

Spotlight gig: Any Enemy

Conducted by Pete Stollery

Sunday 27 October 2024, 11:30am

Cowdray Hall, Aberdeen

Programme

Raymond MacDonald
co-created with Any Enemy

And Yet... we remember & love & live

Isidor ten Hooven

Salt Mines

Nancy Johnstone

Looms to Waterwheels

Lewis Coenen-Rowe

I take comfort in

Any Enemy: Catherine O'Rourke (flute), Guera Crockett (violin), Alison MacDonald (cello), Lucy Webster (bassoon), Aden Mazur (piano), Brodie McCash (percussion)

Programme notes

Raymond MacDonald *And Yet ... we remember and love and live*

This piece is designed to explore ideas of cocreation, distributed creativity and deindividuation. Personal histories are used as stimuli for brief encounters as significant objects and texts provide a focus for new musical textures.

Over the past nine months we have met and explored different approaches to improvisation, composition and performance with the aim of creating a new piece together. We began by exploring conduction - a popular approach within the niche, but growing, world of large ensemble improvisation. In this approach a conductor helps shape an improvisation using hand signals. After a couple of sessions, each member of the ensemble was invited to bring "an object" that could be used as a sound making device to a rehearsal. It was suggested that the object should have some personal significance. As it turned out, all sorts of objects and ideas were contributed and, over the course of a couple of rehearsals, we distilled these ideas into 4 "movements" with text or an object being the focus for each movement. These

objects and texts are: A Geiger counter, two paintings, and two short phrases - "And yet", and "Right". Three of the movements are played in sequence and the 4th will appear as decided during the performance. These movements are preceded by a short, conducted improvisation. The whole piece last approximately 20 minutes.

Isidor ten Hooven *Salt Mines*

Salt Mines is a short character piece for chamber ensemble, depicting an image of melancholy, instability and euphoria. In his fascination with disrupting grooves, Isidor got inspired by the different concert of pulse and metre found in Flamenco music and used this inspiration as a starting point to create a distinctive feel for his piece. Even though he put his own spin on it, the seemingly unstable rhythm and variation of accents are clearly audible. This unpredictable, and occasionally choppy character, in contrast with expressive melodies, creates an impression of splendour and earthy grit, which might contradict each other of go hand in hand.

Isidor is a Dutch bassist and composer of new music, creating eclectic and interdisciplinary works. Now based in Glasgow, he is active as a bass player in the folk ensemble Alba Challah, and as a composer, writing for various genres, such as chamber music, multi-media productions and music theatre. In his work he draws from contrasting worlds and traditions, bringing them together to create innovative ideas. With a passion for groove, folk melodies, punk energy and the complexity of classical music, his music is daring, straightforward and reflective, with just a dash of crazy.

Nancy Johnstone *Looms to Waterwheels*

Each instrument leads and follows each other, moving as one collective sound. Through unravelling harmony, weaving textures, and contrasting instrumental colours, '*Looms to Waterwheels*' (2024) for Chamber Ensemble explores the history of textiles.

Nancy is a student composer based in Glasgow, and currently studying at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland for her bachelor's degree with Dr Bekah Simms. Nancy's current compositions experiment with time, irregularity, and repetition; influenced by a range of composers such as: György Ligeti, Jonny Greenwood, Cassandra Miller, and Arvo Pärt. She is also passionate about historical music, and working with renaissance musicians, founding the International Crumhorn Society earlier this year. Nancy has just published new works for Classical Guitar, Organ, Trumpet in B \flat , Piano Four Hands, Chamber Ensemble, and has upcoming concerts in Scotland and overseas.

Lewis Coenen-Rowe *I take comfort in*

'I take comfort in' was written during a rather stressful period, and as a result I decided to write a piece that explored the things that help me to escape from feelings of stress and anxiety. The text of the piece is a mixture of my own and words that were shared by members of the ensemble about times that they felt happy or relaxed. We live in scary times for a few reasons and the piece ends with a kind of

mantra about holding onto those small pleasures, although the music has to fight through some anxieties to get there.

Lewis is a composer, pianist and occasional vocalist specialising in opera and other music with words and storytelling. His previous works have included STUMPED, which was performed at Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2024, *The Storm*, runner up for the Ivan Juritz prize, and *Collision*, performed at Grimeborn Opera Festival 2017. He is interested in themes of ecology, memory, decay and humour. The Scotsman described his music as having 'an almost Britten-like clarity and sense of purpose', while Michelle McManus on her radio show said, 'good on you, for a whole variety of reasons'.

Biographies

Raymond MacDonald is a saxophonist, composer and multidisciplinary artist whose work is informed by a view of improvisation as a social, collaborative and uniquely creative process that provides opportunities to develop new ways of working musically and creatively. Collaborating with musicians such as Marilyn Crispell, Evan Parker, David Byrne, Jim O'Rourke, Günter 'Baby' Sommer and Satoko Fujii, he has released over 60 CDs and toured and broadcast worldwide. He has produced music for film, television, theatre and art installations and is a founder member of *The Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra* - "One of the best large improvising ensembles in the world." (BBC Jazz on 3). He has a particular interest in cross-disciplinary collaboration and has extensive experience of working with artists, dancers and filmmakers. He has also collaborated extensively with an artificial intelligence producing films, compositions, sculptures, visual art and book a published in 2023 titled *Conversations with Chimère*. He is Professor of Music Psychology and Improvisation at University of Edinburgh and his most recent book is a co-authored text, *The Theatre of Home: The Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra and New Directions in Creativity* will be published by Oxford University Press in 2025.

Any Enemy is a contemporary music ensemble of local musicians in NE Scotland, conducted by Pete Stollery. They meet monthly throughout the year and rehearse a wide range of new music for flexible instrumentation.

Any Enemy gave their inaugural performance at *soundfestival* in 2018 which included works by Gemma McGregor and Rose Dodd. At *soundfestival* 2019 they premiered new works by three young Scottish composers, and also joined forces with the Red Note Ensemble for the world premiere of "Fire and Ice" by Linda Buckley. Both concerts were recorded and later broadcast by BBC Radio 3. During lockdown restrictions, Any Enemy gave several performances from their own homes via Zoom. These reached distant audiences and brought about a Trans-Atlantic Zoom concert with Brandon University New Music Ensemble.

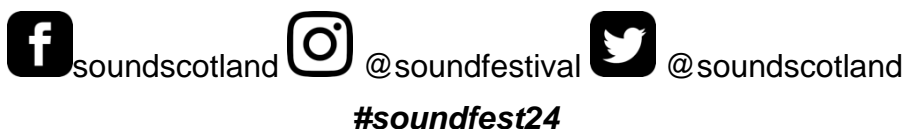
Any Enemy were joined by local musicians of all ages and Aberdeen University's Spectrum Ensemble for CoMA's Contemporary Music for All festivals in 2022 and

2024 and they also enjoy working with community projects such as **sound's** Get Creative contemporary music workshops for young musicians.

To date they have given world premieres of 20 new works commissioned with the help of **sound** and Aberdeen City Council funding.

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.

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



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

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