



Architectural Arpeggios

The University of Aberdeen Concert Band Breakout Group
conducted by Pixie Nishina

in collaboration with the University of Aberdeen Photographic Society

Saturday 24th October 2026, 8pm

King's Pavilion, University of Aberdeen

Programme

Rory Anderson	<i>The Arrival of Eos</i>
Rhianna Henderson	<i>Summer Petals</i>
Pixie Nishina	<i>Experiment No.1</i>
Hadrian Gray	<i>School Hill Street</i>
- Interval -	
Kristain Ramussen	<i>DEVOID</i>
Alex Stafford	<i>Arch of Life</i>
Spectrum Ensemble	<i>Pass the Parcel</i>

Concert Band Breakout Group Quartet: Flute: Eli Cooper - Piano: Rory Anderson - Clarinet: Adam Blair - Trumpet: Maisie Urch.

Concert Band Breakout Group Full Ensemble: Alto Saxophone: Philip Cowan - Clarinet 1: Adam Blair - Clarinet 2 - Lindon Stewart - Bass clarinet: Bryn Effinger - Flute : Eli Cooper - Flute 2: Michalina Kwiatuszek - Horn: Rhianna Henderson - Percussion: Erin McDonald - Piano/percussion: Rory Anderson - Trombone 1: Megan Huan - Trombone 2: Zoe Dudgeon - Trumpet 1: Maisie Urch - Trumpet 2: Alex Hadfield.

Programme notes

The collection of photographs presented tonight has been captured across Aberdeen City and explores five themes of landscape, architecture, floral, alone, and empty.

The landscape series draws attention to Aberdeen's changing skies and natural scenery, while the architecture photographs focus on the structures and character of the city. The floral images were captured during summer, when gardens and front porches bloomed with colour.

The themes of alone and empty take a more abstract and emotional approach, exploring feelings of solitude, stillness, and absence. Many were taken late at night, when familiar places become quieter and take on a different atmosphere.

Across the collection, scenes were often chosen for their ability to evoke beauty or emotion, with some photographs intended to act as visual inspiration for music.

The Arrival of Eos by Rory Anderson

The Arrival of Eos is a piece written to be accompanied by three pictures; first a flowing and lyrical evening with a subdued character that slowly fades away to reveal the darkness of night, and second picture. A characterful saxophone solo over a repeating piano and timpani figure precedes a much more quiet, creepy, and mystical stillness, out of which springs a dozy and more upbeat morning. With the arrival of Eos, the Greek goddess of dawn, the piece explores many variations of a falling chromatic melody which comes to an end with a longing, expressive saxophone and bass clarinet duet.

Summer Petals by Rhianna Henderson

Summer Petals is a flowing, expressive piece inspired by three flowers over the course of the season. The first introduces a quiet arpeggiated progression on the piano, slowly introducing the flute's tune and the end of spring. As it moves to the next picture, we hear the trumpet and clarinet grow in sound as summer blooms and the piano moves in octaves to build up the warm melody. After short solos on each instrument, the piece falls back into the melancholic melody from the beginning as summer ends.

Experiment No.1 by Pixie Nishina

The piece opens with the ensemble playing long, slow notes, with the piano joining in with more detail as the piece progresses. This material repeats over and over again, changing slightly each time. The changes come from a set of instructions/prompts I have given the ensemble. Each time they repeat the musical material, they use one of these instructions/prompts to influence their playing and interpretation. I write a lot of poetry, so I enjoy using text in music to explore new ways of connecting music and poetry. It creates unexpected results, and it is really interesting to see how different words resonate with different people

School Hill Street by Hadrian Gray

School Hill Street is a piece that captures the tranquil environment surrounding the war memorial. As the photos expand out, the sounds of the city enter the sound space of the memorial creating a chaotic sound space. Throughout the piece, the piano and flute work in harmony to produce the sound of the memorial and the rest of the ensemble creates different sounds that go on the street such as cars,

motorbikes, pedestrians and crossings before the photos eventually center back on the memorial.

DEVOID by Kristain Ramussen

From the three stimuli provided, DEVOID seeks to create a supplementary backdrop to the theme of 'empty.' No place can every truly be empty and there's no such thing as silence; there is always something there and something to be heard. Often in these empty places our minds can wander free, putting us in a contemplative state. DEVOID invites the listener to enter a mental state of contemplation and provides a moment of time for reflection.'

Arch of Life by Alex Stafford

Within this piece we follow our main character taking the journey through life. The three images connected to this piece resonated with me as I saw three different stages of life within them. The first stage represents birth as I saw the horizon between buildings as signifying new life entering the world. The second stage represents middle age both visually by the tall grey buildings and musically through the stiff mechanical drum rhythms and the noisy sporadic woodwind and brass melodies. This stage gradually becomes more atonal overtime as our main character is driven to madness before they reach the end of their life in a fatal accident. The final stage represents death which is conveyed by the repetitive church bell melody. This leitmotif has been subtly incorporated throughout the piece and is mostly heard when our main character is born and dies, emphasising the connection between birth and death.

Pass the Parcel Two by Spectrum Ensemble

This piece is composed with the restriction that each composer could only work on the piece for 10 minutes and was passed between all members of Spectrum Ensemble. This piece was finished too late to be played by Spectrum Ensemble so has been rearranged for breakout ensemble with it then being sent to the photography society to take photos to match the sound of the piece.

Biographies

The **curator** of tonight's concert, **Hadrian Gray**, is from Dumfries. He graduated from the University of Aberdeen in Bachelors of Music in 2026. He is currently studying his masters at the Royal Conservator of Scotland in Arts Leadership and Fundraising. He is a multi-instrumentalist having played saxophone, piano and clarinet his instrument instructor Lewis Banks has guided him down the path of classical saxophone. He is now focused on developing his professional skills in ensemble management having worked as orchestral manager for the Glasgow Barons.

The Concert Band Breakout Group (CBBG) is a selected group of musicians from the Aberdeen University Concert Band (AUCB), who perform as a smaller consort for events around Aberdeen where the full AUCB can't. The CBBG is passionate

about promoting new music by emerging composers, especially students, and are very pleased to be performing a concert of premieres. Having only recently been set up by Hadrian Gray, the CBBG is a relatively new group and have only performed before at Composers Weekend 2026 at Aberdeen University. Currently organized by AUCB president, Rory Anderson, the CBBG hope to continue to perform for the coming years. All the while, commissioning and performing new works as well as wind band classics!

This concert was made possible through the support of the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust.

*This concert is part of our **sound**creators programme (nurturing new music creators with year-round artistic & skills development opportunities). The **sound**creators overall programme is supported by Creative Scotland, PRSF Talent Development Network, Aberdeen City Council, Hinrichsen Foundation and the William Syson Foundation and this particular composer development opportunity concert is also supported by the Garrick Charitable Trust, the Radcliffe Foundation and the Vaughan Williams Foundation.*

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



soundscotland



@soundfestival



@soundscotland.bsky.social

#soundfest26

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



soundfestival 2026 gratefully acknowledges the support of:



PRSF
Foundation



Talent
Development
Partner



soundfestival is also supported by the Vaughan Williams Foundation, The William Syson Foundation, the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, The Radcliffe Trust, The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, the Garrick Charitable Trust, and the Scops Arts Trust.