



## IN LOCKDOWN: Contemplation, Comedy, Anger and Nature (2020)

Rolf Hind (piano)

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 12.45pm

Cowdray Hall, Aberdeen

### Programme

Rolf Hind	<i>BHUTANI</i>
Stuart MacRae	<i>Draw the Veil</i>
Lisa Robertson	<i>Is It Too Soon To Start Talking About All This?</i>
Mika Pelo	<i>Broken</i>
Ben Lunn	<i>Viva!</i>
Yehuda Yannay	<i>Piece for a Pianist Pondering the Pandemic</i>
Rylan Gleave	<i>The Void Above</i>
Elaine Mitchener	<i>Herein the News</i>
Frances-Marie Uitti	<i>Mashup</i>
Matthew King	<i>When Birds Do Sing</i>
Sadie Harrison	<i>Barkarolle</i>
Greg May	<i>Tree</i>

In association with Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums.



---

### Programme notes

#### Rolf Hind (2020) *BHUTANI*

*Eight studies for solo piano based on the names of animals in Sanskrit*

These pieces were initially triggered by a confluence - a perfect storm of events in 2020: lockdowns began, I was immersing myself more fully in the Sanskrit language of classical India, work fell away. And my father, Christopher Martin Clinch Hind, died in April of that year.

It was a horrible time, for many people. I wrote my father a tribute, based in a very hidden way on *The Lark Ascending*, which he - like Englishmen of his generation - loved. I called it *Khaga*, one of the many Sanskrit words for a bird, which literally translates as “sky-gone: gone to the sky.” It forms the final piece in the set.

Writing *Khaga* set me thinking about the possibility of other animal names, which are so very beautiful and sometimes bizarrely literal in Sanskrit, and how they might be represented in sound and action. This ended up growing organically into a sequence of eight. They are:

***Pakshina*** - Also a word for a bird. Literally “having wings or edges”. Mostly at extremes of the keyboard, very fast. Inspired by the flight of swallows, in parallel, seemingly impossible that they don’t crash.

***Vrka*** - Wolf. Literally “tear-er”. The most violent force coming towards you, accelerating continuously. Merciless Nature.

***Matsya*** - Fish. Two overlaid ragas, an essence of Indian scales and sound. The fish position in yoga, mystical and blissful...

***Shatpadi*** - Bee. Literally “six-feet” - inspired by the trippy experience of being on a long silent retreat and hearing the music in the buzzing of each bee, and its resonances. The piano’s preparations are fully revealed! And six fingers are only ever used at one time.

***Hastin*** - Elephant - “having a hand.” It was thought that the trunk was some kind of a hand, hence the name. The piece explores all the possible shapes of the hand on the instrument and the idea of the story of the blind man touching an elephant, who cannot identify it as its form his too huge and mysterious...

***Avatara*** - “he who descends” - a human. A piece that crystallises into form from remote far-reaching chords. As if falling to earth.

***Bhujanganam*** - “winding-going” a snake; the music is repetitive, hypnotic, but a sudden outburst of violence erupts...

***Khaga*** - the original bird.

*BHUTANI* is dedicated to a group of dear friends, who supported me in its writing, both financially and emotionally; and to an equally dear set of former students, who inspired its sounds and ideas.

### **Various Composers *Lockdown Miniatures***

This is a selection from a series of pieces written in the spring and summer of 2020, when we were all under the first lockdown in the UK, a strange, mysterious - and to me at least - somewhat numinous time.

I suggested to friends on Facebook and also on other social media that people might like to write short piano pieces to express themselves at this time, a time when everything came to a halt for creative people. The provisos were that I

could learn the piece to play the same morning, and that it was short, and I could film it on my phone to post.

The response was amazing, and really inspiring. I ended up with some 90 pieces, from a huge range of composers all over the world, and from many different backgrounds. It felt like a wonderful way for me to keep connected and add meaning and purpose to life.

Since the world returned, I have been playing selections from the resulting pieces as part of recital programmes. Tonight's selection has been chosen partly to prominently feature pieces by Scots, but also to show the range of mood and inspiration. People turned to humour, anger, political protest, nature and more to find a way to keep a voice heard. I want to thank them all for their generosity and creativity.

## Biographies

### Rolf Hind

Rolf Hind's career has established him as a major force as soloist, composer, recording artist, chamber musician, pedagogue, collaborator and concert planner. He has given recitals at many of Europe's leading new music festivals, and at Carnegie Hall, Sydney Opera House and on tours of Korea, Taiwan and Cuba.

Rolf has worked with many leading conductors, including Ashkenazy, Knussen, Rattle, David Robertson and Andrew Davis and appeared seven times at the BBC Proms. Orchestras he has worked with include the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Munich Philharmonic, Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Malmö Symphony, and Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, many appearances with the London Sinfonietta, the LPO, RPO, and with all the BBC orchestras.

Composers who have worked with Rolf or written for him include Tan Dun, John Adams, Helmut Lachenmann, Unsuk Chin, Elliott Carter, George Benjamin and James MacMillan. Rolf's compositions include a piano concerto, *Maya-Sesha* (nominated for a British Composer's Award) and a concerto for accordion, premiered at London's Barbican Centre. Much of his music is inspired by India, where he travels often, while drawing on the technical adventurousness of performers including himself.

An interest in new dance resulted in collaborations including with choreographer Rui Horta on a large-scale tour of a new work, *Danza Preparata*, featuring John Cage's Sonatas and Interludes for prepared piano, with dancer.

As pianist Rolf curated and performed in *Occupy The Pianos*, a piano festival which became a regular feature at St John's Smith Square in London and also

travelled to France and Denmark. He initiated a project in March 2020 which produced over 100 new short piano pieces from composers far and wide, intended as responses to lockdown, a fascinating range of pieces which he is now including in recital and which has been performed in London, Glasgow and Zagreb. He re-visited a masterpiece in the form of Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur l'enfant Jesus*.

His first opera, *Lost in Thought*, a 'Mindfulness opera' commissioned by Mahogany Opera Group was premiered at The Barbican in London. Current composition plans include an operatic project about the poet Sufi Rumi, working with Rolf's long-time collaborator Frederick Wake-Walker and the Anglo-US poet Dante Micheaux. He is also writing a song-cycle for Elaine Mitchener and Apartment House for the Wigmore Hall in 2024.

---

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.

**Follow us on social media for up to date information and festival news**

 soundscotland  @soundfestival  @soundscotland

**#soundfest23**

---

**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](http://www.sound-scotland.co.uk)

**soundfestival 2023** gratefully acknowledges the support of:

