

Spotlight gig: Red Note Ensemble

Fiona Winning (viola) and Tom Hunter (percussion)

Saturday 26th October 2024, 12pm

St Andrew's Cathedral, Aberdeen

Programme

Lucy Callen	<i>Duet for viola and vibraphone</i>
Kristain Rasmussen	<i>chilled in the absence of your light</i>
Vishak Ramaprasad	<i>Śrāvaṇa</i>
Naomi McGillivray	<i>Anam Ćara</i>
Craig Morrison	<i>Who's afraid of drones, mallets and bows?</i>

Programme notes

Lucy Callen

Lucy is a composer, conductor and instrumentalist (piano, flute, accordion). She is currently involved in projects with Septura, Horsham Symphony Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta alongside her studies at the Royal Academy of Music.

Lucy finds it important to collaborate closely with musicians, often building her music through aleatoric devices and drawing on influences from medieval material and folksong.

Kristain Rasmussen *chilled in the absence of your light*

chilled in the absence of your light is a reflection on the emotional vulnerability and insecurity that accompanies the soon approaching loss of a loved one. The piece explores the fragility of our internal responses to such a loss, focusing on the lingering feelings of absence.

Scored for vibraphone, viola, and tibetan singing bowls, this work is driven by resonance and the slow, deliberate unfolding of harmony; the instruments emphasise the organic, ethereal qualities of sound, with their sustained tones blending into a constantly shifting harmonic landscape. This fluidity reflects the fluctuating emotions of grief—moments of stillness and tension intertwined.

Conceptually, the piece is designed to challenge the listener's sense of time. The harmony washes over the audience in a way that distorts their perception, creating an experience where time seems to stretch and contract, much like the way time feels during periods of emotional upheaval.

Kristain is a Scottish composer based in Aberdeen. He is pursuing a PhD in Composition at the University of Aberdeen on the research topic 'Reorienting Towards the Self: New

Sentimentality'. He started his composition journey late into 2020, where an initial interest ignited a passion and obsession. At UoA, Kristain is currently the music director and conductor of Spectrum Ensemble, which serves as the university's new music ensemble, and works to premiere student compositions. He has also had several works premiered by Spectrum. He also has worked with Red Note, Any Enemy and performers from The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, as well as with Orkest de Ereprijs for their 30th Young Composers' Meeting in Apeldoorn. Along with his premiere *'chilled in the absence of your light'*, Kristain had a recent debut performance for a Magnetic Resonator Piano at Queen's University Belfast for his piece *'Rumination'* performed by Dr Xenia Pestova Bennett on the 24th of October 2024.

Vishak Ramaprasad Śrāvaṇa

Śrāvaṇa captures the vibrant spirit of the Hindu month of Sravana, a time marked by devotion, ritual, and the rejuvenating monsoon rains. This piece draws inspiration from the rhythmic dance of raindrops, the lushness of the revived earth, and the mesmerizing beauty of peacocks—symbols of grace and joy, who dance in celebration of the season. The music evokes the interplay of rain and renewal through flowing harmonic textures, blending Raaga-inspired motifs with shimmering colors. The peacocks' vibrant plumage and their call to the clouds find expression in melodic flourishes, offering a musical portrayal of nature's exuberant response to Sravana's showers and spiritual energy.

Vishak is an Indian composer, music producer and pianist based in Glasgow. His musical language involves concepts of Indian traditional music with jazz, western classical contemporary, pop and sound design giving him a unique global style. His concert music is often inspired by philosophy and spirituality that finds relevance in everyday life. As a media composer, he has worked in over 15 Indian movies with well-known actors and directors, composing background scores and songs. contemporary text theatre productions, and film projects.

He recently graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with an MMus in Composition studying with Bekah Simms and Stuart MacRae, having been awarded the RCS Composition Prize. Vishak is one of the Opus 1 Composers with Britten Sinfonia for the year 2024 and also a part of the composer mentorship scheme music education with ABRSM.

Naomi McGillivray Anam Ćara

Anam Ćara, which translates to 'soul friend' in Irish Gaelic, is a contemplative piece that explores the profound connections between kindred spirits. The instruments weave a tapestry of sound that embodies both the intimate and expansive aspects of this unique bond. The viola, with its rich and expressive timbre, converses with the shimmering resonance and ethereal tones of the vibraphone, creating a tender and profound dialogue. The interplay between the two instruments symbolises the ebb and flow of friendship, capturing moments of quiet reflection and love. Anam Ćara invites listeners into a meditative space, where the essence of friendship is not just heard, but felt deep inside.

Born in Aberdeenshire, Naomi recently completed her MMus in Composition from the University of Edinburgh, kindly supported by The Cross Trust, with supervision from Dr Gareth Williams and holds her BMus Music from the University of Glasgow. Naomi has an affinity for community music and works as a freelance workshop musician around Scotland. Alongside Erin McGonagle, she currently runs sound's Creative Orchestra exploring creative music-making for primary children. Collaborating with other creatives, she has worked in primary schools around Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire

to deliver sessions in composition. Naomi was awarded first prize for her composition 'Sounds of the Day' in the CoMA Open Score competition which premiered in Berlin in November 2023 at the Klangwerkstatt Festival by the KNM Ensemble. She is a recipient of the Francis Chagrin Award from Sound and Music UK.

Craig Morrison *Who's afraid of drones, mallets and bows?*

This work takes a microscopic view into the subtle sound qualities of the vibraphone and viola, exploring slight changes in placement, material, and resonance. Focusing on a single note, the listener is invited to focus into a quasi-static sound-world. The title references Benartt Newman's painting series 'who's afraid of red, yellow and blue', abstract works that explore subtle changes of primary colours.

Craig is a composer, arranger, and experimental musician from the Southside of Glasgow, currently based in Edinburgh. He is currently doing his PhD at Edinburgh in Music Composition, under the supervision of Martin Parker and Dee Isaacs, with a focus on his own personal compositional style.

His work is mostly abstract, focusing on gradual and subtle shifts through slowly transforming harmonies and the intent focus on monotonal timbre transformations. He has worked with groups such as Army at the fringe, Leith New Music Ensemble, the Composers Orchestra, the Napier orchestral society, and Action Theatre Scotland. His influences include Julius Eastman, Rebecca Saunders, Giacinto Scelsi, Gyorgi Ligeti, Medieval Isorhythmic motets, Indian Classical music, and Karlheinz Stockhausen.

Outwith composition, Craig is also a choral singer and multi-instrumentalist. He has performed with the Composers Orchestra, where he plays percussion, piano, vocals and tin whistles, has performed his own solo works, performed open scores by Henry McPherson, and has sung in multiple choirs, most recently performing in Ethan Davies' "Avantlaughs".

Biographies

Tom Hunter, Scottish based percussionist and timpanist, plays regularly for Red Note Ensemble, including performances at Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, St Magnus Festival and Ultima Festival. Committed to contemporary music, alongside playing regularly for orchestras in Scotland, Tom has been invited on many occasions as guest principal timpani and percussion with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra as well as the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Tom was previously Assistant Principal Timpanist of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Norway under Music Director Andrew Litton. During this time performing, touring Europe and USA, and recording with the orchestra, Tom also performed Norwegian duo repertoire in the Borealis Festival. As a founder member of the Bergen Pipe Band, Tom coached several new drummers in traditional Scottish pipe band drumming. A dedicated teacher, Tom teaches at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, St Mary's Music School, Edinburgh and has been invited regularly to coach percussionists of the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland.

Scottish violist **Fiona Winning** was until 2014 Principal Viola of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and before that the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. During her years in London she was a regular guest principal of the Philharmonia and London Philharmonic Orchestras, including four seasons at Glyndebourne Opera. She is also a

regular guest principal viola of the Aurora Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

For seven years she was a member of the Scottish Ensemble with whom she performed at the Wigmore Hall, BBC Proms, and at the Edinburgh International, Aldeburgh and City of London Festivals, and broadcast regularly on Radio 3.

Fiona studied at the Juilliard School in New York where she lived and worked for 6 years. When not playing the viola she enjoys climbing mountains and recently climbed 6000m peaks in the Bolivian Andes and the Himalayas.

Fiona plays on an Antonio Gragnani viola from 1780 for which she gratefully acknowledges support from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust and the Loan Fund for Musical Instruments. She lives near Loch Lomond with her husband and two sons.

This year's **sound** festival 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.

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