



# **Roland Dahinden: Theatre of the Mind**

Gareth Davis (bass clarinet) and Mikuláš Mrva (electronics)

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

King's Pavilion, University of Aberdeen

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## **Programme notes**

Theatre of the Mind is a work for bass clarinet and electronics by Swiss composer Roland Dahinden. It was commissioned by the Dutch Foundation Mousai, an organisation that uses contemporary music as a platform to explore and work with issues of mental health. It was written for bass clarinetist Gareth Davis.

Roland's composition takes elements of his mixed background performing in jazz and improvised combinations with Miles Davis and Anthony Braxton while at the same time working with John Cage, Alvin Lucier and other contemporary composers over the last 40 years. The work uses different forms of notation, jazz and improvised influences and extended instrumental techniques as part of its musical language, thematically attempting to capture the layers and process of mental thought and how they interact with patches of partially remembered ideas.

Struggles with mental health have become increasingly pronounced over the last few years. In this work the idea of the sensation of being 'locked in' to one's thought process are juxtaposed with memory and remembering and how memory recreates constantly, creating ever changing backdrops which can in some cases lead to inspiration while in others can be the cause of confusion and

struggle with surroundings. A recurring theme when speaking to those suffering from mental health difficulties was the sensation of the contrast between the heightened mental activity, with a sense of almost physical (or in the case of Parkinson's Disease, actual physical) decay of the rest of the body.

Theatre of the Mind is a soundscape influenced not by a vision of surroundings but rather as an impression of the internal process of the mind, the constant ongoing narrative between memories, ideas, possibilities and tasks.

## Biographies

**Roland Dahinden** was born in 1962 in Zug, Switzerland. He completed studies in trombone, composition and conducting at the Musikhochschule Graz with Georg F. Haas, Scuola di Musica di Fiesole with Vinko Globokar and Wesleyan University Connecticut with Anthony Braxton and Alvin Lucier.

He has performed and conducted throughout the world working extensively with Anthony Braxton, Miles Davis, Pierre Favre, John Cage, Christian Wolf etc. Since 2021 he is the conductor of the PMP Orchestra Prague.

As a composer his work has explored the spaces between concert music, installation, and sculpture, including collaborations with visual artists Inge Dick, Sol LeWitt architects Morger & Degelo and with the authors Pirmin Bossart and Eugen Gomringer.

**Gareth Davis** is an artist, composer and musician living in Amsterdam.

He plays clarinet(s), the result of a somewhat impulsive purchase whilst window shopping in Covent Garden, London, around ten years before the turn of the century. The serendipitous location of a rather wonderful (and equally important, rather cheap) second hand record shop less than 10m from the bus stop required for seven years of schooling, combined with delivering newspapers on a daily basis, lead to a somewhat eclectic, dusty and generally unclassified taste in music.

The result. Activity covering sonic art and contemporary classical music through rock, improvisation and noise with collaborations that have included the premiering of new written pieces by composers such as Bernhard Lang, Peter Ablinger, Toshio Hosokawa and Chaya Czernowin, soloist with orchestras including the SWR Symphonieorchester, Warsaw Philharmonic and Orquesta de la Comunidad de Madrid, performances with groups and performers ranging

from the Neue Vocalsolisten and Arditti Quartet through to improvisers including Elliott Sharp, Michael Mantler and Frances Marie Uitti, bands such as Oiseaux Tempete and Henry Cow, electronic artists Robin Rimbaud and Merzbow and multimedia work with artists including Christian Marclay and Peter Greenaway.

Czech Sound Designer and composer **Mikuláš Mrva** is one of the foremost of a new generation of programmers working in Central Europe. He is an expert in MAX MSP and its live performance use. After a series of national premieres doing sound design for the large scale works of Luigi Nono, he was chosen by Roland Dahinden to create the electronic components of two recent works, 'Theatre of The Mind' and 'Bratislava' which has resulted in an ongoing relationship between the composer and digital artist. Other recent collaborations include Anthony Braxton (the premiere of his opera Trillium X), Roscoe Mitchell, Richard Ayers and Zygmunt Krauze. Mikulas is head of electronics and sound design at Ostrava New Music.

This concert was made possible through the support of Stichting Mousai (Netherlands) and the Swiss Arts Council.




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