

Spotlight Gig: Tiffany Vong (harpsichord)

Thursday 24th October 2024, 3pm

Cowdray Hall, Aberdeen

Programme

Mingdu Li	<i>Moonlight Tides</i>
Nikodem Rodzeń	<i>Soundlapse: a ruin for solo harpsichord</i>
Alison Beattie	<i>Break the Cycle</i>

Programme notes

Mingdu Li *Moonlight Tides*

Mingdu Li is a first-year doctoral composer pursuing a PhD at the Royal College of Music, under the supervision of Professor Kenneth Hesketh and Professor William Mival, supported by the RCM Studentship and the Mendelssohn Scholarship Foundation. She holds an MMus and BMus (Hons) in Composition from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where she studied with Dr Oliver Iredale Searle and Tom David Wilson, as well as a BSc (Hons) in Mathematics from University College London.

Mingdu's orchestral work *Entropy* received the 2022/23 Walter and Dinah Wolfe Memorial Prize. This piece premiered at Glasgow's City Halls, performed by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Martyn Brabbins, and was later broadcast on BBC Radio 3. She is also the recipient of the 2023 Musicians' Company Silver Medal. For the 2024/25 season, she has been named a Britten Pears Young Artist, under the guidance of Colin Matthews OBE and Mark-Anthony Turnage CBE. In addition, she is participating in the 2024/25 ABRSM Composer Mentoring Program, with a focus on composing within educational contexts.

The *Edinburgh Music Review* has praised her music for its "...compelling ever-present pulse, conveying a sense of inexorability," while *Bachtrack* described her compositions as having "...a sense of an uncontrollable beast of pure energy... a confident work."

This piece was inspired by a summer road trip in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2024. As Mingdu wandered through the bustling city, she stumbled upon a small, abandoned

pier at the far end of a lively market. That evening, a few people were scattered there, sitting quietly and savouring the tranquillity beneath the full moon. The moon illuminated the sky, casting its gentle light farther across the ocean than usual, reaching the distant tides where the waves lay calm and still, like a mirror, concealing the restless surge beneath.

Nikodem Rodzeń *Soundlapse / a ruin for solo harpsichord / for Tiffany Vong*

Nikodem Rodzeń is a violinist, composer and improviser from Warsaw, Poland currently based in Glasgow where he moved to study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. A keen collaborator and an in-depth researcher, he has been developing his personal artistic practice by extending its diverse vectors of inquiry. From historically informed performance practice to experimental contemporary music and wide-ranging improvising practices, he hopes to map the shared matrix of creative research and practice and explore it for refreshing outcomes.

This is a new piece for solo harpsichord. Three subparts, continuous: foundation – earthwalk – remains. Five minutes. Influences various. Intentions likewise. Perceptions – always new. On the brink of someone’s fall onto the road to complete cause / laid on firm undermining for strong and charitable shakes / Circle down to earth, go for a brisk of life above – through and / into towards along past / by, not even noticing the weak foundation exhumed.

Alison Beattie *Break the Cycle*

Irresistibly drawn by the pull of music I left a career in Chemistry to embark on the journey towards becoming a Composer and Sonic Artist. I completed a Masters in Composition (MMus), by research, at the University of Glasgow, Scotland in 2019. My area of study combined writing for acoustic instruments with field recordings exploiting the spectral properties of both sound worlds. Since then, I have registered my company Alison Beattie – Composition and Sound Sculpture, in January 2020, and released my debut album *Bifurcation* in February 2020. I have also performed electroacoustic pieces, both interactive and fixed media at Sound Thought on a few occasions. I have had acoustic pieces played by Red Note Ensemble, Hermes Experiment and the London Consort of Winds. I was recently commissioned as one of 3 composers to write a piece for Any Enemy which was performed during the Sound Festival October 2023. I believe music to be a powerful medium for breaking down barriers and bringing people together from different sectors of society including age, race and political views. I currently play saxophone, cornet and trombone in numerous community bands, orchestras and ensembles. I am one of four volunteer directors for “Music for People”, a summer school providing playing, singing and composing opportunities for adult learners.

Inspiration for this piece for solo harpsichord began by researching what was happening in other areas of the world during the Baroque Era. In the middle east the Ottoman Empire was expanding with lots of warring factions and unrest. This brought to mind the current war and turbulence in the Middle East. The method by which the harpsichord is played, namely plucking of the strings, is also suggestive of Eastern instruments including ouds, lyres and harps. I decided to focus in on some of the Maqam which are associated with mood. The piece includes a sad

section, two battle sections, some extended techniques which exploit the open strings ending with a happy section. The plea inherent in this composition is to Break the Cycle of devastation, retaliation and enabling.

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Biographies

Tiffany Vong

Tiffany Vong is a Glasgow-based organist, harpsichordist and choral conductor. She is the Organist and Director of Music of Jordanhill Parish Church and the recipient of the Women's Conducting Fellowship 2023-2024 with the National Youth Choir of Scotland.

Originally from Hong Kong, Tiffany was organ scholar at Glenalmond College (Perthshire), Oriel College (University of Oxford), and University of Glasgow. Tiffany completed a Master of Music at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where she was generously supported by scholarships from the RCS Trust and ABRSM, studying principal study organ and second study harpsichord with David Hamilton and Jan Waterfield. Awards include the Governors' Recital Prize for Keyboard (highly commended), Bach Prize (commended), Agnes Millar Harmony and Counterpoint Prize, and the British Reserve Insurance Prize for Early Music. She also studied for a Master of Music in Historically Informed Performance Practice jointly at the University of Glasgow and RCS.

Tiffany works regularly as a conductor and accompanist with various choral groups including Kelvin Choir and the University of Glasgow Choral Society. She was previously Musical Director of Cunninghame Choir (2016-2023) and Choral Music Assistant (2020-2023) at St Aloysius' College. Tiffany was involved in a production of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas (2019) with the University of Glasgow Opera Society as musical director and harpsichordist. She frequently collaborates with other musicians, previously performing with the Caccini Ensemble, Kellie Consort and NYOS Camerata. Tiffany is currently a member of the International Baroque Consort. As an organist, Tiffany has given recitals at the Caird Hall, Paisley Abbey, and Ayr Town Hall. She is a keyboard tutor at St Aloysius' College, Vice-President of the Glasgow Society of Organists and an Associate of the Royal College of Organists.

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