

Zubin Kanga: The Art of Sinking

Friday 31st October 2025, 6pm

Lemon Tree, Aberdeen

Programme

Neil Luck	<i>8.5 Traditional English Folksongs</i> (World Premiere)
Lara Agar	<i>ON THE WAY OUT</i> (World Premiere)
Rylan Gleave	<i>Gulf</i> (World Premiere)
Ben Nobuto	<i>The Art of Sinking</i> (World Premiere)

Programme notes

Pianist, composer and technologist Zubin Kanga performs new solo works created out of his Cyborg Soloists research project, combining the piano with malleable keyboards, interactive visuals, motion sensors, AI-integrated software and other cutting-edge technologies. Zubin is also be joined by accordionist Andreas Borregaard to launch their duo project with *8.5 Traditional English Folksongs* by Neil Luck. All the works on this programme were commissioned by Zubin Kanga as part of Cyborg Soloists, supported by a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship and Royal Holloway, University of London.

Neil Luck *8.5 Traditional English Love Songs* (2025) (15 mins)

8.5 Traditional English Love Songs is a writing-through of Broadside Ballads drawn from the archival collection of Samuel Pepys' Broadside were cheaply printed single sheets of paper containing song lyrics, melodies, and woodcut illustrations of popular and folk songs, hawked on London street corners from the 16th-18th centuries. In Pepys collection he divides Love songs into different categories depending on their subject matters; whether they're happy, or tragic, or unrequited. This new setting contains almost no singing, but swims complicatedly in the loving ambivalence present in the best of these numbers.

Lara Agar *ON THE WAY OUT* (2025) (12 mins)

On the Way Out!

On the Way Out! (in three parts): a triptych, three images horizontally aligned

Don't let the door hit you _____!

... she was _____ anyway....

whilst _____, they left their keys and so the rest of the day got stuck, laden with the mundane task of trying to get back into the flat.

everybody's in love with the world and they're trying to save it [alternative title]

pain or otherwise love [title for something else]

looping = current reality vs./+ the immediate past.

(I love this because it's two things together that should not have been; they create a new, third dimension, a new reality, (temporal manipulation).)

oscillations

deep synth, resonant frequencies

dial it down

midi and pre-recorded samples, mainly voices, often silenced

white noise

hand held vs. digital. human over AI (but losing confidence)

Solitude vs. the crowd

contradictions and fluctuations:

on the one hand, on the other

indecisiveness

too, true.

archival, slow practice, mindlessness, inabilities, limitations

rocking chair

(soothing)

pulling, teething

ringing

most of all, its like the ringing your get when you've been listening to loud music for too long, screaming only into a grapefruit skin

Choruses from ancient Greek tragedies, but the voices are drowned out, can't be heard.

Only ever alone, the chorus is beyond contact, behind a screen: (= isolation and loneliness)

An eudaimonic state of affairs.

That means: everything needs everything else to thrive.

interwoven_____, chaotic_____, _____sensical !

Rylan Gleave *Gulf* (2024) (9 mns)

Gulf lives on a knife edge, treading carefully through both natural and artificial soundscapes, and seeks to find a relationship between queer and sacred identities.

The performer traverses this path alone, the temperamental duet between piano and electronics only ever able to respond to itself. By controlling the effects that alter the sound of the piano, and to a degree, how long the listener dwells in heavy in and lighter spaces, the performer balances on either side of the gap. The performer is also asked to de- and re-attach themselves to both their instrument and their upper body movements, timing moments of change carefully to avoid tumbling over the edge.

Ben Nobuto *The Art of Sinking* (2025) (19 mns)

You are playing to an imaginary crowd in a huge, imaginary stadium. It's your big day: everyone is excited, but you feel sleepy and not really up to it. You keep hearing a little voice in your head telling you to do things. Everything feels slightly glossy like a dream. You have the feeling that you've forgotten to do something urgent. You keep playing. The crowd loves you.

The Art of Sinking was commissioned by Zubin Kanga as part of *Cyborg Soloists*, with the support of a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship and Royal Holloway, University of London.

All programme notes are provided by the composers.

Biographies

Zubin Kanga is a pianist, composer, and technologist. For over a decade, he has been at the forefront of creating, co-creating and performing interdisciplinary music that seeks to explore and redefine what it means to be a performer through interactions with new technologies.

Since 2021, he has been the Director and Research Lead of *Cyborg Soloists*, a 7-year music technology research project, supported by a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship and Royal Holloway, University of London. *Cyborg Soloists* is unlocking new possibilities in composition and performance through interactions with AI and machine learning, interactive visuals, motion and biosensors, and new hybrid instruments.

Zubin has premiered more than 160 works, including works by Philip Venables, Laura Bowler, Alexander Schubert, Tansy Davies, Alex Paxton, Nicole Lizée, and Laurence Osborn. He has performed at many international festivals including hcmf// (UK), Paris Autumn Festival (France), Hamburg International Music Festival (Germany), Gaudeamus Festival (Netherlands), Transit Festival (Belgium), Melbourne Festival (Australia), and Modulus Festival (Canada). In 2024-2025, he premiered 8 new concerti with ensembles including BCMG, Explore Ensemble, Manchester Collective and the BBC Philharmonic.


www.zubinkanga.com

www.cyborgsoloists.com

Andreas Borregaard is recognized as one of the world's most exciting classical accordionists. Through an extensive career as soloist and chamber musician, Andreas Borregaard communicates the accordion's fascinating qualities and palette of expressions to a wide audience. Collaborating with composers from all over Europe, he is actively influencing the development of this young instrument's use and repertoire – and pushing the boundaries of the performer's involvement on stage. Through a parallel fascination with early music, he explores how the accordion can add new colours to the keyboard repertoire of the 18th century. In 2017 Andreas Borregaard was appointed accordion lecturer at the Norwegian Academy of Music where he is currently also a PhD fellow in artistic research.

www.andreasborregaard.com

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