



*unbound***sound**

## **Red Note Ensemble with Richard Watkins, French Horn**

**Geoffrey Paterson, Conductor**

Saturday 12 June 2021, 7pm  
Queen's Cross Church, Aberdeen

### **Programme**

<b>Aileen Sweeney</b>	<i>Feda</i> (World Premiere) *
<b>Rylan Gleave</b>	<i>UNSUNG II; even from a loved one</i> (World Premiere) *
<b>Philip Cashian</b>	<i>Scenes from the Life of Viscount Medardo for chamber ensemble</i> (World Premiere) *

\***sound** and Red Note Ensemble co-commission

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### **Programme notes**

#### **Aileen Sweeney *Feda***

In early medieval times, trees played an important role in Irish and Scottish Celtic culture and traditions. Trees formed the basis of literature, religion, myth, legend and symbolism and were believed to be sacred. They were regarded as "sustainers of life," offering food, medicine, warmth and housing as well as forming connections to the spiritual worlds. Trees were marvelled for their longevity, living sometimes for thousands of years which to people of the time, seemed something almost eternal. To fell a tree unnecessarily was considered taboo and could result in severe punishment.

Trees were also used to form an alphabet and calendar known as Ogham. The alphabet contained twenty distinct characters called Feda meaning trees. The letters of the alphabet corresponded with a particular tree, the characteristics of which symbolised a certain attribute of human existence.

#### *I - Beíth (Birch Tree) – The Lady of the Woods*

The Birch Tree is one of the first trees to come into leaf and therefore represented new beginnings, change, new life and rebirth along with purification, protection and healing. It is therefore used as the first letter in the alphabet and calendar. The birch is an extremely resilient "Pioneer Tree" meaning it can restart colonisations after natural disasters. It was also known as "The Lady of the Woods" for having associations with femininity, grace and purity.

## *II – Luís (Rowan Tree) – The Veil Between the Heavens*

Rowan trees are not tall so are found growing singly, away from other trees. They can grow in shallow soil and at high altitudes, where few other trees could grow so are often found atop mountains in the Scottish Highlands. Celts believed there was a veil between the heavens and the mortal world which was thinnest on top of mountains, closest to heaven which is perhaps why the Rowan has such a special spiritual significance. It is associated with humanity, life and blessings and offered protection against evil enchantments and magic.

## *III – Eadha (Aspen Tree) – The Whispering Tree*

The small, circular shape of Aspen leaves are unique to this tree. The leaves tremble in the wind which creates a whispering sound which the Celts believed was the souls of their ancestors communicating giving it the title of "The Whispering Tree." This gave this tree particular sacred significance and was often rumoured to be connected to the realm of the Faeries and the underworld.

## **Rylan Gleave *UNSUNG II; even from a loved one***

*UNSUNG II; even from a loved one* is the second piece in *UNSUNG II*, a collection of works exploring the same material surrounding, on some level, voicelessness. *UNSUNG II; even from a loved one* is the most intentionally obscured work in the collection, to the extent that the fragmented text throughout the rest of the pieces is not referenced, and serves as a reflection on silently healing broken trust.

CONTENT WARNING: Audiences should be aware that the piece *UNSUNG II* by Rylan Gleave contains non-explicit references to sexual violence which some may find uncomfortable.

## **Philip Cashian *Scenes from the Life of Viscount Medardo* for horn and chamber ensemble**

Viscount Medardo of Terralba is a character in Italo Calvino's short story *The Cloven Viscount*. After being split in two by a canon ball in battle with the Turks, the left half and the right half of the Viscount (a good half and a bad half) each separately return home to Italy, falling in love with the same girl and eventually having a sword fight on horseback to decide who shall marry her.

## **Biographies**

**Richard Watkins** is one of the most sought-after horn players of his generation. He was Principal Horn of the Philharmonia Orchestra for twelve years, and is currently a member of the Nash Ensemble and a founder member of London Winds.

Richard Watkins has appeared at many of the world's most prestigious venues in the UK, Europe and the USA, and has worked with conductors such as Giulini, Sawallisch, Salonen, Slatkin, Sinopoli, Rozhdestvensky, Petrenko, Andrew Davis and Mark Elder.

His extensive discography includes recordings of the Horn Concertos by Mozart, Malcolm Arnold, Glière, Ethel Smyth and Colin Matthews, as well as Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante and Chamber Music for Horn by Schumann, Schubert and Poulenc. Recent releases include 'The Romantic Horn' with pianist, Julius Drake for Signum, a Wigmore Live Disc of the Britten Canticles with Mark Padmore, Alexander Goehr's Horn Trio for NMC, Edward Gregson's Horn Concerto with the BBC Philharmonic for Chandos and 'Sea-Eagle' for NMC featuring works by British composers composed for Richard Watkins.

