhale my spirit in its last refrain!
**Song 13 - Waikiki (Rupert Brooke, 1887-1915) from Three Poems op 9**

Warm perfumes like a breath from vine and tree
Drift down the darkness.
Plangent, hidden from my eyes,
Somewhere an ukulele thrills and cries,
And stabs with pain the night’s brown savagery.
And dark scents whisper; and dim waves creep to me,
Gleam like a woman’s hair, stretch out and rise;
And new stars burn into the ancient skies,
Over the murmurous soft Hawaiian sea.
And I recall, lose, grasp, forget again,
And still remember, a tale I have heard or known,
An empty tale, of idleness and pain,
Of two that loved or did not love, and one
And one whose perplexed heart did evil, foolishly,
A long while since, and by some other sea.

**Song 14 - The Old Temple (Chang Wen-Chang, Tang Dynasty, c. 8th/9th century BC) from Five poems of Ancient China and Japan Op 10**

The temple courts with grasses rank abound,
And birds throng in the forest trees around.
But pilgrims few, though tablets still remain,
Come to the shrine while revolutions reign.
And mice climb through the curtains full of holes,
And thick dust overspreads the ‘brodered stoles;
The temple pool in gloomy blackness lies,
To which the sleeping dragon sometimes hies.

**Song 15 - Kinanti (traditional Sundanese) from Three Javanese Songs**

Saha itoe noengngal lantoeng
Dedek nalangkoeng raspati
So djana reh nga lala na
Di iring keo boe dakle tik.
Kole jang angkat ka passar
Noe kas soran njala ling.
Who walks there alone?
Such beauty, such bearing, going far.
So early this morning.
The tinkling bells of buffalo,
And sunshine mark that lonely way:
The quest for meaning and for truth.
Song 16 - Lament of Ian the Proud from Three Poems of Fiona MacLeod (William Sharp AKA Fiona MacLeod, 1855-1905) Op 11

What is this crying that I hear in the wind?
Is it the old sorrow and the old grief?
Or is it a new thing coming, a whirling leaf
About the gray hair of me who am weary and blind?

I know not what it is, but on the moor above the shore
There is a stone which the purple nets of heather bind,
And thereon is writ: She will return no more.

O blown, whirling leaf,
And the old grief,
And wind crying to me who am old and blind!

Song 17 - The Sorrow of Mydath from Two Poems by John Masefield (John Masefield, 1878-1967)

Weary the cry of the wind is,
Weary the sea,
Weary the heart and the mind and the body of me,
Would I were out of it, done with it, would I could be
A white gull crying along the desolate sands.

Outcast, derelict soul in a body accurst,
Standing drenched with the spindrift, standing a-thirst,
For the cool green waves of death to arise and burst
In a tide of quiet for me on the desolate sands.

Would that the waves and the long white hair of the spray
Would gather in splendid terror, and blot me away
To the sunless place of the wrecks where the waters sway
Gently, dreamily, over desolate sands,

Song 18 - Come, Love, across the sunlit land (Clinton Scollard) from Two Rondels Op 4 (Reprise)

Come, Love, across the sunlit land,
As blithe as dryad dancing free,

While time slips by like silvery sand
Within the glass of memory.
Ere Winter, in his reckless glee,
Blight all the bloom with ruthless hand,
Come, Love, across the sunlit land,
As blithe as dryad dancing free.

And all the years of life shall be
Like peaceful vales that wise expand
To meet a bright untroubled sea
By radiant azure arches spann'd;

Come, Love, across the sunlit land,
As blithe as dryad dancing free.

PROGRAMME NOTES

Song 1 – Si mes vers avaient des ailes (Victor Hugo, 1802-1885)

This is one of two songs Griffes wrote in 1901 when he was 16. They were performed at the farewell concert held on 21st May 1903 before he went to Berlin to study, and he played this song, in his own arrangement for piano solo, at a concert in the chapel of Elmira College on 24th July 1906, when he returned home briefly after the death of his father. The song remains unpublished, the manuscript is held in the New York Library for the Performing Arts, and the performance at this concert is from a transcription of the manuscript made by London Song Festival Director Nigel Foster.

