

## Spotlight gig: Red Note Ensemble

Mark O’Keeffe (trumpet) and Sasha Savaloni (guitar)

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 3pm

Big Sky Studio, Music Hall, Aberdeen

### Programme

Max Syedtollan	<i>Quartet for trumpet, guitar and two conductors (World première)</i>
Kate Sagovsky	<i>Glean (World première)</i>
Reese Carly Manglicmot	<i>Candle (World première)</i>
Mingdu Li	<i>Barren (World première)</i>
Stephen Chase	<i>Bagatelles (World première)</i>
	<i>I. Preamble (tintintinambulation)</i>
	<i>II. new/red/things</i>
	<i>III. Finnucane's Fanfare</i>
	<i>IV. Calzada de las Águilas</i>
	<i>V. "cracked bells &amp; washed-out horns</i>

## Programme notes

### **Max Syedtollan *Quartet for trumpet, guitar and two conductors***

This piece explores the implications of polytempo in a duo context, asking the players to divide their attention between the actions of the other as well as the directions of the two conductors. It's a game of attention – the harmonic and melodic material, although deceptively simple, requiring utmost focus from performers and audience alike in order to be locked into. The results are of strange, gentle rhythmic interweavings – disrupted and unfamiliar yet at the same time graspable and welcoming. The inclusion of conductors in the title of the piece is a Brechtian gesture drawing focus to the means of musical production as well as to the musicians. The audience is encouraged to consider the musicality of all aspects of this performance, treating it as a quartet in as traditional a sense of the word as permissible.

### **Kate Sagovsky *Glean***

*for flugelhorn, guitar and flat guitar resonator*

This composition was written in collaboration with Colin Mutch, who is a forensic psychology student at The Open University, who also works in the NHS and has a military/security background. He is interested in brain plasticity, the causes of auditory and sensory illusions, psychosis, mountaineering, ADHD, creativity and what constitutes creativity.

Together, we have written a piece that seeks to explore the instinctive awkwardness of communication through the filter of our own experiences of auditory perception and processing issues. We used patterns of repetition and the expressive capabilities of the guitar and flugelhorn to create the illusion of music by tagging together fragments of transcribed speech. Throughout the piece this moves from imitations of computer-generated voice to incorporating interpretations of both Mark and Sasha's voices. While imitating speech-to-music illusion we realised there was something about the impulsive, distracted, relentless, joyful and awkward nature of our own experiences of auditory perception that we wanted to portray. We really enjoyed finding creative ways to try to *glean* this from our initial transcribed materials.

## **Reese Carly Manglicmot *Candle***

*Candle* recounts the experience of receiving a private revelation whilst holding a candle, observing its movements.

Candlelight from a distance appears to be still, but in reality, the flame is in constant motion, flickering between great and minute scales of movement. This motion is reflected in the piece through the impermanent, transitory nature of the sounds: they emerge and come into being, change in their qualities and 'play' with each other, giving birth to new sounds and patterns.

The piece deals also with the harmony and relations between non-pitched and pitched material: non-pitched and muted sounds reflect when one's focus is drawn to the movements of the flame, whereas pitched and 'open' sounds reflect when the attention is drawn to the inner state in both the physical and spiritual senses. *Candle* mirrors not only the transition between these points of focus, but also their coexistence through the combination of the sound materials.

## **Mingdu Li *Barren***

During my road trip in the early summer of 2023 through the northwestern part of China, I traversed a stark, barren landscape that seemed to be comprised of nothing more than piles of earth. This landscape appeared to be somewhat between desert and gobi, where the wind stirred up the yellow soil, and the stratified sand and dirt layers shone like an earthen tapestry under the sunlight. Strikingly, within this austere terrain, villages and homes existed for generations...

Poetically, humans dwell on this earth.

## **Stephen Chase *Bagatelles***

There are five movements: Preamble, new/red/things, Finnu cane's Fanfare, Calzada de las Águilas, and 'cracked bells & washed out horns'. The guitar is retuned to the harmonics of the low E string, which means that sometimes things are 'perfectly in tune' and at other times differently so... This reflects the wider wayward progress of the piece, treading warily/stomping awkwardly between the familiar and the odder, exploring resonances between the instruments, with the space we're in, and resonances of memory.

## **Biographies**

### **Mark O’Keeffe**

Mark O’Keeffe has held the post of principal trumpet with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra since December 1996.

In addition to his career with the BBCSSO, he plays chamber music with Scottish based Red Note Ensemble and has been guest Principal Trumpet with the World Orchestra for Peace, London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Opera House Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Halle Orchestra and Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

Mark was awarded a Creative Scotland bursary in 2004 for a collaborative project with Theatre Cryptic.

He teaches at the RCS Glasgow, the RNCM Manchester and was awarded a distinguished alumnus from the CIT Cork School of Music in 2018.

