



THE
NIGHT
WITH...

TURNING THE ELEMENTS

MUSIC FOR SOPRANO FRANCES COOPER AND CLARINET JOANNA NICHOLSON FEATURING A NEW PIECE
BY MATTHEW WHITESIDE AND MUSIC BY REBECCA ROWE AND STUART MURRAY MITCHELL

8TH
OCT

THE FRUITMARKET GALLERY
45 MARKET ST, EH1 1DF
EDINBURGH

9TH
OCT

THE HUG AND PINT
171 GREAT WESTERN ROAD, G4 9AW
GLASGOW

31ST
OCT

BREWDOG CASTLEGATE
5-9 UNION ST, AB11 5BU
ABERDEEN

DOORS 7.30PM STARTS 8PM

WWW.THENIGHTWITH.CO.UK

TICKETS £10 CONCESSIONS £6. CITY SEASON TICKET £30. BOOKING FEES NOT INCLUDED



LOTTERY FUNDED



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RVWTrust

Tonight's concert begins with the first of two suites we commissioned in 2015 for the project Turning the Elements, which subsequently gave our duo its name. We asked poets Jane McKie and Stewart Sanderson and composers Rebecca Rowe and Stuart Murray Mitchell to create new works for us inspired by the early 19th century song Turn Ye To Me. The poems' themes delve into the life around and within the Scottish seascape, and our human relationship with it. In the solo clarinet piece which follows, the suggestion of birds, or thoughts, soaring becomes more abstract.

From the pure majesty of the natural world we plummet to the human midden. The two works in the middle section of the evening examine our seeming inability to co-exist in an increasingly globalised world or to avoid nihilism in the face of the human condition.

For the last third of the concert, we rise again to the natural world, with the second of the Turning the Elements suites. The final piece in the programme is a musical setting of a poem by Nan Shepherd, which we are very grateful to have permission to use. Lux Perpetua draws the themes of the evening together in a kind of resolution – the magnificent indifference of the natural world to human concerns, religion, even time itself.

Three Pieces for Soprano and Clarinet
Beautiful Feathered Tyrant – Duologue – Past Sula Sgeir
REBECCA ROWE

Vas Odani.../Yours Sincerely... for clarinet solo
MARKO RUZDJAK

-INTERVAL-

these days or
everyone is a child of the inbetween
or
everyone is a child of the inbetween these days
MATTHEW WHITESIDE POETRY BY HELENE GRØN

Do we? we do
BECK HANSEN ARRANGED BY JOANNA NICHOLSON

-INTERVAL-

Horo
I. Ceòl Na II. Mhairi Du III. Contrary Bird
STUART MURRAY-MITCHELL

Lux Aeterna
Nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux
MUSC BY JOANNA NICHOLSON POETRY BY NAN SHEPHERD

THREE PLECES FOR SOPRANO AND CLARINET
BEAUTIFUL FEATHERED TYRANT - DUOLOGUE - PAST SULA SGEIR
REBECCA ROWE

With the vocal melodic lines shaped and phrased in a very natural way - exactly as they would be spoken - and the clarinet at times accompanying the voice, at other times in the foreground, the three pieces share tonalities and harmonic colours. The outer songs explore the relationship between man and nature very directly, using the evocative texts. The middle piece Duologue is a vocalise for two, playing with the similar timbres of voice and clarinet, by having them in unison then slowly shifting apart, either in pitch or rhythm. The priest referenced in Beautiful Feathered Tyrant will return in the closing poem of the concert, Nan Shepherd's Lux Perpetua.

BEAUTIFUL FEATHERED TYRANT

BY JANE MCKIE

I bring you berries and insects; bowing,
I leave them in a long trail behind me.

From a distance, I watch you pick at them
without much relish. They're not the rough dimes
of gelid flesh scooped out of the bellies
of off-shore fish, or ridged pincers of crab
torn from their joints. They're not rainbow fragments
foraged from dumps, packets smacking of chips,
vinegar, candied burnt-tyre viscera—

You style yourself like a priest: slicked into
the totemic, your black wings and back, dressed
with oil, fold into a surplice of fright.
And when you roll the skulls of lesser birds
in your white-ringed eyes, I can't look away.
For what else can I worship at the edge
of the world? I beg you to forgive me.

PAST SULA SGEIR

BY STEWART SANDERSON

Past Sula Sgeir fat snowflakes fall
onto the sightless sea. A shark
basks on, hapt close in wintry dark
while up aloft a single gull

turns back in search of cliffs, hidden
in sleet. It beats a louche retreat
towards this land where people greet
and call a pile of trash a midden.

On Rannoch Moor a lyart stag
plods slowly through a swirling rut
of frozen sperm, until a shot
cracks out. He goes down on one leg.

Then two. He gets back up and tries
a crazy jig. Then down for good.
Nearby, an freshly planted wood
lets slip a frightened crow, which flies.

Light thickens. Somewhere to the south
lies Glasgow – well-lit avenues,
dark vennels, supermarket queues,
the quick smile and the laughing mouth.

Beyond it Lanarkshire pans out
then Ayrshire, splashed with orange pools –
houses, an airport, prisons, schools.
You're somewhere out there too, no doubt.

In rooms which could be anywhere
the many-headed creature moves,
makes small choices, rejoices, grieves
a little for the dying year.

It never sees the shark, the stag,
the white bird flapping out at sea
though in rare moments you and I
might do so, squinting over log

or cliff top at the animal
which is, for now, just out of reach.
Snow settles on the farthest beach.
Past Sula Sgeir the fat flakes fall.

(Sula Sgeir is a small, uninhabited island, 40 miles north of the Isle of Lewis, which is best known for its population of gannets.)

VAS ODANI.../YOURS SINCERELY... FOR CLARINET SOLO

MARKO RUZDJAK

Croatian composer Marko Ruzdjak, who died in 2012, was also a clarinetist. This piece is constructed like an arch, with a single phrase repeated 17 times, variously embellished and intensified.

**THESE DAYS OR
EVERYONE IS A CHILD OF THE INBETWEEN
OR
EVERYONE IS A CHILD OF THE INBETWEEN THESE DAYS**

MATTHEW WHITESIDE POETRY BY HELENE GRØN

and so welcome
and so welcome
and so by being here

i forgot
forgot how to speak
your language broke me
In

whatever else you do.
you paid for this too

do or didn't speak geography.
and so had no way
to start again.
Forgot

forgot
and
there's a kindness in containment also
the arbitrary ways
and so
After

after someone asked me where i was from
and because i had no way
of
with lines in the sand

everyone is a child of the inbetween
these days
and so
you can't enter here without speaking.

i lost my voice.
but everyone is a child
of the inbetween these days.

there is kindness in containment also
the lines in the sand
the arbitrary ways we keep
and so
where can we meet?

where one speech meets another
i forgot

you have paid for this too
and so welcome to
the lines in the sand

where one speech meets another
and you're a child
kindness in
keep

people in
our out
of the inbetween
and you paid for this too.
the arbitrary ways
where one speech meets another
on these days
of the inbetween

DO WE? WE DO

BECK HANSEN ARRANGED BY JOANNA NICHOLSON

The song *Do we? We do* is from *Song Reader*, a collection of twenty songs by the American alternative artist Beck, published as a book of sheet music in 2012. An album was subsequently released with different artists performing each song in their own style, and named by *Rolling Stone* magazine as 50th on their list of 50 best albums of 2013. The publishers, *McSweeney's*, have subsequently expanded the project by featuring versions of the songs performed by other musicians on their website. Links to YouTube and SoundCloud performances of the songs can be contributed for inclusion.

HORO

I. CEÒL NA II. MHAIRI DU III. CONTRARY BIRD

STUART MURRAY-MITCHELL

Composed in three movements, the work as a whole can be felt as an extended aria for voice and clarinet, with the opening movement serving as the introduction and recitative. An extensive instrumental interlude follows, taking its structure almost entirely from the text of the original Scots song. The concluding aria has a repetition of the phrase 'Turn ye to me' acting as a mantra throughout and employing material heard in the previous movement.