Victor Hugo’s father was an officer in Napoleon’s army and a free-thinking Republican, his mother was a Catholic Royalist. This political and cultural difference between his parents shaped his upbringing; his mother, tired of the constant travelling necessitated by Napoleon’s campaigns, separated from his father and settled in Paris, bringing Victor up as a devoted Roman Catholic, but in the events leading up to the revolution of 1848, he became a Republican. He was elected to parliament following the revolution, but when Napoleon seized power in 1851 and abolished parliament, Hugo called him a traitor and was exiled, living first in Brussels, and then in the Channel Islands, first in Jersey, then in Guernsey from 1855 until 1870. His best-known work, Les Misérables, a heart-felt plea against social injustices, was published in 1862, though Hugo had been writing it since around 1830. When the Third Republic was declared following Napoleon III’s fall from power in 1870 Hugo returned to France as a national hero and was elected to the Senate. He was in Paris during the Prussian siege of 1870 and was fiercely critical of the atrocities committed by both sides during the Commune of 1871. He was a life-long campaigner against the death penalty in France. The Hunch-back of Notre-Dame (in French entitled simply Notre-Dame de Paris) was his first major success as a novelist, dating from 1831. His collection of poetry Les Orientales was published in 1829. His death at the age of 83 was marked by large-scale public mourning, his funeral procession was said to have been followed by over a million people and he was buried in the Panthéon in Paris.
Support London Song Festival

Song 2 - Wohl lag ich einst in Gram und Schmerz (Emmanuel Geibel, 1815-1884) from Five German Songs

This is one of the songs Griffes composed while in Berlin and one of the set of Five German Songs that were the first of his works to be published; he signed the contract with Schirmer's in New York on 4th February 1909 for 10% royalties. In a letter to Lilian Schoobert that October, Griffes wrote: “Of course, I don’t expect to very soon become a millionaire either from these or any subsequent things that come out. But nobody nowadays becomes rich from composition except Richard Strauss or people who write such things as ‘Love me and the world is mine’. By the way, I was seriously advised by an experienced person the other day to write something like that and get rich in a week – that is of course if it should take.”

Emmanuel Geibel was born in Lübeck. He was the son of a pastor and was originally intended for that profession, but from the start he was always more interested in philology. He went to study Greek in Athens, and in 1840, age 25, he published a volume of translations of Greek poetry. His first volume of poetry, Zeitstimmen was published in 1841, and the following year he entered the service of Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, for whom he wrote König Roderich (1843), König Sigurds Brautfahrt (1846) and Juniuslieder (1848). In 1851 his growing reputation as a poet led to Maximillian II of Bavaria inviting him to Munich University as an honorary professor. While there he became part of the literary circle Die Krokodile (The Crocodiles), which propounded traditional, lyrical forms of poetry. Always interested in languages, Geibel, together with Paul Heyse, translated several volumes of Spanish and Italian poetry, which were famously set by Hugo Wolf as his Spanisches and Italienisches Liederbuch.

Song 3 - Nacht liegt auf den fremden Wegen (Heinrich Heine, 1797-1856) from Five German Songs

Nacht liegt auf den fremden Wegen is another of the five songs published by Schirmer in 1909. It is dedicated to Fräulein Fredy Juel, a Norwegian singer that Griffes befriended in Berlin.

Heinrich Heine was born in Düsseldorf in the same year as Schubert and died in exile in Paris the same year as Schumann. He was Jewish, but went to Catholic schools and in 1825, for political reasons ‘converted’ to Protestantism. Politically he was a radical (he was third cousin once removed of Karl Marx) and grew to hate the censorship and restrictions of life in German-speaking lands. He espoused the liberal ideals of the French Revolution and spent the last 25 years of his life in self-imposed exile in Paris. Düsseldorf was under French occupation at the time of his birth, and from an early age Heine admired the French for their adoption of liberté, égalité and fraternité and the forward-looking Code Napoléon. He first began writing poetry when he was a law student at Bonn University. His first volume of poetry, called simply Gedichte, dates from 1821, written when he was at Berlin University (he had been suspended from Bonn University due to his radical political views), and his Buch der Lieder followed in 1827. This was to become the most influential and most widely read book of poetry ever published in German, and the one most commonly set by composers.