### **Sasha Savaloni**

Classical guitarist Sasha Savaloni is the winner of two of the most prestigious guitar competitions in Europe; the Sevilla International Guitar Competition (2018) and the New Elizabethan Award (2022).

As a soloist he has given concerts across Europe and throughout the UK, performing recitals in venues such as the Wigmore Hall (London), Kings Place (London), Usher Hall (Edinburgh), Sage Gateshead, The Shoe Factory (Nicosia), City Halls (Glasgow), Holyrood Palace (Edinburgh), DIT Conservatory (Dublin), Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Leeds College of Music as well as performances in festivals such as the London Guitar Festival, St Magnus International Festival, Sul Tasto Paris, Festival de la Guitarra de Sevilla, Big Guitar Weekend, Festival Corde d’Autunno, Les Garrigues Memorial Emili Pujol, Bath Guitar Festival, Shrewsbury Guitar Festival, Plug New Music Festival and the Ullapool Guitar Festival.

Sasha is a passionate advocate of new music and has been regularly active in expanding the guitar repertoire through performing and commissioning new works. To date he has been involved in the premiere of nearly thirty new works.

Sasha is a guitar lecturer at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. In 2023 he also completed a doctorate at the RCS and University of St Andrews focusing on performance of Schubert's music on guitar.

## **Red Note Ensemble**

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.

## **Max Syedtollan**

Max Syedtollan is an artist/composer/researcher based in Glasgow. His pieces frequently combine music with text, video and performance. Besides this he also writes non-conceptual instrumental music and songs, working across idioms and short-circuiting composition with improvisational techniques. Max has been heard on BBC Radios 3, 4 and 6; at Britten Pears' Festival of New, and while on residency at Rotterdam's WORM. Since 2016 he has released a string of tapes on Glasgow's GLARC label including 2021's Four Assignments (and other pieces), a collaboration with Plus-Minus Ensemble.

## **Kate Sagovsky**

Kate is a PhD composer from Stirlingshire studying at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where she is supervised by Emily Doolittle, having previously studied at the Royal Academy of Music. Having worked for much of her life outside creative practice, her research centres around interdisciplinary collaborations which explore her interests in miscommunication, awkwardness, translation and mishearing.

## **Reese Carly Manglicmot**

Reese Carly Manglicmot (*b. 2004*) is a composer and performer, whose practice spans from early and classical keyboard performance to contemporary composition and collaborative improvisation projects. She was recently announced as one of two winners in the senior category of the BBC Young Composer Competition 2023, prior to which she was a finalist in the NCEM Young Composers Competition 2023 and highly commended in the BBC Young Composer 2021.

Reese Carly has also earned accolades in various international piano competitions, which has led her to perform and self-première in Lithuania, Romania and across the UK. She is also active as a collaborative pianist, working not only with emerging professionals, but also with young people in the West of Scotland. Currently, Reese Carly is at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under an RCS Trust Scholarship, studying on the Bachelor of Music course as a Joint Principal Study pianist and composer with Fali Pavri and Stuart MacRae respectively. She is an alumna of the Purcell School, where she trained under a Music and Dance Scheme bursary from 2017 to 2022.

## **Mingdu Li**

Composer Mingdu Li is currently pursuing her MMus in Composition at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under the tutelage of Dr Oliver Searle, after getting a BMus (Hons) in Composition in RCS under the guidance of Mr Tom Wilson, and BSc (Hons) in Mathematics in University College London.

Mingdu was awarded the 2023 Musicians' Company Silver Medal. Her orchestral piece 'Entropy' won the 2022/23 Walter and Dinah Wolfe Memorial Prize, premiered at Glasgow's City Halls by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Mr Martyn Brabbins, and was later aired on BBC Radio 3.

Recently, Mingdu has concentrated her musical aesthetic on expressing the 'silent' facts and concepts, including but not limited to fields of maths, quantum physics and our nature, into 'audible' compositions, to contribute her music to the integration of knowledge exploration and spiritual longing.

She has also been working with quite a few organisations, such as the London Philharmonic Orchestra Soundworks, Summerfest at Curtis Institute of Music, Hebrides Ensemble, Sound Scotland, Red Note Ensemble, GAIA Duo, RCS Orchestra and many more.

Critics have praised Mingdu's works. The Edinburgh Music Review observed her music's, "...compelling ever-present pulse..." and Bachtrack commented "...potent energy exuding...", on her Entropy.

## **Stephen Chase**

Stephen Chase composes, improvises, and walks quite a lot. His work veers between generative ideas and following his nose, exploring, among other things, group interaction, participation, acoustical phenomena, and the passing of time. Co-conspirators and performing comrades have included Exaudi, Quatuor Bozzini, Philip Thomas, Choir Brevis, Music We'd Like to Hear, CoMA, Ryoko Akama, Patrick Farmer, Ross Parfitt, Coastguard All Stars, Mick Beck, Taku Sugimoto, piggle, Luke Poot, and Freaking Glamorous Teapot.

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:

