



PNEUMA

Richard Craig (flute) and Michael Bonaventure (organ)

Saturday 28th October 2023, 4pm

St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen

Programme

Karlheinz Stockhausen	<i>from 'Tierkreis': Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn</i>
Lauren Redhead	<i>Curse tablets</i>
Ian Matheson	<i>Movement of air (World première)</i>
Huw Morgan	<i>embrace</i>
Kaija Saariaho	<i>Laconisme de l'aile</i>
Richard Craig	<i>CLARION</i>
Luiz Henrique Yudo	<i>PRÉMESURÉ</i>
Michael Bonaventure	<i>Pathways</i>
Karlheinz Stockhausen	<i>from 'Tierkreis': Leo, Sagittarius, Aries</i>

Programme notes

Karlheinz Stockhausen *Tierkreis*

In 1975, 12 melodies were composed for the work *MUSIK IM BAUCH* (Music in the Belly) for 6 percussionists and music boxes, one for each sign of the zodiac.

Stockhausen: *"I began to busy myself with the 12 human characters of the ZODIAC of which I had until then only a vague idea. In inventing each melody, I thought of the characters of children, friends, and acquaintances who were born under the various star signs, and studied the human types of the star signs more thoroughly. Each melody is now composed with all its measures and proportions in keeping with the characteristics of its respective star sign, and one will discover many legitimacies when one hears a melody often, and exactly contemplates its construction . . . Each melody is composed in such a way that one should play it at least 3 times. When one wishes to listen to several or all of them one after another, then each should be played 3 or 4 times in succession".*

When performing these melodies, instrumentalists or singers should consider *various possibilities of interpretation* to make the structures clearly perceivable, and to make them interesting for the listeners. Since each melody must be played three or four

times in succession, the interpreter has many possibilities for variation during the repetitions.

Christel Stockhausen

Lauren Redhead *Curse tablets - no.iii & no.v* for organ/piano, fixed media

Curse tablets was composed in 2022 and comprises a poem, six graphic scores and six miniatures for piano, organ or other keyboards. These elements can be interpreted, combined or layered in any way, and the realisation of each movement can be as flexible as the performer wishes. The miniatures themselves are dedicated as petitionary prayers to fellow musicians of Lauren's.

Each of them is inscribed with a mix of words from the poem. No.iii is dedicated to Michael Bonaventure and No.v to Sophie Louise Stone. Recent concerts have included an audio track that I created using words and phrases from the poem, and this will be part of today's performance.

Ian Matheson *Movement of air*

The flute is an extension of the organ, an additional pipe. The organ is an extension of the flute, amplifying its single line. The title indicates that in this piece the two instruments emphasise what they have in common; two wind-powered instruments, each producing music by means of the movement of air.

Huw Morgan *Embrace*

Embrace is inspired by the "Colour Fields" series of images by the photographer Garry Fabian Miller. Each of these images, created by light falling directly on photosensitive paper, is a square of one colour held within a frame of another, with titles such as "a purple blue holds the floating pale yellow" or "gold embraces the softest pink". The music attempts to capture, in sound and time, the two colours as they vibrate against each other.

Kaija Saariaho *Laconisme de l'aile*

The possibility to move from secret whispers into clear, beautiful and 'abstract' sound was one of the starting points for *Laconisme de l'aile*, started in Freiburg and finished in Paris in 1982. Another important image on which I focused my mind when writing this piece was that of birds, not really their song but rather the lines they draw in the sky when flying. I had already started the piece when I felt the need to add a text in the beginning, which would in fact be the source for the musical material. The book *Oiseaux* (Birds) by St.-John Perse (1887 – 1975, a French poet and diplomat, Nobel-prize winner in 1960) got into my hands in the public library of Freiburg, and I found a passage in this collection of poems that described somehow the images that I had in my mind: that of birds, fighting gravity, flying away, secret and immortal.

Kaija Saariaho (from <https://saariaho.org/>)

Richard Craig *CLARION* for piccolo and organ

While writing *CLARION* I had the poetry of Don Paterson in my mind, in particular his *Orpheus* which is a version of the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke's *Fifty-five sonnets to Orpheus*. Paterson's version of the Rilke Sonnets, as he puts it, became

a personal project to distil Rilke's message of transcendence in a way that it could be memorised and carried with us - a type of *vade mecum*. The fifty-five poems by Paterson evoke an earthiness to the terrestrial and a radiance to the 'upper light' – latter being the grace by which Orpheus can be between both worlds, and his voice heard clearly across the divide of light and dark. This extract in particular gave me pause for thought and to rethink a certain ambivalence towards the natural world in the face of its beauty and power:

*"...are the flower and fruit held out to us in love, or merely thrust
up at us, their masters, like a fist?
Or are they the lords, asleep amongst the roots,
Granting to us in their great largesse
This hybrid thing - part brute force, part mute kiss?"*

CLARION was commissioned by Creative Scotland. I am indebted to Michael Bonaventure for his collaboration with me in developing the work.

Richard Craig

Luiz Henrique Yudo *PRÉMESURÉ* for solo organ

This was written for Lauren Redhead's ongoing project 'unmeasured preludes' for organ and first performed by her, with Alistair Zaldua on live electronics, on German Radio in December 2021. The piece is a kind of 10-finger study in which the player chooses a 10-note chord and articulates it according to fixed patterns in graphic notation, over a pedal drone, starting from either the inner or outer extremities.

Michael Bonaventure *PATHWAYS* for amplified flutes, organ & fixed media electronics

This was commissioned by Creative Scotland for the PNEUMA project and given its first performance in May this year at a concert presented by the Scottish Arts Trust in St. Peter's, Luton Place, Edinburgh. The psycho-geographic inspiration behind "Pathways" comes from the beautiful and atmospheric Roslin Glen, which, with its ancient woodland and divers routes in, out and around, is adjacent to Rosslyn Castle and the Rosslyn Chapel. Live flutes - piccolo, c flute & bass flute - and pipe organ combine or alternate with patches of pre-recorded electronic sound. The electronic sounds have two distinct identities: 1) an atmospheric mélange of chromatic figures derived from samples of Richard playing on bass flute, heard at varying transpositions and tempi, and 2) lively scalar synthesiser loops that become quite overpowering and immersive, creating a wall of sound. The piece consists of multiple sections of music that can fit together in any order, so that a new musical journey can be embarked upon with each performance, hence the title.

Biographies

Richard Craig has a multifaceted career as teacher, performer, composer/improviser and independent researcher. He studied flute at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with Richard Blake, and later with Mario Caroli at the Conservatoire de Strasbourg, France. Specialising in contemporary music, Richard has performed with Klangforum Wien, Musikfabrik and ensembles in the UK such as Ensemble Octandre and the Riot Ensemble. As a recording artist he has released two solo discs (INWARD and VALE) on the Mètier label, as well as

numerous chamber music recordings and radio broadcasts. Alongside his work as a performer, Richard gives masterclasses and seminars. He was a Visiting Fellow in Performance at the University of Aberdeen 2010 – 2012. In 2015 he was appointed as a lecturer and Head of Performance at Bangor University, Wales, a post he held until 2019. During this time he was also an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Huddersfield. Richard is currently Director of Performance at the University of Edinburgh.

Michael Bonaventure (b. 1962, Edinburgh), composer, organist and collaborator in new and experimental music projects; based in Edinburgh & Amsterdam. In recent times he has been producing work in the Dark Ambient field of electronica, as exemplified in the CD album *In Tenebris Ratione Organi* released in 2019 by Eighth Tower Records. His music has been played in Canada, USA, Russia, UK, New Zealand, France, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland & The Netherlands as well as on BBC Radio 3, Concertzender (Netherlands), Radio Onda Rossa (Italy) and Resonance Extra FM.

As an organ soloist (with and without electronics) Bonaventure is also a seasoned interpreter of new & experimental music, with innumerable composer collaborations since the early 1980s. To date he has given over 200 premières and concertized throughout the UK, in Europe & USA, on BBC Radio 3 & Radio Scotland, and on 7 solo CDs : these include four volumes of 'Contemporary British Organ Music' on the *sfz* label and the later organ cycles of Olivier Messiaen for *Delphian Records*, including a widely-acclaimed rendition of the massive *Livre du Saint Sacrement*, released in 2008.

*This year's **sound** festival 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.*

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