

## Deconstructing Tartan

Heather Roche (clarinet) and Eva Zollner (accordionist)

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 1.10pm

King's College Chapel, University of Aberdeen

### Programme

Ewan Mackay	<i>Light Over the Bass Rock (World première)</i>
Elnaz Seyedi (Iran)	<i>Nach neuen Meeren (Scottish première)</i>
Joe Stollery	<i>The Kelpie Beckons (World première)</i>
Sonia Allori	<i>Deconstructing Tartan (World première)</i>
Matthew Shlomowitz (Aus)	<i>Symphony for clarinet, accordion, and drum-machine ('The Inescapable') (World première)</i>

Composers' funding from Creative Scotland and PRS Foundation's Talent Development Partnerships. In association with Drake Music Scotland's Disabled Artists Network.

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### Programme notes

#### **Ewan Mackay *Light Over the Bass Rock***

This piece was directly inspired by a painting - of the same name, by Artist Pam Mckenzie, and was commissioned by Drake Music Scotland for its premiere at the **soundfestival**. This piece itself is somewhat of a departure from my previous work. The art through which this piece takes its inspiration features the Bass Rock - located in Fife, centered under a shroud of dark cloud, under a foreboding sky. In the foreground, a selection of bright and vibrant flowers contrast the backdrop. This inspiration has manifested itself in the form of a slow melancholic air which is followed by a more upbeat second section composed in the style of a traditional Scottish dance.

The emotional connection between the painting and this piece are directly intertwined. My Gran, Helen Mackay passed away in 2022. This painting was one of her belongings which I decided to keep. It now sits on the windowsill of my study and is a reminder to me of her presence which is still very much in my life. This piece is dedicated to her memory.

### **Elnaz Seyedi (1982) *Nach neuen Meeren***

Toward New Seas  
That way—I will: and my assure  
In me henceforth and in my seize.  
The sea lies open, in azure  
There drifts my ship, my Genoese.

All, new on new, shakes flame to me,  
On space and time the midday  
sleeps—:  
And but your eye—in monstrously  
Stares at me! Infinity!

### **Joe Stollery *The Kelpie Beckons***

The piece was inspired by the Scottish legend of the Kelpie, a malevolent water demon often in the form of a horse, who is said to lure human victims to their death by offering a ride across the stream they haunt and then drowning them. In this case, the accordion represents the Kelpie, and the interplay between it and the clarinet takes on an increasingly frantic dialogue until the latter is 'caught' in the climax. To represent the horse, the gradual build-up in rhythm for each successive section was loosely inspired by the equine gaits of 'walk', 'trot', 'canter' and 'gallop', and there are various tremolos in the accordion at frequent points to give impressions of an almost supernatural 'whinnying'. For me, the contrast between the mechanisms of the two instruments provides further symbolism to this piece, in the way the 'breathing' of the accordion seems to give a sense of a fantastical entity, against the more 'natural' stance of the directly blown clarinet.

### **Sonia Allori *Deconstructing Tartan***

This short work for Bb clarinet and accordion was inspired by my first visit to the V & A Dundee and the exhibition "Tartan" in June 2023. Included in the exhibition was a "Find your tartan" activity and so I looked for the Wemyss tartan which forms one half of my Scottish/Italian heritage. I analysed the colours and pattern of the tartan assigning both pitches and a narrative leading the listener through a whistlestop journey of moods: "A mournful lament", "A wee bit misty & murky", "Jaunty", "A safe haven" and back again!

### **Matthew Shlomowitz (2022) *Symphony for clarinet, accordion, and drum-machine ('The Inescapable')***

*The Inescapable* was inspired by a segment comedian Stewart Lee made for Comedy Vehicle on BBC Two, which is known as, 'these days if you say you're English you get arrested and you'll be, you'll be just thrown in jail'. It was composed for the Zöllner-Roche Duo. This is its first performance.

