

RED NOTE

soundfestival

Northern Connection

Red Note Ensemble

Ruth Morley (flute), Tim Lines (clarinet), Jackie Shave (violin), Christian Elliott (cello), Simon Smith (piano), Tom Hunter (percussion), Matthew Swan (electronics)

Conducted by Geoffrey Patterson

Wednesday 25th October 2023, 6pm
The Lemon Tree, Aberdeen

Programme

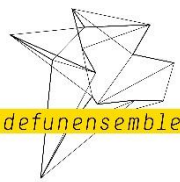
Kaija Saariaho	<i>Light and Matter</i> [12']
Bekah Simms	<i>metamold (UK première)</i> [13']
Tine Surel Lange	<i>Flaskepost* (world première)</i> [10']

*This is a Northern Connection project commission. Northern Connection aims to sustainably connect Nordic countries and Scotland by establishing and strengthening liaisons between composers, ensembles and festivals in contemporary music. Partners are: Music Finland, Musica nova Helsinki and defunensemble (Finland), Music Norway, Ultima Festival and Ensemble Temporum (Norway), Scottish Music Centre, **sound** and Red Note Ensemble (Scotland). Funded by Nordisk Kulturfond and Creative Scotland.

**Music
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MUSICA NOVA HELSINKI



defunensemble

MUSIC NORWAY

ultima



scottish
music centre

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With thanks to The University of Aberdeen Music Department for the loan of percussion instruments.

Programme notes

Kaija Saariaho *Light and Matter*

I have written many trios for different combinations, but have been hesitant to compose for a traditional piano trio, maybe because of its long and weighty tradition. When I finally decided to approach this instrumentation, my first musical ideas were of light

and rapid nature, and I started to imagine a one movement perpetual motion piece. During the composition, I developed the form into three continuous sections, including more varied tempi and textures. The starting point for the music is light kinetic energy, which is then developed into more dramatic gestures and rapid exchanges among the three instruments. The piece advances in spinning motion, moving from the original luminous fabric into more thematic patterns or towards the inertia of slow choral textures, before returning into the original weightlessness and starting a new flickering spin. As a result, we hear three musical elements - kinetic texture, thematic motives and slowly moving choral material - in constantly changing combinations and orchestrations.

I wrote this piece in New York, while watching from my window the changing light and colors of Morningside Park. Besides providing me with the name for the piece, perhaps that continuous transformation of light on the glinting leaves and the immobile trunks of the solid trees became the inspiration for the musical materials in this piece.

Light and Matter was commissioned by the Aeolian Chamber Players, the Library of Congress, Britten Sinfonia and Norrbotten NEO. The world premiere took place at the Bowdoin International Festival on July 30th, 2014, in honour of the festival's 50th anniversary, with Renee Jolles, violin, Nicholas Canellakis, cello, and Benjamin Hochman, piano. (*Source – WiseMusicClassical*)

Bekah Simms *metamold*

The three commissioning ensembles of “metamold” are embedded within the work; the electronic element is sourced almost exclusively from provided recordings of their musical performances. Both their sound and interpretive inclinations are inherent within these recordings, and this carries forward into the processed audio that make up the fixed media portion of the electronics. This audio also influences the acoustic component, reflecting three very different groups of performers. The transmission and processing of audio – as it becomes further and further away from its intended purpose as a recorded performance – becomes diluted, accruing artefacts both sonic and contextual. The disembodied version of the players is further abstracted, granulated, separated from the whole. It was impossible to ignore the connections between this concept and the experience of global-pandemic-induced isolation; for now, the only way I’ve experienced my family and friends is abstracted, granulated, separated from the whole, disembodied and transmitted through speakers and screens. As a result, “metamold” is at times fragmented and sectional while simultaneously being repetitive and insistent: an electronic echo that shifts quickly but maintains core elements of itself (the commissioners themselves) always at a distance through the speakers.

Tine Surel Lange *Flaskepost*

Flaskepost — message in a bottle — is a piece inspired by the ocean connecting Scotland and Norway. Based on field recordings made in the Lofoten archipelago in Northern Norway (where the composer is based) the piece is diving into the depths of the ocean, exploring the musical potential of the ocean itself as well as imagining the creatures and other things you can encounter in the depths. The piece also reflects on the ocean as pathway, both for human travel throughout the times but also for enormous amounts of plastic waste that with the Gulf Stream end up in Lofoten from all over the world. Inspired by the image of sending a cry for help and rescue with a message in a bottle.

Flaskepost — a message written on a scrap of paper, rolled up and put into an empty bottle and set adrift on the ocean; traditionally, a method used by castaways to advertise their distress to the outside world.

Biographies

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 hangers, 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 Austria in recent years.

Kaija Saariaho was a prominent member of a group of Finnish composers and performers whose music is making a worldwide impact. She studied composition in Helsinki, Freiburg and Paris, where she lived from 1982. Her studies and research at IRCAM had a major influence on her music and her characteristically luxuriant and mysterious textures were often created by combining live music and electronics.

Although much of her catalogue comprises chamber works, from the mid-nineties she turned increasingly to larger forces and broader structures, such as the operas *L'Amour de loin*, *Adriana Mater* and *Emilie*. Around the operas there have been other vocal works, notably the ravishing *Château de l'âme* (1996), *Oltramare* (1999), *Quatre instants* (2002), and *True Fire* (2014). The oratorio *La Passion de Simone*, portraying the life and death of the philosopher Simone Weil, formed part of Sellars's international festival 'New Crowned Hope' in 2006/07. The chamber version of the oratorio was premiered by La Chambre aux echos at the Bratislava Melos Ethos Festival in 2013.

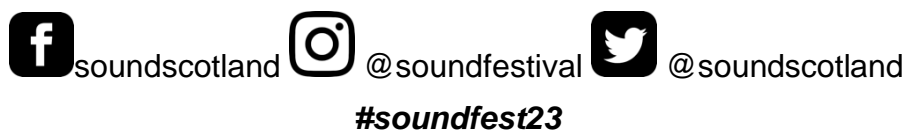
Saariaho claimed the major composing awards in The Grawemeyer Award, The Wihuri Prize, The Nemmers Prize, The Sonning Prize, The Polar Music Prize. In 2018 she was honoured with the BBVA Foundation's Frontiers of Knowledge Award. In 2015 she was the judge of the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award. Always keen on strong educational programmes, Kaija Saariaho was the music mentor of the 2014-15 Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative and was in residence at U.C. Berkeley Music Department in 2015.

Only The Sound Remains, her most recent opera collaboration with Peter Sellars, was premiered in Amsterdam in 2016. In the same year her first opera *L'Amour de loin* was presented in its New York premiere by the Metropolitan Opera in a new production by Robert Le Page. The Park Avenue Armory and New York Philharmonic presented a celebration of her orchestral music with visual accompaniment. February 2017 saw Paris come alive with her work when she was featured composer of Radio France's Festival Présences. Her last opera, *Innocence*, received its world premiere at Festival d'Aix-en-Provence in July 2021. (Source – *WiseMusicClassical*)

JUNO Award-winning composer **Bekah Simms** hails from Newfoundland, Canada and is currently based in Glasgow after nine years living and working in Toronto. Her varied musical output has been heralded as “cacophonous, jarring, oppressive — and totally engrossing!” (CBC Music), “visceral contemporary music that enfolds external inspirations with dazzling rigor and logic” (Peter Margasak), and lauded for its “sheer range of ingenious material, expressive range and sonic complexity” (The Journal of Music.) She has worked with some of the top interpreters of contemporary music internationally, including Crash Ensemble - with whom she is currently an artist-in-residence - Riot Ensemble, Eighth Blackbird, and l'Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal. Bekah has also been the recipient of over 35 awards, competitive selections, nominations, and prizes, including the 2019 Barlow Prize, the 2023 JUNO Award for Classical Composition of the Year, and a nomination for the 2022 Gaudeamus Award. She is a Lecturer in Composition at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Tine Surel Lange: Arctic landscapes, surrounding sounds, mythologies, and sound choreography are some of the inspirations that shape the works of Norwegian composer and interdisciplinary artist Tine Surel Lange (b. 1989, Vesterålen, Norway). Based in Lofoten, Northern Norway, her work is rooted in organic material – with a focus on listening, space, and the ways that different connotations colour how we listen to and experience art. Currently, her main focus is on storytelling, site-specificity, sculptural objects, 3D sound, sounding objects, sound for scenic productions, and creating conceptual works for sound and image – all strongly influenced by Nordic roots, magical realism, and the coming doom of the human race.

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This year's **soundfestival** is dedicated to the memory of Angela Michael and of Ian Spink. We very much valued each of their contributions to **sound**, and they will be greatly missed.

sound is a new music incubator based in north-east Scotland encouraging new music creation and discovery. We run the annual **soundfestival**, as well as year-round activity supporting a wide range of composers, engaging with local communities and providing educational opportunities

Find out more: www.sound-scotland.co.uk

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