FIRST SONG

BY STEWART SANDERSON

A mile or two from Ullapool
we found a useless fishing boat
hauled up to rot, its ragged hull
yawning like a cod's cut throat.

Here and there red scabs of paint
lent colour to the splintered wood.
A thin dark line of faded print
named her – Ceòl na... I understood.

All round, innumerable twists
of frayed rope frizzed from stony sand:
too many sailors' knots to list
tying the water to the land.

We pressed on through the afternoon
walking on crinkled bladderwrack,
crisp packets, plastic bottles. Soon
we lost sight of the little wreck.

After a while our nostrils grew
accustomed to the salty reek
of seaweed which, a week or two
before, had broken with the slick

melee of fronds, handed from wave
to wave until it washed up here:
a rank beard for the tide to shave,
to fold slowly out of the air.

CONTRARY BIRD

BY JANE MCKIE

Contrary bird, black-backed, falling from rocks
only to rise as surely as embers –

icy is the stormwind ruffling her breast,
warm is the featherdown lining her nest.

One day is black glass; the next, gentle foam
washing against the jutting lips of cliffs.

Turn ye to me, yowls the sea, turn to me.
The bird declines, holding true to her gyre,

believing in the upward force that keeps
her safe – one day it is lift; the next, grace.

Turn ye to me, turn, turn: do you hear it?
Gulls live pressed against it, sheltering inches

from the inverse sky of submerged voices
to fold slowly out of the air.

LUX AETERNA

NOBIS CUM SEMEL OCCIDIT BREVIS LUX

POETRY BY NAN SHEPHERD MUSIC BY JOANNA NICHOLSON

(used by kind permission of the literary executor)

Anyone who has stood high in the Scottish mountains will know the intoxication expressed in Nan Shepherd's poem.

The bass clarinet presents a seven-bar melody; at first split into (geological) layers from sky to inner earth, then as it might be heard in church, and finally in canon with a human voice.

TURNING THE ELEMENTS

began as the name for the 2015 project which resulted in the two suites of song in tonight's programme. As they evolved and our performances developed, we realised that the name reflected perfectly what we do as a duo; taking music, both new and traditional, and turning the elements of each piece to fit our two instruments, the voice and the clarinet, and putting our own slant on their performance.

Turning the Elements has appeared at festivals around the country: StAnza Poetry Festival (St Andrews), Fringe by the Sea (North Berwick), Sound Festival (Aberdeenshire), Book Week Scotland (Jedburgh), and taken our programmes to the Isle of Arran, Campbeltown, Dundee and Aden Park in Mintlaw (with assistance from the Hope Scott Trust).

FRANCES COOPER

began her singing studies at the North East of Scotland Music School in Aberdeen and continued studying privately with Johanna Peters and Patricia MacMahon. She has sung countrywide with Cappella Nova and Dunedin Consort and worked extensively with various small ensembles, including Fires of Love, who released three critically acclaimed recordings with Delphian Records.

Most recently she has been instrumental in forming a new ensemble, Fliskmahoy!, for three female voices and violin, a perfect foil for her duo performances with Joanna.

JOANNA NICHOLSON

was a junior student at the then Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and on leaving school won a scholarship at London's Royal College of Music. She pursues a freelance career encompassing orchestral, chamber and solo playing and has written and performed several musical stories for children. This summer she was artist in residence at The Barn, Banchory, where she worked on the two pieces for soprano and clarinet you will hear tonight, Do we? We do and Lux Perpetua.

www.turningtheelements.com

THE NIGHT WITH... PRESENTS interesting music in informal venues curated by composer Matthew Whiteside and supported by The National Lottery through Creative Scotland's Open Programme, the Hope Scott Trust and the RVW Trust.

UPCOMING CONCERTS:

The Night With... Juice Vocal Ensemble
The Hug and Pint, Glasgow – 13th November
The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh – 14th November

Music for female vocal trio featuring a newly commissioned piece by Claire McCue and music by Mica Levi.

The call for scores workshop with Juice will start at 10am on 13th November in the Scottish Music Information Centre in Merchant City. This is open to the public and free to attend.

Tickets are £10/£6 (plus online booking fee) on the door or from www.thenightwith.co.uk



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