

## **Any Enemy**

*Conducted by Pete Stollery*

### **Lemon Tree, Aberdeen**

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019

#### **Programme**

Ruaraidh Williams	<i>This Morning I watched from here</i>
Georgina MacDonell Finlayson	<i>To Glenesk</i>
Joe Stollery	<i>Sticks and Stones</i>

*All three pieces are world premieres*

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**Any Enemy** is a flexible new music ensemble based in Aberdeen. Founded by Guera Maunder and Lesley Wilson in 2018, it is composed of local musicians keen to play contemporary music together. Any Enemy made its concert debut at the 2018 **soundfestival**.

Any Enemy is: Guera Maunder (violin), Alison MacDonald (cello), Catherine O'Rourke (flute), Fiona Gordon (oboe), Lucy Webster (bassoon), Pauline Black (trumpet), Brodie McCash and Peter Ney (percussion), Aden Mazur (piano) and Pete Stollery (conductor).

Today's programme is the conclusion of an opportunity offered to three local young composers, who have been working with the ensemble since June 2019 to develop their pieces.

#### **Programme notes**

##### **Ruaraidh Williams *This Morning I watched from here***

Hotel Room, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor by Norman MacCaig

*This morning I watched from here  
a helicopter skirting like a damaged insect  
the Empire State Building, that  
jumbo size dentist's drill, and landing  
on the roof of the PanAm skyscraper.*

*But now midnight has come in  
from foreign places. Its uncivilised darkness  
is shot at by a million lit windows, all  
ups and acrosses*

*But midnight is not  
so easily defeated. I lie in bed, between  
a radio and a television set, and hear  
the wildest of warwhoops continually ululating through  
the glittering canyons and gulches—  
police cars and ambulances racing  
to the broken bones, the harsh screaming  
from coldwater flats, the blood  
glazed on sidewalks.*

*The frontier is never  
somewhere else. And no stockades  
can keep the midnight out.*

Inspired by the poetry of Norman MacCaig, this piece depicts the bright, new, modern city of 1960s New York. Between the bustling drive of the city and the downtown jazz clubs contentions have arisen from greater, darker forces at play which are reflected in the pieces slight discordance and rhythmic contention. The sighing melody of the second half conveys MacCaig's contemplation of the night and the links between the wild west and 'The Frontier' which is 'never somewhere else.' as 'no stockades can keep the midnight out'. (RW)

Ruaraidh Williams is a final year student at Albyn School. Having performed as Principal Cello with The National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, he was recently selected as Principal Cello for Grampian Youth Orchestra's 2020 Berlin tour. Earlier this year he was awarded the Joan Dickson Cello Scholarship from *North East Scotland Music School*, a Robert Lewin Scholarship from *Awards for Young Musicians* and a Steve Martland Scholarship from *Sound and Music*. In November 2019 Ruaraidh will be performing a new composition by Shiori Usui called 'The Silent Forest' with musicians from the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

### **Georgina MacDonell Finlayson *To Glenesk***

*To Glenesk by Helen Cruickshank*

*I sing of Prosen  
or of Noranside,  
but these are not my dears,  
Another stream is running in my blood,  
grown dearer thro' the years;  
One loved since childhood*

*like a mother's face  
no child can e'er portray;  
Too dear, too near,  
too much a part of me,  
and now too far away.*

*A child cannot describe  
his mother's face,  
nor can I paint aright  
the loveliness  
inhabiting the place,  
the source of my delight.*

*Maskeldy, Unich,  
Waters of the Tarf,  
Effock, Cardowan, Lee,  
Glenesk.*

Based around the poem *To Glenesk* by the North East writer Helen Cruickshank, this piece is an exploration of the glen and a landscape which has been my home and childhood playground for the last twenty-three years. It combines a simple strathspey-like tune with the playfulness of childhood memories, but also strives to evoke a sense of the ice, wind and cold and the natural elements around which my young life revolved. Overall the work is tinged with a sense of emptiness and longing – both my own yearning for the place which I know so dearly, but also a lamentation for the change and depopulation which has occurred there in the last one hundred years. Cruickshank's poem resonates very personally with me and my intention has been to weave her prose through a musical tapestry of memory, nature and landscape.

Georgina MacDonell Finlayson

Born and raised in Glenesk in the North East of Scotland, Georgina recently graduated with a first class degree in music from The University of Edinburgh. Aged seven she started violin lessons with a strong passion to perform, having since played with orchestras across Scotland including NYOS, Kellie Consort and the newly founded Nevis Ensemble. It was during her university studies under the tutelage of Dr Gareth Williams and Pippa Murphy that she began to explore her own compositional voice. In her final year, she was one of a small cohort of composers given the opportunity to write a piece for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, which was premiered at the 2019 ECA Degree Show. Georgina plans to go on to further study at postgraduate level where she can continue to combine her love of performance and composition.

### **Joe Stollery *Sticks and Stones***

For many years I have been interested in certain harmonic progressions. Having listened to plenty of music from the common-practice period, I have worked out that much of the harmonic language used there essentially boils down to two particularly interesting types: a rise from and back to the tonic, and a cycle, usually in fifths. I then visualised these harmonic shapes and came up with a stroke (I) and circle (O) respectively. These symbols provide various templates for the harmonic backbone of this piece. The title then comes in to describe certain natural objects based in these shapes.

There is also a sense of conflict in the title, seeming to suggest the phrase 'Sticks and stones / will break my bones', and so I decided to incorporate that element into the music.

In short, this piece can be described as a melee between various musical ideas, that is generally loud, brutal and merciless, with some ironic allusions to the baroque!

Joe Stollery

Joe is a composer from central Aberdeenshire, currently working through his PhD at the University of Aberdeen. He has written for a wide variety of ensembles, mostly instrumental, but also including art songs and a handful of chamber operas. His musical interests cover a wide range, and as such his compositional aesthetic stands somewhere between common-practice and the avant-garde. He is also keen on putting dramatic statements into his music and is inclined towards a theatrical element in many of his instrumental works. [www.joestollery.com](http://www.joestollery.com)

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**sound** is a new music incubator based in north-east Scotland encouraging new music creation and discovery. We run the annual **soundfestival**, as well as year-round activity supporting a wide range of composers, engaging with local communities and providing educational opportunities.

Find out more: [www.sound-scotland.co.uk](http://www.sound-scotland.co.uk)

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