

MUSIC ROOM POETRY
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After you, Mr. Ryder

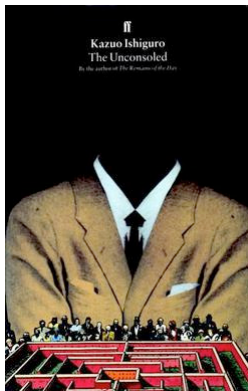
by

Cheryl Moskowitz and Alastair Gavin



www.allsaintssessions.uk

Music Room Poetry, Bloomsbury
Tuesday 11th June 2024, 7.30pm



ALLSAINTSSESSION #17

After you, Mr. Ryder

PROGRAMME

Text by Cheryl Moskowitz plus excerpts from:

- **Death In Venice** by Thomas Mann
- **The Unconsoled** by Kazuo Ishiguro
- **An Outline of Psychoanalysis** by Sigmund Freud
- **The Innocents** by William Archibald

*Music by Alastair Gavin inc. **Orchid** (Chappell Recorded Music Library) plus:*

- two drones by Phil Niblock (1933–2024)
- **Soundtrack of Shadow Play** by I.S. Mathur (c1945–)

Field recordings, recorded May 2024:

- Piccadilly Line tube train
- outside Somerset House, London
- pavement repair team, Winton Ave, London
- outside the Missing Bar, Birmingham
- inside the Cheshire Cheese Pub, London
- audience at Birmingham Hippodrome for a performance of Benjamin Britten's opera *Death In Venice*
- audience at Cafe Oto, London for a gig by Maggie Nichols, Charlotte Hug and Caroline Kraabel

The Unconsoled by Kazuo Ishiguro

Ryder, a renowned concert pianist, arrives in an unnamed Central European city for an important concert the following day. There is great anticipation that this performance will restore the city's cultural reputation but Ryder realises that not only has he mislaid his schedule of the many events planned over the next two days, but has also failed to do any practice for the recital. Moreover his rapidly disappearing preparation time becomes increasingly squeezed by an endless stream of encounters with overly obsequious and/or needy people, and his exhaustion deepens as the story progresses in a dream-like fug of missed appointments, reappearances of forgotten family members and acquaintances, and unrealistic expectations. It is an anxiety-provoking read and yet also, like our own dreams, emotionally truthful and often farcical and hilarious.

We both read this book in 1996, the year after it was published. It's a tome, over 500 pages long. We had three young children, the youngest still a baby, so managing to read anything at all felt like a miracle. Ryder's predicament strongly resonated with us as we balanced our responsibilities as parents with trying to consolidate our freelance and unpredictable artistic careers, and still does nearly thirty years on. And in a way none more so than now, having known we wanted to make an All Saints work which responded to the themes in *The Unconsoled*, formulating a proposal for the editors at Music Room Poetry, kindly being given a performance date – Tuesday 11 June – and then having to actually write the piece. Our proposal was inspiring to us and yet simultaneously a stick with which to beat ourselves with as we strove to live up to it. In *The Unconsoled* Ryder is incapable of saying no to people and yet, as sure as night follows day, the curtain was going to open at the allotted time, and something was going to have to happen.

All Saints Sessions is about the meeting place of words and sound, and the thrill of chance happenings and the new layers created by these collisions. Developing this evening's debut showing of *After You, Mr. Ryder* has been thrilling for us, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Writer **Rumaan Alam** on *The Unconsoled* (from *My Favourite Ishiguro*, The Guardian):

[...] The Unconsoled would be easier to make sense of were it the pure abstraction of experiment. Instead, it unfolds as scenes that are almost impossible to reconcile into a whole. "I'll do my very best for you, but I have to warn you, I may not be quite the influence I once was," Ryder tells a crowd of well-wishers before his concert. But Ishiguro isn't just talking about himself. Ryder is haunted by a past he's often barely able to remember. He finds himself in places (hotel rooms, apartments, cafés) that seem familiar but also profoundly changed. He's just trying to get through the day, but beset at every turn by odd people and illogical circumstances. Nothing makes much sense. But he keeps going, from hotel room to apartment to café. It's not about art, or not only; it's about life itself.

Poet **Caroline Bird** on poetry and dreams:

We're all poets when we're asleep: translating our emotion into imagery (in poetry – and dreams – the imagery is the emotion) and when we wake up, we only know two things: 1) the dream was about ourselves 2) we will never fully understand it. And that's the beautiful, infinite paradox of poetry... it is as personal and private as a dream and yet if you write it vividly enough – make the experience real – then the reader can dream it too, in the privacy of their minds, and it becomes theirs, and they wake up from it, scratch their heads and feel simultaneously closer and further away from themselves.

CHERYL MOSKOWITZ is a poet, novelist and creative translator trained in dramatherapy and psychodynamic counselling. She writes for children and adults. She has authored two poetry collections, one novel and two poetry books for children. Formerly an actor and playwright, she facilitates creative projects in a wide variety of health and community settings including schools, prisons, refugee centres, and with the homeless. She was one of the original co-founders of Lapidus, the national organisation for writing for wellbeing and taught on the ground-breaking Creative Writing & Personal Development MA from 1996-2010 at Sussex University. She is an editor at Magma and together with Alastair curates the poetry and electronic series, All Saints Sessions.

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ALASTAIR GAVIN is a keyboardist, composer and arranger. He has composed for film, TV, theatre and dance, with over 90 production music (library) compositions to his name. In 2018 and 2021 Warner Chappells released his albums of ambient music created on a vintage Wurlitzer piano and electronics: *Weathered Stone*, and *From A Distant Earth*. He has worked as a keyboardist for artists ranging from Mari Wilson to the Michael Nyman Band, and on various West End shows, and until 2016 he was assistant musical director for the London production of *Mamma Mia!* In 2017 he completed a masters in Scenography at Central School of Speech and Drama and in the same year started the All Saints Sessions with Cheryl, in a church in Edmonton, North London. He is a keyboards lecturer on the Popular Music Performance BMus at BIMM London.

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