Song 4 - Könnt'ich mit dir dort oben gehn (Julius Mosen, 1803-1867)

Julius Mosen was the son of a cantor and schoolmaster. He studied law at Jena University and then at Leipzig and worked as an advocate there and then in Dresden. His published poetry includes Lied vom Ritter Wahn (1831), Ahasvar (1838) and a volume simply entitled Gedichte (1836). Mosen wrote a number of historical plays including Heinrich der Fünfte (1836) and Cola Rienzi (1842) about the 14th century Italian nationalist and attempter at Italian unity who was the subject of Wagner's early opera, and a historical novel Der Kongress von Verona (1842). His best-known work is the text of the Andreas-Hofer-Lied on the subject of an executed leader of the
Tyrolean Rebellion of 1810. This poem today forms the text of the anthem of the Austrian State of Tyrol. In 1846 Mosen was paralysed, aged only 42 and spent the remaining 21 years of his life bed-ridden.

Song 5 - The half-ring moon (John Tabb, 1845-1909)

John Tabb was born in Virginia. He was a blockade runner for the Confederacy in the American civil war, was captured and spent time in the ‘Bull-Pen’, a union prison camp, where he established a friendship with the poet and fellow-Confederate soldier Sidney Lanier. After the war he wanted to follow a career in music, practising the piano for many hours every day. Despite his failing eyesight (he began to go blind from the age of 14) he was given a teaching post at a school in Baltimore, and while there was converted to Catholicism. He entered St Charles College, Ellicott, Maryland, to prepare for the priesthood; he also taught Greek and English there. He was ordained as a priest in 1884, age 39, but kept his teaching position. His volumes of poetry include: Poems (1894), Lyrics (1897), Later Lyrics (1902) and Later Poems (published posthumously).

Song 6 - La fuite de la lune (Oscar Wilde, 1854-1900) from Tone Images Op 3

Griffes completed this song on 29th October 1912. The three Tone Images Op 3 were published by Schirmer's in 1914, alongside the Two Rondels Op 4. La Fuite de la Lune was performed by Louise Lancaster, with Griffes playing, on 5th September 1918 as part of the National American Music Festival at Lockport, New York.

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin. He studied Classics at Trinity College and Greats at Oxford. At Oxford he became interested in the aesthetics movement and flirted with freemasonry and Roman Catholicism. After Oxford Wilde returned to Dublin, then moved to London. His first set of poems was issued in 1881. Richard d'Oyly Carte invited Wilde to embark on a lecture tour of America, possibly as a means of promoting the forthcoming US tour of Gilbert and Sullivan's Patience, which caricatured the aestheticism that Wilde and his circle practised. Wilde married Constance Lloyd in 1884, their marriage was unhappy though and Wilde reignited his homosexual activities that had first become evident at Oxford. He wrote for The Pall Mall Gazette and other journals and became the editor of The Lady's World magazine. A string of successful short stories and plays followed: The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890), Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Stories (1891), the subtly subversive Lady Windermere's Fan (1892), Salome (1893, though not performed until 1896) and Wilde's final play, The Importance of being Earnest (1895).

Wilde was introduced to Lord Alfred Douglas, known as Bosie, in 1891, and they embarked on a wild and indiscreet affair, with Bosie introducing Wilde to the seamy London underworld of gay prostitution. The relationship angered Bosie's father, the Marquess of Queensberry; on 18th February Queensberry called at Wilde's club, the Albemarle, and left a card inscribed “For Oscar Wilde, posing somdomite” [sic]. Encouraged by Bosie, but against his friends’ advice, Wilde initiated a private prosecution for libel against Queensberry. The trial opened on 3rd April 1895 and was a cause célèbre as all the sordid details of Wilde’s gay life and the homosexual underworld of London were revealed. Wilde, on the advice of his lawyers dropped the prosecution and Queensberry was acquitted, but Wilde found himself liable to pay all of Queensberry's court expenses, which left him bankrupt. Wilde was arrested for gross indecency and held on remand in Holloway Prison. Wilde's trial opened on 26th April 1895. The jury was unable to reach a verdict and Wilde posted bail. The final trial was the following month and on 25th May 1895 Wilde was convicted of gross indecency and sentenced to two years hard labour, a sentence described by the judge as “totally inadequate for a case such as this.” His sentence was passed at Newgate Prison, then Pentonville, where the hard labour consisted of walking a treadmill for ten
hours at a time and picking oakum (separating the fibres in scraps of old navy ropes) then Wandsworth Prison, where his delicate health was ruined, he collapsed and spent two months in the infirmary. His eardrum was ruptured, an injury which later led to his death. He was finally moved to Reading Gaol to finish his sentence, which lasted from 25th May 1895 to 18th May 1897. He wrote a long letter to Bosie, reflecting on his life – he wasn’t allowed to send this but was permitted to take it with him when was released. This letter was later published as De Profundis. Wilde sailed to Dieppe on the evening of his release and never came back to Britain. In 1897 he wrote The Ballad of Reading Gaol describing the hanging of Charles Thomas Wooldridge there for murdering his wife. Wilde was reunited for a time with Bosie; they briefly lived together near Naples until both their families insisted that they separate on the threat of cutting off their funds. After that Wilde lived alone in poverty in Paris, drinking heavily. He died on 30th November 1900 and was initially buried in the Cimetière de Bagneux outside Paris, but reinterred in Père Lachaise Cemetery in 1909. Wilde was among the 50,000 men who received a posthumous pardon in 2017.