## **Biographies**

### **Heather Roche**

Born in Canada, clarinetist Heather Roche lives in London. Recently referred to as "The Queen of Extended Techniques" and "a figurehead for contemporary music performance practice" on BBC Radio 3, she appears regularly as a soloist and chamber musician at European festivals, including the London Contemporary Music Festival, Acht Brücken (Cologne), Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik

(Germany), Musica Nova (Helsinki), MusikFest (Berlin), BachFest (Leipzig), Manifeste (Paris), etc. She was a founding member the Cologne-based hand werk, and currently plays with Apartment House (London). She has a longstanding duo collaboration with the German accordionist Eva Zöllner, with whom she has toured Mexico, Sweden, Colombia and across the European festival circuit. She has performed as a soloist with the BBCSSO, and performed with other ensembles including the London Sinfonietta, the London Symphony Orchestra, Musikfabrik (Cologne), the WDR Symphony Orchestra (Cologne), the London Symphony Orchestra, the London Sinfonietta, Alisios Camerata (Zagreb), and ensemble Proton (Bern), Mimitabu (Gothenburg), among others. She wrote her doctoral thesis at the University of Huddersfield. Her blog on writing for the clarinet attracts 90,000 viewers each year. She is also reviews editor of TEMPO, published by Cambridge University Press, and teaches clarinet at Goldsmiths University, London. Her debut solo CD, *Ptelea*, is out on HCR/NMC, and her CD featuring the clarinet works of Christopher Fox, *Headlong*, appears on Métier. She also records regularly for the Another Timbre label.

### **Eva Zöllner**

Eva Zöllner studied accordion at the HfMT Cologne and the Royal Danish Conservatory in Copenhagen. She is one of the most active accordionists of her generation and is a passionate advocate of contemporary music. As an internationally sought-after artist, she presents projects ranging from experimental solo performances to collaborations with renowned orchestras. Concert tours have taken her to all continents; she is particularly interested in the countries of Central and South America with their lively contemporary music scene. Collaboration with composers around the world is an essential aspect of her work. As a result, she has premiered more than 300 works. In 2021 her book *Composing for the Accordion* was published.

### **Elnaz Seyedi**

Elnaz Seyedi was born in Tehran in 1982. She studied piano with Ali Gorji and Farimah Ghawam-Sadri and music theory and composition with Alireza Mashayekhi. From 2007 to 2018, she studied composition with Younghi Pagh-Paan and Jörg Birkenkötter at Hochschule für Künste in Bremen, with Caspar Johannes Walter at Hochschule für Musik in Basel and with Günter Steinke at Folkwang University of Arts in Essen. She has received awards and scholarships like Bernd-Alois-Zimmermann-Scholarship of the City Cologne and Ensemble Phoenix Basel Competition prize in 2017 and DAAD Scholarship in 2016. In 2018/19 she was Composer in Residence at International Ensemble Modern Academy (IEMA) in Frankfurt am Main in Germany, 2020 Composer in Residence by Bartels Foundation at Atelier zum Markgräflerhof in Basel, 2021 Composer in Residence in Künstlerhof Schreyahn.

Her music has been performed among others at numerous festivals such as Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik, Venice Art Biennale, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Ultraschall Berlin, Festival Mixture Barcelona, Darmstädter Ferienkurse, the Acht Brücken Festival in Cologne, Zeiträume – Biennale for Contemporary Music and Architecture Basel, Bludenzer Tage zeitgemäßer Musik, Gaudeamus Muziekweek in Utrecht, Festival Leicht über Linz,

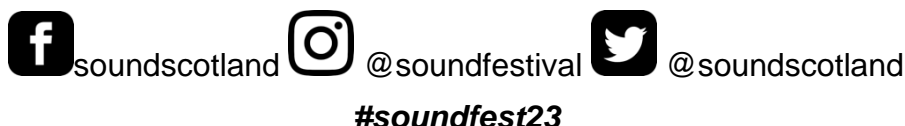
Musica Insieme Panicale Italy, Tehran International Electronic Festival and the Klangwerkstage in Hamburg. Her works are published by Edition Juliane Klein, Berlin.

## Matthew Shlomowitz

Matthew Shlomowitz (b. 1975) is a London based composer, raised in Adelaide, Australia. Major projects Electric Dreams, an opera staged at 2017 ORF Musikprotokoll as winner of the Johann Joseph Fux Opera Composition, with a second production in 2023 at Grand Théâtre de Genève; *Glücklich, Glücklich, Freude, Freude*, written for keyboardist Mark Knoop and the SWR Symphonieorchester and premiered at 2019 Donaueschinger Musiktage; *Minor Characters*, a one-hour show written with composer/singer Jennifer Walshe for Ensemble Nikel; and *6 Scenes for Turntables and Orchestra* written with composer/turntablist Mariam Rezaei commissioned for Frankfurt Radio Orchestra, Brussels Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Norwegian Radio Orchestra. Matthew co-directs Plus Minus Ensemble and the Soundmaking Podcast and is Professor of Composition at University of Southampton.

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