



Laura Bowler in conversation

Monday 21st October 2024, 7pm

The Lemon Tree, Aberdeen

Composer/vocalist Laura Bowler will give an insight into the development of three new works she commissioned for solo female performer centred around voice and movement, all with an exploration of the female identity in contemporary society at their heart.

Extracts of works by Nwando Ebizie and Sivan Cohen Elias and a short film showing Laura developing a new work (*La Ville-Zizi*) with composer Diana Soh will be presented alongside discussions about the process of development between composer, performer and dramaturg.

Sivan Elias *Who-He-Huh*

Who-He-Huh is a solo multimedia piece for a singer and live electronics, written specifically for Laura Bowler. The piece embraces the confusion of our time at its core, where our identities are shredded into fragments of realities. In the plot, the singer is a social-media presenter who gives a tutorial on “how to teach your avatar emotions”. In parallel, she also creates a DIY figure that starts to move on the table. The piece is designed as a sequence of connected miniatures combining theatrical elements, visually and sonically, while using fixed media, live electronics, and video.

Sivan Cohen Elias, a 2024 ACF McKnight Composer Fellow with the American Composers Forum, is an electroacoustic composer and improviser. Her work often combines modified musical instruments, objects, fixed media, and live electronics, while exploring social themes of failure, entanglement, and illusion. As noted by The New York Times, she often “deconstructs the instruments themselves” to establish extended sonic environments consisting of multi-layered textures and timbres.

Cohen Elias’ work spans the United States, Europe, and Asia, where she has received various prestigious international awards, including the Harvard Fromm

Foundation commission, winner of the 2016 International Staatstheater Darmstadt Music-Theater Composition Competition, and Akademie Schloss Solitude Fellowship (Stuttgart). Her works have been performed by ensembles such as Klangforum Wien, soundinitiative, Jack Quartet, Talea, and Distractfold, among many others.

She received her Ph.D. from Harvard University, and post-graduate studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna. Since Fall 2022 she has been the Assistant Professor of Composition/Music Technology at the University of Minnesota School of Music. Innova Recordings Label will release her new album *Melting Planets* in Fall 2024.

Nwando Ebizie *Dahlia (and you will be there forever and ever)*

A ritual experience for one performer. A practice: committing to the experience of Joy. Encompassing vivid memories of a wedding, a proposal, a dance and a dress. A reclaiming of what is beautiful. A heralding of new spring and a determination to grow.

Co-commissioned by **sound**.

An unclassifiable polymath, British-Nigerian multidisciplinary artist Nwando Ebizie fabulates speculative fictions and alternate realities at the intersection of live art, experimental music and multi-sensory installation. She proposes new myths, rituals and provocations for perceptual change, radical care and transformation of the self and community, drawing from science fiction, Black Atlantic ritual cultures, biophilia, neuroscience, her own neurodivergency and Nigerian heritage.

Commissions include compositions for London Sinfonietta, Aurora Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Zubin Kanga, Opera North and Sky Arts, Zubin Kanga, Juliet Fraser, Juice Vocal Ensemble, The Hermes Experiment, Estuary Festival, Yarmonics, Radiophrenia.

Awards include: An Ivor Novello nomination, an Oram Award, and the Steve Reid Innovation award. Her debut album was released in 2022 on Matthew Herbert's Accidental Records to critical acclaim including features in *The Wire*. She self released her debut EP *The Passion of Lady Vendredi* on her own imprint *Tears In The Rain records* alongside a 3 week run of shows at Soho Theatre. She has performed at clubs and festival stages worldwide as her art-pop alter-ego Lady Vendredi (a blaxploitation heroine from another dimension), including performances at Latitude Festival, Kings Place, the Barbican, Southbank Centre, Bonobo (Tokyo), Tempo Festival (Rio de Janeiro), Blok (Zurich) and opening for Mykki Blanco, Peaches and Princess Superstar.

Her work including live art gigs, sound art installations and curated happenings, has been performed at Barbican, Southbank Centre, Wellcome Collection, Tempo Festival (Rio de Janeiro), Hepworth Wakefield, Melbourne Science

Gallery, Tate Britain, Art/Science Museum, Singapore, Rewire 2023, Donau 2023I and She Makes Noise 2023.

Laura Bowler

Laura Bowler (born 1986) is a composer and vocalist specialising in music-theatre, multi-disciplinary work and opera. She has been commissioned and featured across the globe by ensembles and festivals, including the Royal Opera House, Music on Main (Canada), Ensemble Phace (Austria), Festiva Musica (France), MaerzMuzik (Berlin), Donaueschinger Musiktage and Omega Ensemble (Australia). As a vocal soloist she has performed and premiered works internationally, including the premiere of Louis Aguirre's *The Way The Dead Love* as part of the European Capital of Culture Aarhus programme. She is also the vocalist in contemporary music ensemble, *Ensemble Lydenskab*, based in Denmark.

Bowler's recent compositions include *The Blue Woman*, a chamber opera commissioned by the Royal Opera House and Britten Pears Arts; *Wicked Problems* for flute and soprano (herself), commissioned by soundfestival, which won the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Chamber-scale Composition and was nominated for an Ivor Composer Award. Her other works include, *Houses Slide*, a bike powered music theatre work for ensemble and cycling soprano (Jessica Aszodi) commissioned by London Sinfonietta, *ADVERT (herself and Decoder Ensemble)* commissioned by Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, New Music Dublin, November Music, Ultima, Musica Estrana, Music on Main and Time of Music festivals; and *Antarctica*, a 50-minute multimedia work for orchestra and vocalist (herself) co-commissioned by Manchester Camerata and BBC Radio 3. Her latest opera, *Girl with the Hurricane Brain*, commissioned by Ensemble Lydenskab premiered August 2024 in Aarhus and Copenhagen Opera Festival.

Laura completed her BMus (Hons) at the Royal Northern College of Music and Sibelius Academy (Finland), followed by her MMus and PhD at the Royal Academy of Music. She also completed an MA in Theatre Directing at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. She is currently Lecturer in Composition at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Trinity Laban Conservatoire and the Royal Northern College of Music. In the coming months she will be performing works by Diana Soh, Nwando Ebizie and Sivan Cohen Elias at MaerzMuzik25, whilst touring her new chamber work *Deconstructing Pierrot* to Scotland, Canada and Australia. She will also begin work on a new orchestral song cycle for Barbara Hannigan, and new music theatre commission for Basel Sinfonietta, herself and GBSR Duo.

*This project was made possible through the generous support of:
Vaughan Williams Foundation, Hinrichsen Foundation, Arts Council England, Britten
Pears Arts and Diaphonique (Franco-British fund for contemporary music, in
partnership with the SACEM, the Friends of the French Institute Trust, the British
Council, the Institut français, the Institut français du Royaume-Uni, the Centre
National de la Musique and Creative Scotland).*

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



This year's **soundfestival** is dedicated to the memory of cellist Rohan de Saram, one of our patrons, who took part in many festivals. His musicianship, kindness and generosity will be much 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

soundfestival 2024 gratefully acknowledges the support of:



David and June
Gordon Memorial
Trust

DIAPHONIQUE



Hugh Fraser
Foundation



PRS
Foundation



Talent
Development
Partner



Beyond
Borders
PRS Foundation



Funded by
UK Government



VAUGHAN
WILLIAMS
FOUNDATION

THE
WILLIAM SYSON
FOUNDATION



UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
DEVELOPMENT TRUST SCIO