Richard Watkins has a long association with Aldeburgh Music, first performing Britten's Serenade with Sir Peter Pears in 1983. Since then he has appeared regularly as soloist and recitalist, performing Concertos by Colin Matthews and Oliver Knussen as well as performances of Britten's works for solo horn, the Serenade and Canticles. He has been actively involved with the Britten-Pears School, coaching and giving masterclasses. He has also recorded Britten's Serenade with Allan Clayton and Aldeburgh Strings and recently directed the inaugural Britten-Pears Brass Week.

In recital, Richard Watkins regularly performs with singers such as Allan Clayton, John Mark Ainsley, Ian Bostridge and Mark Padmore, and with pianists Barry Douglas, Julius Drake, Paul Lewis, Roger Vignoles and Ian Brown.

Closely associated with promoting contemporary music for the horn, Richard Watkins has given premières of concertos by Mark-Anthony Turnage, Maxwell-Davies, Osborne, Lindberg, Muldowney, Lefanu, Tansy Davies, Colin and David Matthews. Recent premières have included Colin Matthews' Horn Concerto and Trio, horn quintets by James MacMillan, David Matthews and Mark-Anthony Turnage and Horn Trios by Huw Watkins, Alexander Goehr and Gerald Barry.

Richard Watkins holds the Dennis Brain Chair of Horn Playing at the Royal Academy of Music where he is also a Fellow.

**Red Note Ensemble** is **sound's** associate ensemble. We work together regularly – sharing ideas, devising projects and commissioning composers. Some of the projects we have worked jointly on have included the Framed Against the Sky community engagement project, Go Compose! course for young composers, a major international joint project with the Orchestre d'Auvergne and Musiques Démesurées (France).

Red Note Ensemble was founded in 2008 by Scottish cellist Robert Irvine, and is directed by John Harris (Chief Executive and Artistic Co-Director) and Robert Irvine (Artistic Co-Director). The Ensemble performs the established classics of contemporary music, commissions new music, develops the work of new and emerging composers from around the world and finds new spaces and new ways of performing contemporary music to attract new audiences.

Red Note's performing ensemble is drawn from the deep talent pool of Scottish new music expertise, and counts amongst its players some of the very finest performers working in the UK today. Red Note undertake a Spring and Autumn season each year comprising tours, site-specific work and collaborations with other companies within Scotland, around the UK and abroad, and run regular new music series showcasing the work of new composers (Noisy Nights and Noisy Words). It is also extensively involved in the education sector, particularly at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, as well as **soundfestival** in Aberdeen. The company is now developing collaborations and new work with companies abroad.

Red Note is Associate Contemporary Ensemble at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, an Associate Company of the Traverse Theatre Edinburgh and Associate Ensemble of **soundfestival** Aberdeen.

*"Red Note Ensemble is a Scottish success story"* Anna Picard, The Times

*"(Red Note's pianist) Simon Smith knocked off outrageously elaborate figuration as though a tune on a pub piano"* Paul Driver, Sunday Times

**Aileen Sweeney** (b.1994) is a Scottish composer, accordionist and arranger based in Glasgow and enjoys a varied career as a freelance musician. Her music is cross-genre, infused with the ornamentation, energy and colours of the Scottish folk music she grew up

playing learning the accordion. Her music is often influenced by nature and folklore, as well as finding inspiration in current social and political affairs she is passionate about such as climate change, equality and politics.

Aileen has worked with and been commissioned by many of the UK's ensembles such as The London Philharmonic Orchestra, The Red Note Ensemble, The Nevis Ensemble, The Michael Cuddigan Trust, The Edinburgh Quartet, The Brodick Quartet, The Hebrides Ensemble and The Psapha Ensemble.

As an accordionist, Aileen has performed with some of the leading contemporary music ensembles in Scotland such as The Glasgow New Music Expedition, Ensemble Thing and NOISE Opera. In 2016, she founded the folk-fusion band Eriska who launched their debut album "At the Wrong Gig" in July 2018 and will be releasing their latest EP this year.

Aileen loves a natter and also co-hosts the Ear to the Ground podcast, where she talks to Scottish/Scottish based composers about their work and promoting their music in partnership with New Music Scotland.

In 2017, Aileen graduated from The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with a Bachelor of Music Degree with First Class Honours and subsequently a Master of Music Degree with scholarships awarded by The Dewar Arts Award, The Cross Trust, The Countess of Munster Musical Trust and The North Lanarkshire Musical Trust.

**Rylan Gleave** (b.1997) is a composer and vocalist from the north of England, currently based in Glasgow, Scotland. He is currently studying a Master of Music Degree at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with Dr. Linda Buckley, supported by The Kenneth Barritt Scholarship from the RCS Trust, and The Glasgow Educational and Marshall Trust. He graduated from the RCS with a Bachelor of Music Degree, with Honours of the First Class, in 2019.

His compositions over the last few years have included chamber works about navigating neurodiversity, defiantly Queer sound art, morality-tale narratives for Deaf actors, duets for out-of-tune piano and snoring, and relaxed concert music for children with Additional Support Needs. Rylan is fascinated by addressing the intersectional issues that overlap in his identity and communities in music, and strives to address these issues as both composer and performer, often taking to the stage in his own pieces.

