



Gaia
Ruth Morley - flute
Laura Bowler - soprano

Sunday 25th October 2020, 1200

Programme

Laura Bowler	<i>Wicked Problems (2020)*</i>
Carmel Smickersgill	<i>More (2020)*</i>
Dai Fujikura	<i>Glacier (2010)</i>
Deirdre McKay	<i>Postcards from a fragile Planet (2020)*</i>
Larry Goves	<i>Happy/boomf/fat (2018)</i>

* Co-commissioned by **sound**, New Music Dublin,
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Royal Northern College of
Music and Kings Place

Supported by PRS Foundation's Beyond Borders

Programme notes

Laura Bowler *Wicked Problems*

Wicked Problems sets text from Timothy Morton's Dark Ecology. The flute and voice find themselves entangled in loops, gasping for air and incessantly thrown forward into the uncertainly interminable. Many thanks to Timothy Morton for his permission to set this extract of text.

Carmel Smickersgill *More*

More explores the relationship between a dependent and the person or thing on which they depend. Written for Laura Bowler and Ruth Morley, the performers play these two roles and we watch as over the course of the piece that relationship become increasingly fraught. The dependent unknowingly takes, and demands, and drains the other person until it reaches a breaking point.

Dai Fujikura *Glacier*

This piece was originally taken from the last section of my ensemble work called "ICE." It was then developed into a stand-alone solo piece. In my imagination this piece is like a plume of cold air which is floating silently between the peaks of a very icy cold landscape, slowly but cutting like a knife...

Deidre McKay *Postcards from a fragile Planet*

Postcard (i) :

Excerpt from a President's address, responding to the Green New Deal climate change legislation

It is impossible to separate concerns for our shared climate crisis from the commentary, influence and ultimate Policy implementation of our most powerful Politicians. Scientific truth must be at the heart of our reach for attainable solutions to the current climate emergency and these solutions must be driven into Policy change. Greenland's Ice sheet shrank by 532 billion tonnes in 2019 - double its already accelerating average annual ice loss.

Postcard (i) text quotes from an address given by the 45th President to young conservatives at the Turning Point USA student action summit, West Palm

Beach, Florida, 21st December 2019. The comments were in response to the Green New Deal climate change legislation, championed by liberal Democrats.

On 4th November 2019, the 45th President initiated formal withdrawal of the United States from the landmark global Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The withdrawal is due to come into effect the day after the November 2020 Presidential election. The Paris Agreement brought together 197 nations in joint accord to constrain global warming.

The President's Aberdeenshire Golf Resort company engaged in a lengthy legal battle, taken to the UK Supreme Court, against the Scottish Government's plans for the now operative offshore wind farm in Aberdeen Bay.

The Postcard's text also interweaves facts on atmospheric carbon.

Postcard (ii) : 'Nature is sending us a message'

Gathering quotations from Inger Andersen (United Nations Environment Programme Executive Director), John Scanlon (former secretary general of Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), Professor Andrew Cunningham (Zoological Society of London), David Quammen, nature and science writer, in commentary responding to the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which triggered the current Covid-19 pandemic. Erosion of wild spaces, habitat loss, the hunting and trading of wildlife are driving emergence of infectious disease in humans - instances of which are accelerating.

A devastating human and economic cost. In the words of the United Nations' Environment chief, Inger Andersen, 'Nature is sending us a message'.

Biographies

Ruth Morley

Ruth Morley was born in Lincoln and studied in Glasgow with David Nicholson and as a Wingate Scholar in Manchester with Peter Lloyd. She is the flute player for Red Note Ensemble, and has also appeared with Hebrides Ensemble, Edinburgh Quartet, and as soloist with London Concertante. She plays regular solo recitals with pianist Scott Mitchell, and also performs with Sharron Griffiths and Scott Dickinson in their flute viola and harp trio. Ruth is also currently developing her project “Lost and Found” with funds from Creative Scotland, which will enable her to commission new works for solo flute.

Ruth has appeared at most of the UK’s major music festivals as well as enjoying touring to many festivals across Europe. She plays regularly on Radio 3 and Radio Scotland and has been a featured artist on Classic FM. She has recorded for Delphian, Metier, 7things, Natural Studio and Mode.

