

Red Note Ensemble

Conductor: William Cole

Queen's Cross Church, Aberdeen

Friday 22nd October, 6pm

Programme

Luke Styles	<i>Five Phase Sphere</i> *
Edwin Hillier	<i>37 Otago Street</i> **
Ailie Robertson	<i>Unfurl</i> ***

*world premiere, *co-commissioned by sound, hcmf//, Red Note Ensemble and Ask Duets*

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Programme notes

Luke Styles *Five Phase Sphere*

Five Phase Sphere presents 5 phases of music for this specific combination of instruments. The resonance of these 3 instruments together, their low frequencies and their combined musical potentials are all stimuli for each phase. Across each phase are musical links, but together, as five points of music they form a sphere of material, in my imagination.

In 2005 I heard a low trio for viola, cello and double bass by the composer Wolfgang Rihm and I was deeply drawn to this familiar but different, slightly deeper and somewhat more mysterious sound world. Since then 16 years has passed, but the desire to sound has never left me and I have always had the idea to write my own "low trio" in the back of my mind.

I'm thrilled that new music champions have come together to commission this work, which will premiere in the UK at Sound Festival and the Huddersfield

Contemporary Music Festival by the extraordinary Red Note Ensemble in 2021, followed by an Australian premiere by Ask Duets in 2022.

Edwin Hillier *37 Otago Street*

Cracked and fissured, reds, whites and earth-like colours dispersed across the frame. Letters, even complete words, hand-painted in the 1920s, just discernible: now faded – still fading – into apparitions. The ‘ghost sign’ at 37 Otago Street became a familiar sight on my daily lockdown walk through Glasgow. Revisiting this image with routine, almost ritual, I became fascinated by its complexity and changeability: its disparate elements enhanced, recoloured, embroidered by the light, affected by the time of day and year. When captured on camera, zoomed in and examined – a method famously employed on the streets of Chicago by ‘abstract expressionist photographer’ Aaron Siskind in the 1950s – the sign betrays an intricate and heavily textured inner world. Inspired by my daily encounters with the street mural, *37 Otago Street* offers several perspectives on what becomes a familiar, even nostalgic, timbral palette. Glimpses of ghostly lettering and flecks of crimson-hued paint emerge in the fragile ensemble textures and concrete sonorities of the auxiliary instruments. Shifting from foreground to background, fractured musical images are interwoven and drawn into focus as we pass them by.

Ailie Robertson *Unfurl*

This piece forms a continuation of my PhD studies into microtonality and the harp, and takes inspiration from Erv Wilson’s 1965 organization of the overtone series as a logarithmic spiral. The piece is anti-narrative and anti-developmental in form, simply housing the tonal material, which consists of the first 80 partials of the overtone series. Expressivity comes from the simple aligning of tones, one to another, as the harmonic and temporal space progressively expands and unfolds towards the fundamental.

Biographies

Red Note Ensemble

Flute: Ruth Morley - Clarinet: Will White - Harp: Ailie Robertson - Violin: Daniel Pioro - Viola: Tom Hankey - Cello: Robert Irvine - Double bass: Iain Crawford

Since its formation Red Note Ensemble has taken up a leadership position as Scotland’s contemporary music ensemble, performing and developing an extensive, highly-varied and critically-acclaimed programme of new music to the highest standards, and taking new music out to audiences across Scotland and internationally.

Red Note performs the established classics of contemporary music, commissions new music, develops the work of new and emerging composers and performers from Scotland and around the world, and finds new spaces and new ways of

performing contemporary music to attract new audiences. Within Scotland the ensemble has performed from the Outer Hebrides to the Borders in concert halls, bothies, pubs, clubs and aircraft hangars, amongst other unusual settings. Outwith the UK it has a growing international reputation, performing to great acclaim at festivals in France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and Australia in recent years.

The ensemble also undertakes an extensive programme of Access, Engagement and Participation (AEP) work, focusing particularly upon working with younger and older people, people with multiple disabilities, people living in areas of multiple deprivation, and also working to address inequalities of access and representation due to race/ethnicity and gender imbalances. We also undertake an extensive performer and composer development programme within schools, universities and conservatoires nationally and internationally.