Within the RCS, Rylan has been awarded the Kimie Composition Prize 2018, commissioned by Live Music Now Scotland for the Gelos Duo, presented in collaboration with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and funded by Kimie Trust. He was also awarded the Walter and Dinah Wolfe Memorial Award, 2019, adjudicated by Philip Venables, with his chosen string quartet *Don't call me that!* premiered by the Brodick Quartet in PLUG Festival, 2019.

Locally, Rylan has recently been commissioned by sound, Red Note Ensemble, Nevis Ensemble, and Hebrides Ensemble. His work *Permanent Address* was premiered in Diversions by Hebrides Ensemble, a concert at the Queen's Hall in Edinburgh, 2019. Diversions was awarded two Scottish New Music Awards 2020; The RCS Award for Making it Happen and The ISM Music Prize for Collaborations. His work *winding through seaweed* was premiered on BBC Radio 3; Classics Unwrapped, as part of Nevis Ensemble's Lochan Sketches 2020, and has been requested for a specialty concert on Trans Radio UK in 2021.

Some recent international successes have included; being selected as a JACK Studio Artist, 2020-22, by JACK Quartet for a professional recording project, being awarded 2nd Prize in The Diversity Initiative Call for Scores in the Brass Septet Category, with an Honourable Mention in the Brass Trio Category, and his piece *in waves*, originally commissioned by the RCS for the Edinburgh Quartet, in collaboration with the University of Stirling, selected and

purchased for a concert of Disabled composers worldwide by Crossing Borders Music, which he co-hosted the broadcast of as a featured artist.

**Philip Cashian** was born in Manchester in 1963 and studied at Cardiff University and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Oliver Knussen and Simon Bainbridge. In 1990 he was the Benjamin Britten fellow at Tanglewood where he studied with Lukas Foss. He was awarded the Britten Prize in 1991, the Mendelssohn Scholarship in 1992 and the PRS Composition Prize in 1994. His fast paced style of music has been described as “an uncompromising reflection of the modern world”.

Cashian has collaborated and worked with many leading musicians, ensembles and orchestras. Performances include the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Riga Sinfonietta, Ensemble Profil (Romania), Arctic Philharmonic, the Esprit Orchestra (Toronto), Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, London Sinfonietta, Ergon Ensemble (Athens), Festival de Música de Alicante, Bergen Festival, Aspen Music Festival, Ojai Festival (California), Musikmonat (Basle), Moscow Autumn Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Spitalfields Festival, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and the BBC Proms as well as recent performances in Germany, France, Austria, Hungary, Holland, Norway, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, Australia, New Zealand and China.

In 2008 the London Sinfonietta commissioned Cashian to write *The Opening of the House* for their inaugural concert at Kings Place and later in the same year his first opera, *The Cumnor Affair* was premiered by Tête à Tête Opera Company at the Riverside Studios, London.

Recent commissions include *Firewheel* for Dark Inventions, *Strix* for the Britten Sinfonia Academy, *the world's turning* for the Esprit Orchestra (Toronto), *Nocturnes and Dances* for the Wye Valley Chamber Music Festival, *The Language of Birds* for Tabea Debus and *Scenes from the Life of Viscount Medardo* for Richard Watkins. In 2017 his String Quartet No.2 was premiered in the St Magnus International Festival by the Gildas Quartet and Psappha gave the premiere of '*Leonora Pictures*' in Manchester followed by three further performances in New York, Oberlin and Aspen. His second piano concerto, *The Book of Ingenious Devices*, premiered by Huw Watkins and the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Oliver Knussen in the 2018 Aldeburgh Festival was described in The Times as '*mesmerising music*'. In the 2019 Beijing Modern Music Festival the Guiyang Symphony Orchestra gave the premiere of his most recent orchestral work, *Fanfaronades*.

Cashian has also written extensively for young and amateur musicians: to date he has written six pieces for the ABRSM's *Spectrum* series as well as large scale works for Contemporary Music for All and the Centre for Young Musicians. Between 2010 and 2013 he was invited by the British Council to curate a series of concerts of contemporary British music in Bucharest during the course of which works by over sixty living British composers were performed.

He is also a sought after teacher and has been Head of Composition at the [Royal Academy of Music](#) since 2007. He is published by [Chester Music](#) and [Composers Edition](#). Recordings of his music are available on the [NMC label](#) including the two portrait discs *The House of Night* and *Dark Inventions*.

## Forthcoming events

**Red Note Ensemble Noisy Nights | Sunday 13 June | 4pm**

Red Note Ensemble's Noisy Nights concerts provide an outlet to hear emerging new musical ideas and voices. Following our Neurotribes conference earlier this year, we have partnered with Red Note for this edition of Noisy Nights, to showcase new music by neurodivergent composers.

## Save the dates!



**19-24 October 2021**

**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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