Song 7 - La mer (Oscar Wilde) from Four Impressions

La Mer was composed on 29th October 1912 and revised in 1916. The 1912 version is performed at this concert. In a letter to Gottfried Galston, his piano teacher in Berlin, dated 30th November 1911, Griffes wrote; “Last summer I read various things by Wilde. Some of his poems are not to my taste, others however I find wonderful. I tried composing to one or two but was not very satisfied with the results. With songs I am trying to limit myself to English texts.”

Song 8 - Phantoms (John Tabb)

This poem is from Tabb's first volume of poetry, prosaically entitled Poems, published in 1894. Tabb was almost completely blind by this time, so the hope expressed in the second verse is very poignant.

'Song' 9 - The White Peacock from Roman Sketches Op 7 (piano solo)

The White Peacock is inspired by a poem of the same name by Fiona MacLeod, the female alter ego of the Scottish poet and writer William Sharp, expressing the 'half-a woman' that he felt was inside him. Both the image of the White Peacock and the dual personality of William Sharp/Fiona MacLeod fascinated Griffes, who felt himself also as a dual personality; with a male side on public view to the world, and a female side which had to be kept hidden. ‘Fiona Macleod’s’ dictum; To live in beauty; which is to put into four words all the dream and spiritual effort of the soul of man can be said to have been Griffes’ credo, the objective of his life, ever since Emil Joël, his boyfriend in Berlin, had written “In the pure, beautiful realm of dreams You will create for us much lovely music” in the score of Siegfried that he had given him during those carefree days. Griffes kept a copy of Fiona MacLeod's poem on his piano while he was composing The White Peacock, and he cut out and kept any image of white peacocks that he could find from newspapers and magazines. In mythology the white peacock symbolises the divine self realised, or as Griffes saw it, a realisation and acceptance of one's true sexual nature, which, in an ideal world of beauty as described in Fiona MacLeod's poem, should be displayed proudly like a peacock's tail, not kept hidden as Griffes' gayness had to be, and as Sharp's female half-self also had to be hidden. It is also no coincidence that the male peacock has a beauty that the female peahen, with no such tail feathers, does not. The white peacock also has the added symbolism of purity, eternity and unconditional love.
The White Peacock was written during May and June 1915 and published by Schirmer's as one of the 4 Roman Sketches in 1917. It is dedicated to the pianist Rudolph Ganz, who Griffes had met in May 1916. The first performance though was by the English pianist Winifred Christie at the Punch and Judy Theater on 23rd February 1916, and it was performed again at the Greenwich Village Theatre on three consecutive Sundays in April 1918 in a version choreographed for the Japanese dancer Michio Ito. Rudolph Ganz included The White Peacock in a piano recital he gave at the Aeolian Hall on 23rd January 1919.

Song 10 - Les ballons (Oscar Wilde)

The soprano Gertrude Flint Frisbie, who admired Griffes' songs and included them in her recitals on a number of occasions, had told him that she thought these words were impossible to set. Griffes evidently took this as a challenge – he did indeed experience difficulties in composing this song - he began to write it in 1912 but it was not completed until 1915. The poem shows Wilde's and Griffes' obsession with colour.

