

## Hockets, a catch, and other games for two

with Juliet Fraser (soprano) and Florentin Ginot (double bass)

**St Mary's Cathedral, Aberdeen**

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 7.30pm

### Programme

Pascale Criton	<i>Ritournelle for J&amp;F</i> (2021) for soprano and double bass*
Martin Smolka	<i>Sss...nn...</i> (2021) for soprano and double bass**

\* world premiere, co-commissioned by **sound** and HowNow, supported by SACEM

\*\* work in progress, co-commissioned by Acht Brücken Festival, Musik für Köln, Milano Musica Festival and HowNow, supported by SACEM

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### Programme notes

**Pascale Criton** *Ritournelle for J&F* for voice and double bass (2021)

Haiku by Issa Kobayashi

*Ritournelle for J&F* is a game for two in repetitive form. Five expressive fragments form a cycle that repeats (nearly) six times. The playground is both structured and open. The two performers interweave their material on the fly, while listening: having worked up a flexible catalogue of material, developed through instructions, conversations and experiments, they follow a set of structural rules for 'play' which are communicated via a circular diagram: a map, a guide, a treasure hunt?! Unlike the finalised notation found in a traditional score, this game prioritises the playful repetition of 'trying again' and the potential of a chance encounter — an instability that we all experienced during the pandemic. Here, the refrain becomes progressively other: a wink to the concept of the *Ritournelle* much loved by the philosopher Gilles Deleuze, that we repeat in the dark to ward off chaos. (PC)

## **Martin Smolka Sss...nn... (2021)**

Extracts of a work in progress for soprano and double bass

Words by Henry David Thoreau (excerpted from the essay 'Winter Walk')

1. Ice
2. Crunching
3. All is ceiled

In the beginning there was I listening to Thoreau's words. Reading them in a low voice, half whispered, grouping and looping and observing the tiny dance of light consonants on the tip of a tongue. Look, try it:

*The polished air sparkles as if there were crystals of ice floating in it*

*The jingling of the ice on the trees is sweet and liquid*

The 'in it', for example, when whispered round and round rhythmically (i-n, i-t), takes me back to the magic silence of my grandma's living room with only the sound of her wall clock. Then there was the mapping of the double bass harmonics. The double bass — the bear among string instruments — is surprisingly rich in this field. The sound of its harmonics is velvet, fleecy, foggy like voice of Ella Fitzgerald. As if there were long gorges in the huge belly of the double bass, the flageolet notes seem to fly afar. Arvo Pärt once said that a composer has to love each of his tones. I did, in this piece, and the silences, too. (MS)

## **Biographies**

Soprano **Juliet Fraser** specialises in the gnarly edges of contemporary classical music. Internationally recognised as a committed interpreter of new music, she regularly appears as a guest soloist with ensembles Musikfabrik, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Modern, Plus-Minus and Talea. She is also a core member of EXAUDI vocal ensemble, which she co-founded in 2002 with composer/conductor James Weeks. Juliet is an active commissioner of new repertoire and has worked particularly closely with composers Pascale Criton, Michael Finnissy, Bernhard Lang, Cassandra Miller and Rebecca Saunders. Her recordings have been released on labels such as Kairos, Hat Hut, NMC, HCR and Another Timbre. Juliet is the founder and artistic director of the eavesdropping series in London and co-director of all that dust, a new label for new music.

Member of Ensemble Musikfabrik since 2015, **Florentin Ginot** lives and works in Paris and Cologne. After graduating from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris, he became a Laureate of the Banque Populaire Foundation and Mécénat Musical Société Générale. In 2015, he recorded his first CD for the « Young Soloists » collection of the Meyer Foundation, with a focus on the early music of Marin Marais.

He is now dedicated to solo repertoire, creation and invention of scenic forms. In 2017 he founded HowNow, a company developing innovative artistic forms based on modern music into scenic forms, alongside contemporary dance, theatre and circus. The same year, the choreographer Yoann Bourgeois commissioned him the musical conception for *La Mécanique de l'Histoire*, presented at the Panthéon as part of the Théâtre de la Ville-Paris's season.