She worked for many years with The Scottish Flute Trio, during which time she premiered many new commissions and site specific collaborative work by leading composers including Thea Musgrave, Edward McGuire, Javier Alvarez, Sally Beamish, Gordon McPherson, Robert Dick, Joji Hirota, and David Fennessy.

Alongside performing work, Ruth teaches at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She is the founder of the Scottish International Flute Summer School, and was its director from 1996 – 2015. The course still attracts students from all over the world.

Favourite concert so far - playing George Crumb’s Vox Balaenae in the amazing cathedral acoustic of the Concorde hangar at East Fortune with that incredible aeroplane above our heads. (Red Note & Lammermuir Festival)

Favourite project so far - Framed Against the Sky. So many crazy gigs playing on stations, in art classes and craft fairs and on Pennan shore into a long summer night, plus kids writing songs with Brian Irvine - genius. (Red Note & Sound)

Laura Bowler

Laura Bowler is a composer, vocalist and sound designer living and working in London and Manchester. She is a Visiting Professor of Composition at Guildhall School of Music Drama, a Lecturer in Composition at Royal Northern College of Music and the Artistic Director of Size Zero Opera.

Her work is influenced by many composers and artists ranging from Stephen Sondheim to Harrison Birtwistle, the paintings of Kandinsky to the theatre of Antonin Artaud. Her passion for working in the theatre is apparent in her compositional output with numerous theatre pieces alongside many concert works with a theatrical influence or performance quality.

Laura is currently working on a new opera working with Edward Bond, a new 20 minute work for the Crouch End Festival Chorus and an immersive music theatre piece for Colourscape for Helen Vidovich (Flute), the Ligeti Quartet and physical theatre performers.

She has been commissioned by BBC SO, LPO, Manchester Camerata, Land's End Ensemble, Lafayette Quartet, Quatour Bozzini, The Opera Group, ROH2, Tete a Tete Opera, Grimeborn Opera, London Sinfonietta, Esbjerg Ensemble and The Kreutzer Quartet among others and has received performances throughout Europe, Canada and the USA.

Having completed her BMus (Hons) at the Royal Northern College of Music and as an Erasmus scholar at the Sibelius Academy of Music followed by her Masters in Composition at the Royal Academy of Music studying with Gary Carpenter generously supported by the Ralph Vaughan Williams Scholarship. Following this she completed her PhD in Composition funded by the AHRC at the Royal Academy of Music supervised by Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Gary Carpenter and Dr Sarah Callis.

Carmel Smickersgill

Carmel is a Manchester based composer and performer. Since leaving education she has worked in a variety of mediums, predominantly writing for theatre, concert hall and playing with the band Bunny Hoova. As one of the nominees for Apple Music's Rising Star Ivor Novello Award, she is currently under the mentorship of Anna Meredith.

Carmel has previously been commissioned by Liverpool Philharmonic Ensemble 10/10, Galvanise Ensemble and Fretwork, Dada Fest and Video Jam among others. She has also been collaborating with the Creative Collective at Leeds

College of Music as part of Making Music and Sound and Music's Adopt a Composer programme.

Outside of notated music Carmel mostly works with live electronics and more pop orientated genres. This can be seen in her work for Theatre as well as with the band Bunny Hoova.

Both her compositions and arrangements have been performed live on Radio 3 and she can be seen as one of the synthesiser orchestra in the documentary Decades, a fly on the wall look at the touring production of Σ (No, 12k, Lg, 17Mif) New Order + Liam Gillick: So it goes..

Before becoming freelance, Carmel studied at the RNCM with Gary Carpenter and graduated with a 1:1 BMus Cons Composition.

Deirdre McKay

Irish composer Deirdre McKay's work has featured at London's Southbank, Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam, Gothenburg International Chamber Music Festival, Orléans Concours International, The Wigmore Hall, London, The National Sawdust, Brooklyn, The Phillips Collection, Washington, National Concert Hall, Dublin, Symphony Space & Carnegie Hall, New York.

