



A Percussionist's Songbook

Joby Burgess (percussion)

Saturday 26 October 2024, 8pm

The Anatomy Rooms, Aberdeen

Programme

Tunde Jegede	<i>The Ancestors Are Within</i>
Dario Marianelli	<i>Unequal</i>
Dobrinka Tabakova	<i>Desert Swimmers</i>
Gabriel Prokofiev	<i>Dr Calvin Remembers</i>
Joby Burgess	<i>Come Sweet Death</i>
Yazz Ahmed	<i>Throw Your Pumpkin (& Pick Me Up)</i>
John Metcalfe	<i>Love Without Hope</i>
Graham Fitkin	<i>Species</i>
Joby Burgess	<i>Take Me Home</i>

Programme notes

The Percussionists Songbook is a collection of specially commissioned 'songs without words' from John Metcalfe, Tunde Jegede, Dario Marianelli, Yazz Ahmed, Graham Fitkin, Dobrinka Tabakova and Gabriel Prokofiev.

Scored for an arsenal of pitched percussion and electronics the songbook is inspired by texts ranging from the poetry of Robert Graves and Birago Diop to novels by Michael Ondaatje and Isaac Asimov; American philosopher Michael Sandel, songwriter Peter Gabriel, United Nation population growth statistics and Saudi Arabian folk tales.

Tunde Jegede *The Ancestors Are Within*

Listen more often to things than to beings
Hear the fire's voice
Hear the voice of water
Hear, in the wind, the sobbing of the trees
It is the breath of the ancestors
The dead are not gone forever
They are in the paling shadows
And in the darkening shadows
The dead are not beneath the ground

They are in the rustling tree
In the murmuring wood
In the flowing water
In the still water
In the lonely place, in the crowd,
The dead are not dead

Words: Birago Diop (Breaths)

Dario Marianelli *Unequal*

'A modest attempt at civic education broadly conceived. If you look at the way we discuss politics: it's not a pretty picture.'

'Yes, I think that narrative and story enable us to make sense of ourselves.'

'Often public discourse about things that matter can be fraught with passion and with disagreement.'

'Public discourse becomes sidelined.'

'Is it fair?'

'And then there's a different worry.'

'With the moral principles and the moral convictions that are often lying beneath the surface.'

'In many ways we have to engage more directly in the debate.'

Words: Michael Sandel

Dobrinka Tabakova *Desert Swimmers*

Beneath the scorching sun, in a corner of the Sahara desert lies the story of a long forgotten world. Where now there is sand, there used to be grass, where there are dunes, lush forests covered the land all the way to the horizon. Snakes and insects once lived alongside antelopes, cheetahs and giraffes, and the sandy valleys were filled to the brim with water. People travelled far to bathe and swim in these lakes. All that is left of this oasis now are the cave drawings - The Cave of Swimmers (as found in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*).

Gabriel Prokofiev *Dr Calvin Remembers*

At the age of twenty, Susan Calvin had been part of the particular Psycho-Math seminar at which Dr Alfred Lanning of US Robots had demonstrated the first mobile robot to be equipped with a voice. It was a large, clumsy unbeautiful robot, smelling of machine-oil and destined for the projected mines on Mercury. But it could speak and make sense.

Words: Isaac Asimov (*I, Robot*)

Joby Burgess *Come Sweet Death*

Come, sweet death, come, blessed rest!

Come lead me to peace

Words: Anonymous

Yazz Ahmed *Throw Your Pumpkin (& Pick Me Up)*

A story about kindness and the rewards of unselfish acts.

A mother is out buying groceries for her daughters and spots a very plump looking pumpkin. Knowing that this would make the perfect meal for her hungry children she buys it straight away.

On her way home, she encounters an old man who begs her to help him, pleading for her to throw away her pumpkin so that she can help carry him. She reluctantly agrees, and carries him along with her groceries and the very heavy pumpkin to her doorstep. He then begs for food and a place to sleep overnight. Once again the mother complies, tending to his needs.

The next morning, to the family's surprise, in the place where the old man had slept, were many pieces of glimmering gold – a reward for their kindness.

The mother told this bizarre story to her neighbour, who, with the intention of obtaining

such riches for herself, re-enacts the same events by picking up an old man – completely disregarding his pleas to leave him alone. The following morning, she and her family are punished for their selfish acts with a nasty surprise...

Words: Traditional Saudi Arabian Folk Tale

John Metcalfe *Love Without Hope*

Love without hope, as when the young bird-catcher
Swept off his tall hat to the Squire's own daughter,
So let the imprisoned larks escape and fly
Singing about her head, as she rode by.

Words: *Love Without Hope* by Robert Graves

Graham Fitkin *Species*

After two hundred thousand years, in eighteen o four
One billion people
One hundred and twenty-three years later
Two billion people
Then thirty-three years later, in nineteen sixty
Three billion people
Just fourteen years later, in ninety seventy-four
Four billion people
Consuming
Then Thirteen years later
It's Five billion people
Non Stop
Then twelve years later
It's Six billion people
It's Seven billion people
A species, eating itself
Eight billion
Nine billion
Ten billion

Words: Adapted from the United Nations' population growth statistics

Joby Burgess *Take Me Home*

Climbing up on Solsbury Hill
I could see the city light
Wind was blowing, time stood still
Eagle flew out of the night
He was something to observe
Came in close, I heard a voice
Standing stretching every nerve
Had to listen had no choice
I did not believe the information
Just had to trust imagination
My heart going boom boom boom
"Son," he said "Grab your things,
I've come to take you home."

Words: Lyric extract from *Solsbury Hill* by Peter Gabriel

Biographies

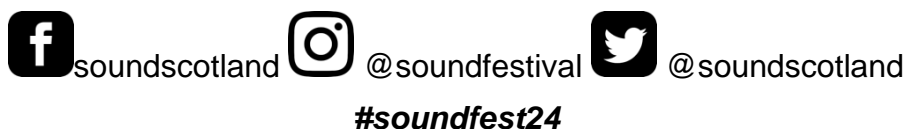
Joby Burgess

One of Britain's most diverse percussionists, Joby is equally at home performing with Peter Gabriel at Red Rocks Amphitheatre and The Who at Wembley Stadium as reimagining Blade Runner at Sydney Opera House and Ibiza Classics at the Royal Albert Hall. Known for his virtuosic performances, Joby's solo projects Powerplant and Pioneers of Percussion have taken him from Berghain, Berlin to SESC Pompéia, São Paulo. Recent releases for Signum include Gabriel Prokofiev's 'Concerto for Bass Drum', Eric Whitacre's 'Marimba Quartets' and BBC Radio 3's Album of the Week 'A Percussionist's Songbook'. Often found at London's Abbey Road and Air Studios, Joby's playing can be heard on major film and TV scores, notably leading the percussion sections on the Black Panther and Ant-man franchises, Spirited, The Harder They Fall, Rocketman, Ad Astra, The Darkest Hour, Obi-Wan Kenobi and Doctor Who. In demand as an educationalist, Joby created the Virtual Marimba Choir, which brought together 227 percussionists from around the world during Spring 2020.

A Percussionist's Songbook is generously supported with funds from Arts Council England, Cambridge Music Festival, PRS Foundation's The Open Fund, The Marchus Trust and the RVW Trust.

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