In 2019, he initiated two collaborations with electronic artists Helge Sten (aka Deathprod, Norway) and Stefan Prins (Belgium/Germany), for two immersive and transdisciplinary shows, *The Waste Land* and *Situations*.

By collaborating closely with composers such as Georges Aperghis, György Kurtág, Rebecca Saunders or Helmut Lachenmann, he initiates and premieres a new solo repertoire for his instrument. His programme *Not Here* presented a series of premieres in 2018 at the Cologne Philharmonie, Manifeste Festival-Ircam and the Biennale di Venezia.

At the same time, he performs baroque and classical repertoire by adapting J.S. Bach's Sonatas and Partitas on piccolo double bass, Marin Marais' Livres de Viole, or L.v. Beethoven's Cello Sonatas.

He has performed as soloist in festivals and venues such as the Berliner Philharmonie, Cologne Philharmonie, Cité de la Musique-Paris, Festival Présences-Radio France, Festival Musica, l'Auditori, Berliner Festspiele, Manifeste Festival-Ircam, Sacrum Profanum-Cracow, Ultima-Oslo, la Biennale di Venezia. His international projects are supported by the Institut Français.

**Pascale Criton** (b. 1954) is a French composer born in Paris. She studied composition with Ivan Wyschnegradsky, Gérard Grisey and Jean-Etienne Marie. She subsequently trained in electro-acoustic music at CIRM (Nice) and in musical computing at IRCAM (Paris), and gained a PhD in musicology in 1999. Her music explores fine details of sound variability: a specialist of microtonality, she uses specific tunings and computing to foreground subtle acoustic effects the spatialisation of listening. In 2015, Pascale edited *Gilles Deleuze, la pensée-musique*, a testimony of her encounter with the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze regarding music. She has collaborated closely with music ensembles such as l'Ensemble 2<sup>e</sup>2m, l'Itinéraire, Accroche Note and Dedalus, with soloists Juliet Fraser, Silvia Tarozzi and Deborah Walker, and with music research studios such as InaGRM (Radio-France), IRCAM, GMEM (Marseille), GMEA (Albi), SCRIME (Bordeaux) and ART ZOYD (Valenciennes). Her monographic CD 'Infra', released on the label Potlatch, was awarded the Charles Cros prize. Her works are published by Jobert Editions (Lemoine distr.) and available from Art&Fact.

**Martin Smolka** (b. 1959) studied composition in Prague with Marek Kopelent. Since 1989 his music has been performed in many places in Europe, as well as in North America and Japan. Much of his material exploited instrumental sounds reminiscent of familiar noises (ship and train sirens, the rumble of machines, the

sounds of rain, and many others); these 'sound memories' helped to define the often nostalgic, sometimes grotesque, idiom of his music. More recently, he began collaging elemental musical shapes, such as a triad or string cantilena, but always whilst deforming them, sometimes detuning by microtones, sometimes displacing by hocketing, sometimes using other alienations. Following his baptism in 2006 he wrote numerous vocal pieces setting sacred texts. Recent works include *Quand le tympan de l'oreille porte le poids du monde* (2015) for orchestra, *List of Infinity* (2012-16), an opera without singing, *Wooden Clouds* (2016-18) written for musikFabrik and *Vor dem Gesetz* (2020) for Ensemble Ascolta.

This concert is supported by Diaphonique, Franco-British fund for classical contemporary music in partnership with the SACEM, the Friends of the French Institute, the British Council, the Institut français, the Institut français du Royaume Uni, the Centre National de la Musique, Creative Scotland and the Salabert Foundation.

The logo for Diaphonique features the word "diaphonique" in a red, serif font. The letter 'd' is stylized with a horizontal line extending to the left. Above the 'i' and 'o' are horizontal lines, and below the 'n' and 'i' are horizontal lines, creating a decorative, architectural feel.

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