

Concerts at City, University of London City Summer Sounds Festival 2021

26 May 2021, 7pm

rarescale

Programme Notes:

John White, Piano Sonata no.180 (2018)

John White was born in 1936, and started writing his piano sonatas at the age of nineteen. They encompass a wide range of disparate styles, including influences from Satie, Alkan, Szymanowski, Messiaen and Medtner. This sonata is typically eclectic, but perhaps shows a particular connection to Busoni in its use of juxtaposed non-diatonic triadic harmonies. It was written in 2018, and dedicated to Ian Mitchell on the occasion of his 70th Birthday. The composer gave the premiere of the piece at a surprise birthday party for Ian at the Royal Academy of Music.

Rob Keeley, movements from *Serenade for Flute and Bassoon* (2020) (London Premiere)

- I. Sonatina
- II. Song Without Words
- III. Scherzo / Finale

Anthony Green, *Short Fantasia on the name Aleksander Józef Szram* (2019) (WP)

Anthony Green was born in 1946 and studied piano with his father, Tanya Polunin and James Gibb, harmony and counterpoint with Anthony Milner, composition also with Anthony Milner and then with Hugh Wood and Melanie Daiken. From 1979 to 1981 he was on a British Council scholarship to Budapest where he studied composition with Zsolt Durkó, piano with Imre Rohmann and Istvan Lantos at the Liszt Academy, where he also studied Bartók-analysis with Ernö Lendvai. Green was a finalist in the BBC Beethoven Chamber Music Competition (1969) and the British Liszt Piano Competition (1976) and has had compositions performed on the BBC and Hungarian Radio. For many years he taught piano at Trinity College of Music. His compositions are available from the British Music Information Centre, and from the Jerwood Library at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. This short piece was written as a present to Aleks Szram on the occasion of his 40th Birthday, using the letters of his name to create a note row.

Robert Fokkens, *reaching, falling* (2016)

reaching, falling is a single-movement work commissioned by and dedicated to the South African flautist Liesl Stoltz for her performance at the Convention Internationale de Flûte in Paris in October 2016. The piece built entirely out of two musical materials – a short, rocking rhythmic cycle which gradually develops a melodic profile, and a slow-moving melodic line which gradually unfurls as the ideas are passed between the two instruments, opening out across the full range of the flute in the process.

© Robert Fokkens

Erika Fox, *Remembering the Tango* (1999)

The New Zealand composer John Rimmer had a surprise birthday party and various colleagues were asked to compose little pieces for him. He was at that time Head of Composition at the University of Auckland and for a few weeks I was composer/teacher in residence there, at his invitation. At the time of writing this piece I was no longer in New Zealand however. I have always loved the tango. Needless to say the harmonic language of my piece is not that of the traditional tango, but there are rhythmic references to that wonderful - and difficult – dance.

© Erika Fox

Volodymyr Runchak, Two pieces for bassoon:

- I. Lamento
- II. Moto Perpetuo

Pedro Faria Gomes, *Quatro Peças* (2001) (solo piano, UK premiere)

Quattro Peças [Four Pieces] is a set of four short, non-programmatic movements for solo piano:

- I. Prelude
- II. Fugue
- III. Dihedral (meaning, in geometry, an angle between two intersecting planes)
- IV. Epilogue

In this work, a restricted approach to harmony—which is based on a small number of intervals throughout—is the starting point to create contrast and variety across four concise movements.

Talia Erdal, *Ballade for the Death of a Dove* (2019) (solo alto flute)

Ballade for the Death of a Dove (2019) is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Yona Erdal (1950-2016), whose name in Hebrew means “dove”.

The composition is a lament-memory consisting of Jewish- and Middle Eastern-sounding motives, echoing the songs and melodies that my mother used to sing to me, to herself, and around the Shabbat table.

I hope she would have enjoyed it.

The piece was written in 2019 for Carla Rees as a part of a composition seminar project at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire, London.

© Talia Erdal

Robert Fokkens, *Two Songs* (2016) (bassoon and piano, World Premiere)

- I. "Sitting Song"
- II. "Walking Song"

Commissioned by the South African Music Rights Organisation Foundation to serve as a prescribed work in the SAMRO Overseas Scholarships Competition for Instrumentalists 2016, these two pieces were designed as challenging showcase works – the first exploring lyrical writing across the instrument’s register, and the second more virtuosic technical playing.

In some South African cultures, there are types of communal songs for various activities and occasions (walking songs being one of these) – I’ve played with this idea in the titles here, not least because there are some aspects of the music which relate (whether audibly or not) to my interest in traditional Xhosa bow music.

Sadly unused for the competition - no bassoonists progressed far enough to use them – these pieces consequently get their world premiere tonight.

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Biographies:

Aleksander Szram specialises in performing music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and has released several albums of contemporary repertoire on the Prima Facie label, including the Piano Concerto by Daryl Runswick, *Inner Landscapes* (Douglas Finch), *A Land so Luminous* (Kenneth Hesketh), and the album *Aztec Dances* with the recorder player Jill Kemp. He has recorded for Nimbus with the flautist Wissam Boustany, and given premieres of works by Rzewski, Fujikura, Kittos, Gregson and Bedford, among others. As pianist in the ensemble Gemini, he has recorded three albums with Métier, including works by Jonathan Harvey, Sadie Harrison, Huw Watkins, Philip Grange, and the first recording of *Mandala 3* by David Lumsdaine. As well as Gemini, Aleks works with Lontano, Continuum Ensemble, and rarescale. He has performed in more than forty countries over six continents.

A graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, **Ashley Myall** is an active chamber musician regularly performing in groups throughout the UK and abroad. His quintet, the Atéa Wind Quintet, are double prize winners at the Carl Nielsen International Chamber Music Competition, Kirckman Concert Society Artists and Tunnell Trust award winners. Ashley is also a passionate advocate of contemporary music. As a member of rarescale, he frequently explores and performs new works for smaller ensemble, often in unusual combinations, such as Michael Oliva's *An Autumn Regret*, for Bassoon, Alto Flute and Electronics. He also tackles larger scale contemporary projects with the London Contemporary Orchestra, including a recent performance of Terry Riley's seminal minimalist work *In C* at the Barbican London alongside the composer. He has performed two works by Arvo Pärt with Endymion, the first joining forces with the Hilliard Ensemble and the BBC Singers for a live broadcast of *Miserere* on BBC Radio 3 and the second a performance of *Passio* at King's College Chapel with the Choir of King's College Cambridge. A keen teacher and coach, Ashley regularly leads chamber music classes and masterclasses at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire where the Atéa Wind Quintet are Associate Ensemble in Residence. He also teaches bassoon at Whitgift School, Croydon.

Carla Rees works at the forefront of innovation in low flutes, working to develop the repertoire for her instruments through research, performance and interdisciplinary collaboration. Her career incorporates chamber music, solo work, improvisation, telematic performance and recording, including a discography of over 20 CDs (including for NMC, Divine Art, Atopos and Capstone). Alongside her passion for low flutes, she also performs historical and contemporary repertoire on baroque flutes. She has premiered several hundred works, many of which are now published by her company Tetractys Publishing. She is Artistic Director of rarescale, with whom she performs regularly both in the UK and internationally, as well as a member of the Goldfield Ensemble and Duo NewFLow. She leads an innovative online music degree at the Open College of Arts and has taught masterclasses and workshops for flute players and composers at some of the world's leading institutions, including the Royal Academy of Music in London, the Juilliard School in New York and USC in Los Angeles. Recent international performances include in Italy, Poland, the Netherlands, Costa Rica, Japan and Brazil www.carlarees.co.uk