**Will Harmer**

**Performance Information**

**Will Harmer *Drummer Hodge***

Solo piano Duration 5’ 39”

**Will Harmer** piano

YouTube Image: Photo by Juanita Swart

**Text**

*Drummer Hodge*

They throw in Drummer Hodge, to rest Uncoffined—just as found: His landmark is a kopje-crest That breaks the veldt around; And foreign constellations west Each night above his mound.

Young Hodge the Drummer never knew— Fresh from his Wessex home— The meaning of the broad Karoo, The Bush, the dusty loam, And why uprose to nightly view Strange stars amid the gloam

Yet portion of that unknown plain Will Hodge for ever be; His homely Northern breast and brain Grow up a Southern tree, And strange-eyed constellations reign His stars eternally.

*Thomas Hardy*

**Programme Note**

*Drummer Hodge* is inspired by Thomas Hardy’s 1901 poem of the same name. It depicts a young, innocent drummer boy, who having died in the Boer War, is given an “uncoffined” burial and his body gradually becomes part of the vast South African veldt, alien and far away from his homeland. This piece reflects on the sorrow of this small boy’s fate, left to dereliction in a huge, unfriendly environment. From simple childlike motives evolve the contrapuntal expanses of the veldt, coloured by plaintive modal harmonies. The high tolling notes in the final section evoke a distant marching into battle, which was for Drummer Hodge a slow journey to death and insignificance.

**Biography**

Will is a composer and pianist studying at Worcester College, Oxford. He studied composition for 6 years at Junior Guildhall with Jeffery Wilson and he was also a member of Aldeburgh Young Musicians. Currently he studies composition with Robert Saxton and piano with Anna Tilbrook. In 2017, Will won the BBC Proms Inspire Competition, with his composition *The Whole Heaven on Fire* being performed by the Aurora Orchestra under Nicholas Collon. He was subsequently commissioned by the BBC Singers to compose *Voyage of the Soul*, a piece commemorating the Apollo 11 Moon Landings which was broadcast on Radio 3 last year. Will’s works have been performed in venues such as Snape Maltings, St John’s College Chapel, Wigmore Hall and The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and have been broadcast on BBC radio and television.