



Mirrors

Garth Knox (viola) and Elise Dabrowski (double bass)

Thursday 27th October 2022, 12.45pm

Cowdray Hall

Programme

Marin Marais	<i>La Rêveuse</i>
Marin Marais	<i>Le Tourbillon</i>
Marin Marais	<i>Le Tourbillon</i>
Gyorgy Kurtag	<i>Miniature 1</i>
Gyorgy Kurtag	<i>Miniature 2</i>
Hildegard von Bingen	<i>O Deus from L'Ordo Virtutum</i>
Giacinto Scelsi	<i>Ho no. 1</i>
Garth Knox	<i>Quartet for One</i>
Elise Dabrowski	<i>Animalia</i>
Garth Knox	<i>Wild Wind</i>

In association with Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums.



Programme notes

Marin Marais, three pieces for Viola d'amore and Bass (1717)

La Rêveuse, le Tourbillon, le Badinage

Originally written for Viola da gamba and Bass viol, these character pieces come from the fourth book of the 'Pièces pour Violes'.

Gyorgy Kurtag, two miniatures for viola and double bass (1993)

These two pieces were given by Kurtag to Garth Knox personally. Handwritten and unpublished, they are part of a large body of work by Kurtag consisting of

sketches and drafts which he gave to musicians who he knew in order to try out and research his ideas.

Hildegard von Bingen *O Deus* from L'Ordo Virtutum

L'Ordo Virtutum (The Game of Virtues) was composed in 1018 by Hildegard von Bingen, mystical Benedictine nun, writer and composer, born in 1098 and died near Bingen in 1179. The essentially dramaturgical work (based on a play of theatre) relates the struggle of the human soul (Anima) between Hell and Paradise, attracted at the same time by the forces of Evil (The Devil) but finally saved by the powerful Virtues (Humility, Obedience, Fidelity, Charity...etc.)

O God(*O Deus*), who are you, who had this great plan in yourself, by which you destroyed that of Hell, drawn from publicans and sinners, who now shine in the supreme Goodness. For this, O King, praise to you!

Giacinto Scelsi *Hô no. 1*

Hô no.1 (1960) is a piece for solo voice. In this piece the litany and the incantatory develop in minimal lines whose dynamic variations and micro intervals seem to arise immutably in the present and thus give the sensation of losing the notion of musical time constructed to face the emergence of any event.

Garth Knox *Quartet for One* for solo viola (2020)

During the recent lockdown period, when all concerts were cancelled due to the Corona virus crisis, and playing music in ensembles was not possible, many musicians began to explore other ways of making music socially. Just as lonely children invent imaginary play-friends to keep themselves company, my own frustrated desire to play with others led me to invent some imaginary colleagues and to explore in a light-hearted way the possibilities of performing chamber music with them. The result is this piece, 'Quartet for One', which all happens inside the head of a viola player who dreams of giving a concert with a string quartet in front of a large appreciative audience. Although alone, the violist really does play a quartet! Each of the four strings on the viola corresponds to an instrument of the quartet, and as each instrument enters, the violist occupies 'their' chair and plays on 'their' string (the stage is set with 4 stands and 4 chairs). To imitate the richness of the deep cello sound the bottom string of the viola is lowered to A. *Quartet for One* was commissioned by the Viola Commissioning Circle, funded by a generous donation from Nicolas and Judith Goodson and is dedicated to Lawrence Power who gave the first performance on 18th June 2020 in the (totally empty!) Royal Festival Hall in London.

Elise Dabrowski *Animalia*

Animalia is an unpredictable form, sometimes shaken by immediately interrupted impulses. The double bass and the voice intertwine and divide. The deep sounds of the double bass come to rumble, support, camouflage or prolong this meeting.

Garth Knox *Wild Wind* for viola and voice (2021)

This song is the first of three Wind Songs for viola and voice commissioned by Katherine Clarke for her Singing Viola project where she both sings and plays viola at the same time. The pieces can also be performed by artists, as here. The inspiration for "Wild Wind" comes from a short poem written by an Irish monk in the 9th century. One of the oldest and finest examples of poetry written in Old Irish, it was found in the margin of a Latin text which the unknown monk was recopying. In this song the viola represents the wind which lashes the sea on a stormy night, seen by the monk as a comforting reassurance that the Viking ships will not come. Real fear appears when the waters are still.

*The wind is wild tonight
it tosses the sea's white hair
I have no fear
tis the calm waters
that bring the sharp men from the North*

Biographies

Garth Knox

Garth Knox is at the forefront of the new music scene in many fields. Drawing on his vast experience as viola player of the *Arditti Quartet* and the *Ensemble intercontemporain* and his close collaboration with most of the leading composers of today, he has become a unique performer of music of many different styles, ranging from minimalist understatement to the cutting edge of new techniques and new technologies.

More recently thanks to his interest in the viola d'amore and the medieval fiddle, his repertoire has opened up to the music of the past (medieval, baroque) which he persuasively brings into the present, and his Irish/Scottish roots enable him to dialogue with traditional celtic music without complexes. He has always felt at home as an improviser, and now more and more so as a composer also, deploying his musical ideas as innovative instrumental theatre.

Elise Dabrowski

Elise Dabrowski started out with the Maîtrise de Radio France, singing in Olivier Messiaen's *Trois Petites Liturgies de la Présence Divine* and in Mahler's third symphony with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, directed by Seiji Ozawa. She has participated in various creations by Thierry Pécou, Édith Lejet, Gérard Condé and Claude Ballif.

She was selected by the Centre d'Art Lyrique de la Méditerranée, where she perfected her voice. She sang Malher's *Knaben Wunderhorn* at the Festival of Young Artists in Bayreuth, having a particular fondness for the German repertoire.

Her work is focussed on contemporary scenic creation: *La Rhésérection* by Jonathan Pontier, *Chant d'Hiver* by Samuel Sighicelli, *La Métamorphose* by

Michaël Lévinas with the Balcon ensemble, directed by Maxime Pascal, Avenida de los Incas by Fernando Fiszbein at Lille opera house with Le Balcon, Bureau 470 by Bordalejo, Crumbling Land co-produced by Opéra de Lille 2016-2017 (associated composer and singer), Voyage d'Hiver by Jelinek and Sébastien Gaxie and Jacob Lenz by Wolfgang Rihm at the Athénée-Louis-Jouvet theatre.

She combines the instrumental and vocal aspects of her career (double bass player and singer) into original projects. She composes and acts on stage in *Quelque Part au Cœur de la Forêt* (directed by Claude Buchvald, *Parcours Jeunesse Théâtre de la Ville*)... She is also very active on the jazz and improvised music scene, working with artists such as Médéric Collignon, Louis Sclavis, Bruno Chevillon and Joëlle Léandre. In 2018, she was the artistic director of TREPAP, presenting her poetic opera, *Comment s'en Sortir sans Sortir*, at Vanves theatre, L'Echangeur theatre in Bagnolet and the Hexagone in Meylan, *Pain Maudit*, her next project, will be created on 13 December 2019, at Vanves theatre.

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