William Cole

With a repertoire from early opera to new compositions, William Cole's recent highlights include his concert debut with the Britten Sinfonia and Red Note Ensemble, Hans Abrahamsen's *Schnee* with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, and Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* for Waterperry Opera Festival. Active in the opera house and the concert stage, recent and future engagements include projects with the Royal Opera Covent Garden, English National Opera, Opera North, Opéra National du Rhin, Theater Aachen, Music Theatre Wales, Snape Maltings' Jerwood Opera Programme, Nevill Holt Opera and The Grange Festival. Engagements cancelled due to Covid-19 include a season as Head of Music for English Touring Opera, and his debuts with the London Sinfonietta and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.

A committed exponent of new and experimental work, he is Music Director of Filthy Lucre, an immersive mixed-genre collective with whom he has worked with artists from dance, sculpture, and film in music from Xenakis to The Clash. Other work in this area includes major works by Ligeti, Boulez, Grisey, Vivier and Kurtág as well as new works by composers including Patricia Alessandrini, Emily Howard, Shiori Usui and Laurence Osborn. He is currently a member of Birmingham Contemporary Music Group's NEXT programme.

William studied at the Royal Academy of Music, where he was a Repetiteur Fellow and is now a visiting coach.

Luke Styles is a British/Australian composer performed regularly throughout the world. Luke was the first Glyndebourne Young Composer in Residence and the first composer in residence at the Foundling Museum since Handel. Luke's operas have been performed on the famous Glyndebourne main stage, and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of conductors such as Vladimir Jurowski.

Luke's most recent opera *Ned Kelly* premiered to critical acclaim at the 2019 Perth Festival and was a finalist in the 2020 Arts Music Awards. Luke's recent symphonic

song cycle *No Friend But The Mountains* premiered at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl in Melbourne in March 2021 and has been turned into a 2-part ABC TV documentary. His 2018 cycle *On Bunyah*, written for Mark Padmore and the Britten Sinfonia setting poetry by Les Murray, premiered at the Wigmore Hall, London followed by a UK tour and performances in Australia, where it was described as “Styles’s *On Bunyah* is magnificent and just like the poem is raw, not polite.” – *The Australian*. *On Bunyah* received a high commendation in the 2019 Paul Lowin Prize.

Luke is currently working on a Saxophone Concerto for for orchestras in the UK, France and Australia. In 2022 Luke will compose two major vocal works, an Oratorio for the Three Choirs Festival, Philharmonia Orchestra and soloist Hilary Summers, and a song cycle for the French ensemble *Le Balcon* for premiere in Paris and at the Lille Opera. Looking further ahead Luke will compose orchestral works for European and Australian orchestras, including a new work for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2022 as part of their 50 Fanfares Project to reopen the Sydney Opera House. He currently has 2 new operas in development for partnerships between European, American and Australian opera companies.

Luke is published by G.Schirmer/Wise Music Group and represented by Linda Marks.

Edwin Hillier is a British composer active in Glasgow and London. His work investigates the connection between musician and instrument, employing a tactile and highly physical approach to sonic exploration. Edwin’s music has been presented internationally, including performances at Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Royaumont Festival (France), at the Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, Roulette (New York City), Nonclassical, and by artists including the London Sinfonietta, Quatuor Tana, EXAUDI, Explore Ensemble and Talea Ensemble. Recent works have been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 (New Music Show, Episode: Edwin Hillier’s *Plastica*), France Musique, and recorded on the NMC Record Label. He was the recipient of a Scottish Award for New Music in both 2021 (Dorico Award for Small/Medium Scale Work) and 2020 (Electroacoustic/Sound Artwork).

Selected for international composition programmes including *Voix Nouvelles* (Royaumont), Dartington International Summer School, Luxembourg Composition Academy, IRCAM/Manifeste and Sound and Music’s Next Wave programme, Edwin has received tuition from Pierluigi Billone, Raphaël Cendo, Frédéric Durieux and Rebecca Saunders, among others.

A graduate of the University of Cambridge, he was awarded a scholarship to the Royal College of Music to pursue his postgraduate studies, supported by the RVW Trust and the AHRC. He is currently completing a doctorate in Composition under the supervision of Jonathan Cole. At the RCM, Edwin teaches Academic Studies units at undergraduate level and is Module Leader for the postgraduate Musical Analysis course.

Ailie Robertson is a multi-award-winning Scottish composer and performer who has been commissioned by some of the world's most prestigious cultural institutions including the BBC Proms, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Bang on a Can, Cappella Nova, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and the Riot Ensemble. She was composer-in-residence with Sound Festival and is currently composer-in residence with Glyndebourne Opera. She holds a PhD in composition from Trinity Laban Conservatoire, and is currently a lecturer at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

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