Song 11 - Come, Love, across the sunlit land (Clinton Scollard, 1860-1932) from Two Rondels Op 4

The Two Rondels were published alongside the Tone Images op 3 in 1914. The poems are from an anthology titled Ballades and Rondeaux that Griffes had purchased the previous November. This song was first performed in the same concert as La Fuite de la Lune as part of the National American Music Festival on 5th September 1918.

Clinton Scollard was born in Clinton, New York State. He studied at the local college, Hamilton College, where he was a noted baseball player and is credited with introducing the curveball to baseball. He also attended Harvard University, where he met and befriended the poet Bliss Carman. After Harvard he went travelling, spending a year in Cambridge in England then going to Greece, Egypt and Palestine. He returned to America and became a professor of English at Hamilton College. He married twice, his second wife being the poet Jessie Belle Rittenhouse. Between 1884 and his death he published 23 volumes of poetry, and a 24th was published posthumously.

Song 12 - Phantoms (Arturo Giovannitti, 1884-1959) from Three Poems Op 9

Griffes asked Giovannitti for copyright permission to set this text on 7th October 1917, however this was actually after he had sold the rights to Schirmer the previous September!

The Italian-American political activist and poet Arturo Giovannitti was born in Italy but emigrated to Canada when he was 16 where he worked in a coal mine and on the railways. He moved to New York in 1904 and ran rescue missions for Italians in Brooklyn. He joined the Italian Socialist Federation of America, and the radical labour movement Industrial Workers of the World. In January 1912 the Lawrence Textile Strike took place. The American Woollen Company in Lawrence Massachusetts reduced the pay of its workers and a strike was called. The mayor of Lawrence called in the local militia who attempted to stop the workers from picketing; 36 were arrested and given prison sentences. Giovannitti was summoned to help with the relief effort, soup kitchens were set up and funds were raised across America to support the families of the strikers. The strike turned violent; a 15-year old boy was killed by a militiaman's bayonet and a woman was shot, allegedly by police, but a striker was charged with her murder. Giovannitti and one other person was arrested and charged as accessories to the murder. Due to the bad publicity the company agreed to all the strikers' demands on 12th March, but Giovannitti remained in prison without trial. He wrote many poems while in prison. Protest meetings all over
America demanded his release, the trial finally took place on 26th November and Giovannitti was acquitted. He was an anti-war activist during the First World War, campaigning for America to stay neutral. After the war, he concentrated his efforts on traditional trade unionism and making a name as one of the greatest orators of the labour movement.

**Song 13 - Waikiki (Rupert Brooke, 1887-1915) from Three Poems op 9**

*Waikiki* was premiered by Eva Gauthier and Marcel Hansotte at the Aeolian Hall New York on 22nd April 1918 a year after publication, together with the as yet unpublished *Sorrow of Mydath*. A review of the *Three Poems* in *Musical America* on 30th March 1918 says: “*Three Poems* Mr Griffes calls these compositions. We are glad that he does not call them songs. If *Waikiki* be the music that he has felt from knowing this poem, then indeed he is the American Stravinsky, as he has been dubbed by his disciples in the nether regions of Greenwich Village. To us he seems to have missed the warmth, the languor of ‘the murmurous, soft Hawaiian sea.’ For doctors of music, for aesthetic dancers who constitute themselves authorities on modern music, for self-appointed music critics whose writing is as distinct as their knowledge of the subject is not, this song will be a masterwork before they will prostrate themselves and about which they will wax enthusiastic.” *Waikiki* has since come to be recognised as one of Griffes' greatest songs.

Rupert Brooke's father was a housemaster at Rugby School. He went to Cambridge, where he became friends with many members of the Bloomsbury Group including Virginia Woolf. Brooke was known for his boyish good looks; W B Yeats called him “the handsomest young man in England.” In 1909, aged twenty-two he moved to the Old Vicarage in Grantchester, just outside Cambridge, a village that he celebrated in his poem *The Old Vicarage, Grantchester* (1912), written while homesick in Berlin, Brooke had gone travelling to mainland Europe, the Americas and the Pacific in order to help him recuperate from a nervous collapse and emotional crisis resulting from his supressed bisexuality and relationship breakdowns. He returned home just before the outbreak of war and joined the Royal Navy in August 1914. In February 1915 he was sailing for the Dardanelles and developed septicaemia from a mosquito bite. He died on April 23rd 1915, and was buried on the Greek island of Skyros.

