



Spotlight gig: KERP

Siôn Parkinson with BabaYaga and Allon Beauvoisin

Thursday 27th October 2022, 3pm

Cowdray Hall

Programme

Siôn Parkinson *KERP*

In association with Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums.



Programme notes

Siôn Parkinson *Kerp*

Composed by artist Siôn Parkinson when he was Musician in Residence at Cove Park in summer 2022, 'Kerp' is a celebration of harvest-time, of food, drink and drunkenness. Through voice, saxophone, Celtic harp and costume, the piece invokes the raucous spirit and eccentric folk characters of traditional harvest festival songs from Scotland to America.

The piece plays on the simple gesture of plucking to gather in the crops. *Kerp* means 'to pluck, or cut' and is the root of the Old English word *hærvest*. The music starts with a single chord, a 'seed', which slowly swells; and it ends with a hard, techno-like beat reminiscent of rural raves, noisily punctuated by voice through megaphone and the mechanical clacking of twenty ratchets. This is not

your typical harvest hymn; this is a work song, music to hearten collective labour at a time when, as Parkinson sings, 'some of us still stoop down to pick up'.

First commissioned by Cove Park as part of the Scotland-wide 'Unexpected Gardens' project, led by arts organisation Dandelion. Costume by Niki Taylor.

Biographies

Siôn Parkinson

Siôn Parkinson is an artist, composer and writer based in his hometown on the east coast of Scotland. His work includes composition and improvisation for voice, acoustic instruments and synthesised sounds, often altogether. He trained as a sculptor at Central Saint Martins and The Slade before receiving his PhD in sound studies from The University of Leeds where he explored the potentiality of foul-smelling atmospheres and objects—such as the stinkhorn fungus—as listening devices. His book *Stinkhorn: A Natural History of Mushrooms, Malodour & Music* will be published in autumn 2023 by Sternberg Press (Berlin).

BabaYaga

Baba Yaga are the unusual combination of saxophone and the harp. Karen and Gwen met whilst studying at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and have forged this musical partnership out of a passion for promoting their instruments. Taking advantage of the varied sound colours of harp and saxophone, they explore transcriptions, original compositions and most recently have toured their own arrangement of Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition.

Gwen has performed with the Orchestra of the Scottish Opera, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Scottish Chamber Orchestra. As a passionate player of traditional music, as well as classical, Gwen has performed at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival, Festival Interceltique de Lorient, Hay Festival, the National Eisteddfod of Wales and the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. 2019 saw the launch of her first solo album, *Mentro*, which was long-listed for the Scots Trad Album of the Year award and in 2021 Gwen released an album of Christmas music from the Basque Country: *Douze Noël*s. Her playing can also be heard on the albums of Gwilym Bowen Rhys (*O Groth y Ddaear*, 2016. *Arenig*, 2019) and *10 Mewn Bws* (2013). Gwen is a tutor for the Welsh Youth Folk Ensemble, *Avanc*, and has published three books of music for clàrsach through Alaw Publishing. Some of her arrangements are included in the graded exam syllabuses for Trinity College and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and for Royal National Mòd competitions.

A varied career of chamber and orchestral music, Karen has performed with the Orchestra of Scottish Opera, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. Karen is soprano saxophonist in the award winning saxophone quartet Sax Ecosse and has performed in Europe and the UK including The Edinburgh International Festival, returning artists at The Emerging Artist Series-The Usher Hall, Celtic Connections, the World Saxophone Congress, Norway's St Olav's Festival, Maltings Theatre and live on BBC Radio Scotland's Classics Unwrapped. She has worked with Turner Prize winner Charlotte Prodger, performing on her 2005 film and in the autumn of 2022 with visual and sound artist Siôn Parkinson.

Allan Beauvoisin

Graduating from the University of Glasgow in 1996, Allan has since has built up a burgeoning reputation as one of Scotland's leading baritone saxophonists. From 2004 Brass Jaw has been his main musical focus in which Allan performs, composes and manages the ensemble and have won numerous awards.

Between 1997 and 2005 he performed primarily with The Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, but in the recent past Allan has also worked with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the RTE Concert Orchestra, the Ryan Quigley Big Band, the Fife Jazz Orchestra and the Andy Mears Big Band.

Session work includes, Sharleen Spitteri's latest album "Melody", an appearance on David Byrne's sound track to the film "Young Adam" starring Ewan McGregor, performances on TV, most notably Joz Tenuto big band (Hogmany Live) live national radio broadcasts, (Brass Jaw – The Jazz House) and features on over twenty albums.

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