Commissions and performances include works for Northern Ireland Opera, State Choir Latvija for Louth Contemporary Music, Chamber Choir Ireland, BBC Singers, Ulster Orchestra, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Boston Firebird Ensemble, RTÉ Con Tempo, Vanbrugh, Norwegian Vertavo and Swiss Terpsycordes string quartets, Access Contemporary Music Chicago, New Music Dublin, pianists Andrew Zolinsky and Antti Siirala, Chloë Hanslip & Danny Driver, Tasmin Little & Martin Roscoe, Dutch violist Elisabeth Smalt, Calefax reed quintet, Irish artists Clíona Doris, Robin Tritschler, Carol McGonnell, Darragh Morgan and Mary Dullea, Catherine Leonard and Hugh Tinney, Elizabeth Cooney and Finghin Collins, Concorde and the Crash Ensemble.

Recipient of a Director's Choice Award from Boston Metro Opera's International Composers' Competition and an Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Major Individual Artist Award, Deirdre was awarded a Paul Hamlyn Composer Award, London, in 2018.

Her music has been released on the Lorelt, Diatribe and RTÉ Lyric FM labels and broadcast by BBC Radio 3, Deutschlandradio Kultur and New York's WNYC and WQXR.

Larry Goves

Larry Goves is a British composer and artist based in Manchester (UK). His work has been presented, performed, about broadcast around the world by numerous groups and musicians including the London Sinfonietta, the Nash Ensemble, The London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, The National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, The Britten Sinfonia, Psappha, The Solem String Quartet, The Argonaut Ensemble (Australia), The Hallé, BIT20 (Norway), 175 East (New Zealand), L'Instant Donné (France), Divertimento Ensemble (Italy), Oliver Coates, Sarah Nicolls, Kathryn Williams, Tom McKinney, Carl Raven, and many others all over the UK and abroad.

His music has been released on NMC, Dutton, Prima Facie, Slip, Nonclassical, Prah, LSO Live, and on the London Sinfonietta's Label. As an installation artist he has presented work at the Aldeburgh Festival, the Tatton Park Biennial, The Science Museum (London), and the Wellcome Institute.

An experienced curator, he was the co-curator of Manchester's New Music North West, curated experimental concert series Decontamination at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM), and is the director of ensemble The House of Bedlam.

He is a Paul Hamlyn Award for Composers recipient, has been shortlisted for an RPS Award, and is a former recipient of a Jerwood-Aldeburgh Opera Writing Fellowship with regular collaborator writer Matthew Welton.

He was the composition tutor for the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain for ten years and is the former composer in residence for Royal Holloway, University of London. He currently devises and delivers the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme course Composition, Alternative Performance, and Performance Art and is a senior lecturer in composition at the Royal Northern College of Music.

Dai Fujikura

Born in 1977 in Osaka Japan, Dai was fifteen when he moved to UK. The recipient of many composition prizes, he has received numerous international co-commissions from the Salzburg Festival, Lucerne Festival, BBC Proms, Bamberg Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra and more. He has been Composer-in-Residence of Nagoya

Philharmonic Orchestra since 2014 and held the same post at the Orchestre national d'Île-de-France in 2017/18. Dai's first opera Solaris, co-commissioned by the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Opéra de Lausanne and the Opéra de Lille, had its world premiere in Paris in 2015 and has since gained a worldwide reputation. A new production of Solaris was created and performed at the Theatre Augsburg in 2018, and the opera received a subsequent staging in 2020.

In 2017, Dai received the Silver Lion Award from the Venice Biennale. In the same year, he was named the Artistic Director of the Tokyo Metropolitan Theater's Born Creative Festival.

In 2019, his Shamisen Concerto was premiered at Mostly Mozart festival in New York Lincoln Center and there have so far been 9 performances of this work by various orchestras.

2020 sees the premiere of his fourth piano concerto Akiko's Piano, dedicated to Hiroshima Symphony's Peace and Music Ambassador, Martha Argerich and performed as part of their "Music for Peace" project. Dai is currently composing his third opera, which will be revealed to the public in the same year.

His works are recorded by and released mainly on his own label Minabel Records in collaboration with SONY Music and his compositions are published by Ricordi Berlin.

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