Rupert Brooke's poetry is unlike that of the other war poets in that it expresses a nationalistic idealism and often speaks of a heroic nobility that is very uncomfortable to read now. Had he lived longer and seen life in the trenches he would undoubtedly have changed his views.

**Song 14 - The Old Temple (Chang Wen-Chang, Tang Dynasty, c. 8th/9th century BC) from Five poems of Ancient China and Japan Op 10**

The *Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan* were premiered by Eva Gauthier and Griffes on 1st November 1917 at Carnegie Hall, New York, in a concert that also included the American premiere of Ravel's *Trois Chansons*. There were several reviews; the *Musical Leader* wrote; “*Nothing on Miss Gauthier's program was more interesting or written with a more winsome pen than the Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan composed on the 5-and 6-tone scales by Charles T Griffes, who appeared at the piano himself as accompanist in this series. The songs are of inherent beauty. Mr Griffes has an unusual talent and he has a fine interpreter in Miss Gauthier, just as she has an excellent medium for a phase of musical expression for which she is strangely well equipped.*” Schirmer's had only agreed to publish them in September, two months previously. On 12th September Griffes write to Rudolph Schirmer; “*The reason for my writing to you is to ask if they could be rushed through any way. [He and Eva Gauthier were going to premiere them on 1st November] I think they ought to be out by that time if possible. There always many enquiries after a new thing immediately after its first performance. If people can't get it, they are apt to lose track of it, and do not ask for it again. I am sorry to bother you about this matter, but realise of course that only you can decide about
such rush orders." Schirmer’s did agree; Griffes spent the morning of 25th October at their office correcting the proofs.

**Song 15 - Kinanti (traditional Sundanese) from Three Javanese Songs**

*Kinanti* was written in 1917, in traditional Sundanese. The inspiration for the *Three Javanese Songs* was the mezzo-soprano Eva Gauthier, who championed Griffes' songs, giving the premieres of several. She lived in Java 1910-14 (apparently staying for part of that time in the palace of the Sultan of Solo) and collected examples of indigenous music, which she happily gave to Griffes. She was one of the first westerners to study the Gamalan in depth.

**Song 16 - Lament of Ian the Proud from Three Poems of Fiona MacLeod (William Sharp aka Fiona MacLeod, 1855-1905) Op 11**

Written in early 1918, these three songs were originally conceived as orchestral songs. Schirmer's agreed to publish piano versions the following April, leading to a disagreement with Griffes as Schirmer's insisted that they had "the right to publish practical orchestral and band arrangements of the composition covered by this agreement and that such arrangements shall be free and exempt from all royalties." Griffes understandably disputed this clause, but Schirmer's countered by saying best cross our bridges when we come to them, and pointing out that this only referred to arrangements that Schirmer's made, leaving Griffes free to make, and profit by, his own arrangements. These piano versions appeared in Schirmer's Spring Catalogue 1919, and the premiere was given by Vera Janacopulos and Griffes at the Aeolian Hall on 22nd March 1919.

Fiona MacLeod was the pseudonym of the Scottish poet and writer William Sharp, and an expression of the female persona that he felt was part of himself. Sharp enrolled at Glasgow University but left before completing his degree to travel with a family of gypsies. He joined the Rossetti circle and shared many of their aesthetic values. He married his cousin, the writer Elizabeth Sharp and later developed a relationship with Edith Wingate Rinder, another writer and the wife of the art critic Frank Rinder. Edith was closely associated with the Scottish Celtic Revival, and it was she who inspired William to develop the secret persona of Fiona MacLeod. From 1893 he wrote under both names; as Fiona MacLeod, exploring Celtic lore, legends and mysticism, subjects that he felt unable to access in his ‘real’ life and writing with a dreamlike spirituality that was totally different to anything he could write in his male persona, and as William Sharp for works more grounded in the ‘real’ world, his work as a critic and biographer. The deception was very thorough; William corresponded as Fiona, using his sister to provide her handwriting, and Fiona had her own entry in Who’s Who. The three women in Sharp's life, Elizabeth, Edith, and his sister, were all in on the deception and kept the secret until his death. Suspicions were aroused when ‘Fiona MacLeod' had to decline a civil list pension, but the prime minister, Arthur Balfour, accepted a verbal assurance from Sharp (maybe he was privy to the secret too?) which meant the identity of Fiona didn't have to be revealed.

**Song 17 - The Sorrow of Mydath from Two Poems by John Masefield (John Masefield, 1878-1967)**

*The Sorrow of Mydath* was written in December 1917 and was accepted for publication on 11th February 1918 but in fact only published after Griffes' death. The premiere was given by Eva Gauthier and Marcel Hansotte in April 1918 at the Aeolian Hall. The review in the *Evening Mail* spoke of “an advance in the direction of ultra-modernism on the part of that gifted composer.” Other critics were more forthright; Herbert E Peyser of *Musical America* considered these songs “ill-sounding and vacuous trash” and wrote of “variously ugly, neurotic or senseless spasms.”
Both John Masefield's parents died in tragic circumstances when he was six: his mother in childbirth and his father after a mental breakdown. He was sent away to boarding school, where he was intensely unhappy, then to sea, in an attempt by his aunt to rid him of his love of books, of which she strongly disapproved. After a number of voyages, he abandoned ship in New York and lived as a vagrant, working part time in a carpet factory, and continuing to read as many books as he could whenever he could. He returned to England in 1897 age 29, settled down working as a bank clerk and starting to write poetry. His first published volume was Salt Water Ballads (1902). When war broke out he went to France to work as a hospital orderly, and then went to Gallipoli where he started a motorboat ambulance service. After the war he settled in Oxfordshire, where he kept livestock and took up bee keeping. He was appointed Poet Laureate in 1930.

Charles Griffes (1884-1920) – A summary of his life by Nigel Foster

Charles Griffes was born in Elmira in New York State. He had a comfortable childhood and played the piano from an early age, first taking lessons from his sister, then from Mary Selena Broughton, a teacher at Elmira College. In 1901, aged 16, he wrote his first songs, two settings of French poems by Sainte-Beuve and Victor Hugo. In 1903 Griffes went to Berlin to study at the Stern Conservatory, financed by Mary Broughton. In Berlin he studied piano with Ernst Jedliczka, but composition gradually assumed a greater importance and he studied briefly with Engelbert Humperdinck. While in Berlin Griffes read the writings of Magnus Hirschfeld, Edward Carpenter, André Gide and Oscar Wilde and became fully accepting of and comfortable with his homosexuality. He entered into a relationship with Emil Joël, a fellow student 8 years older than he, who greatly influenced and supported his musical and artistic development.

Griffes returned to America in 1907 and took the post of Director of Music at Hackley School, a private school in Tarrytown, New York. The job was dreary for him, but it did give him some financial stability and he was free to go into New York at weekends and during the holidays to take advantage of the city's cultural life. His first publication was Five German Songs, issued by Schirmer's in 1909. Musically Griffes was influenced by French impressionism and by the orient; he wrote songs based on Chinese, Japanese and Javanese texts and scales, as well as from Hawaii. In literature, the works of Oscar Wilde and Fiona MacLeod, the female alter ego of the Scottish writer William Sharp, were important influences and Celtic themes played a large part also. As well as many songs, Griffes wrote piano music, his Three Tone Pictures (including The Lake at Evening), Roman Sketches (including The White Peacock), the piano sonata (1917-18) and The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla-Khan, based on poetry by Coleridge being his most famous. Stage works include a dance-drama The Kairn of Koridwen (1919) based on a druid legend and Sho-jo (1917), a Japanese-inspired pantomime. Emotionally at this time Griffes found solace in a relationship with John Meyer, a married policeman.

Griffes was gradually becoming more well known as a composer; over the winter of 1919-20 the New York Symphony Orchestra played his Poem for Flute and Orchestra in the Aeolian Hall, the Boston Symphony Orchestra played the orchestral version of The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla-Khan in Boston, which was then repeated in New York's Carnegie Hall and the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra also performed his works. Griffes attended the concert in Boston, which was a huge success but was too ill to attend the others. He died in hospital, age just 35, a victim of the Spanish Flu pandemic.

Nigel Foster