

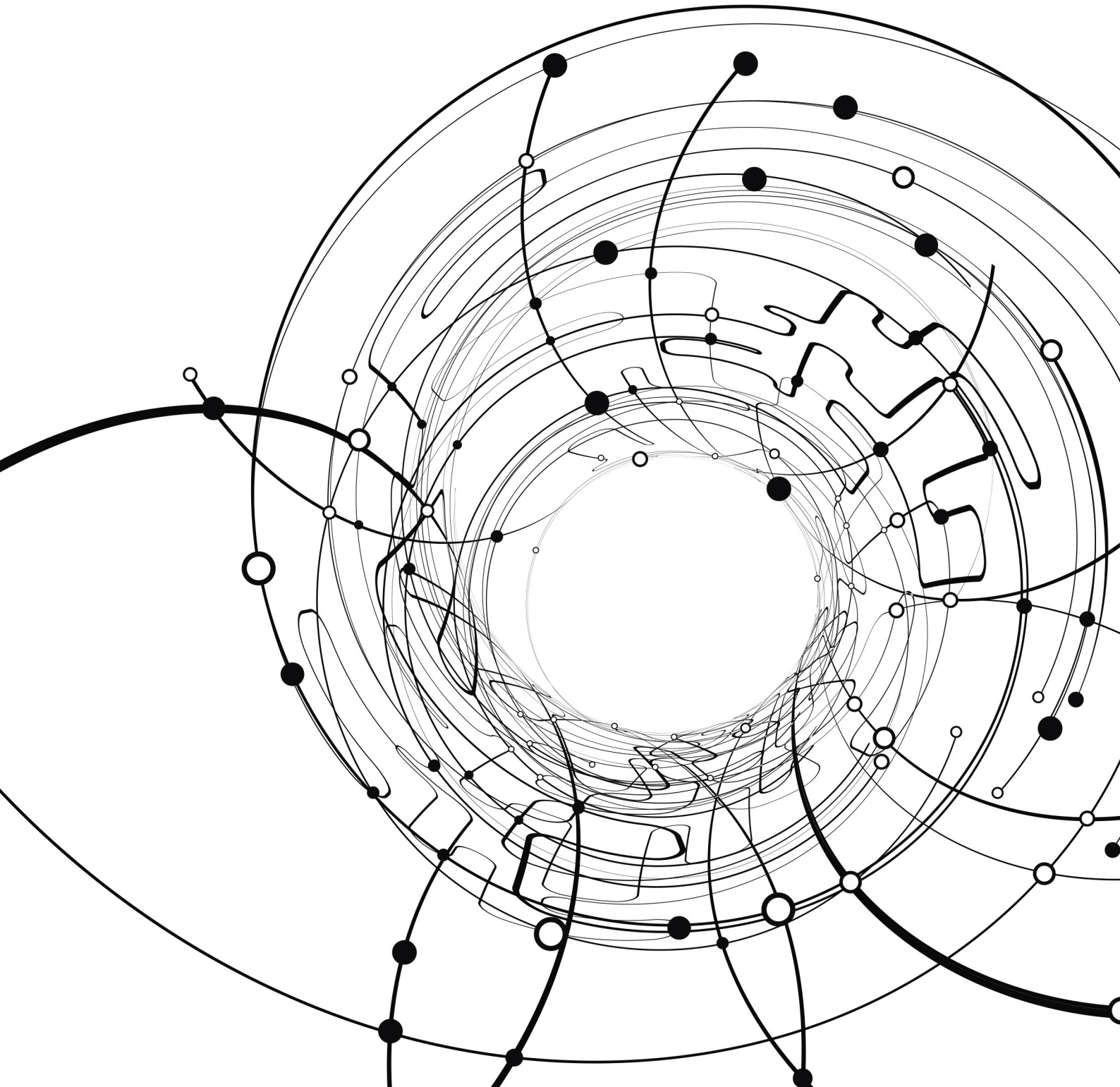


University
of Glasgow | School of Culture
& Creative Arts

School of Culture and Creative Arts presents

**McEwen Memorial Concert
of Scottish Chamber Music**

Thursday, 6 November 2014



McEwen Memorial Concert of Scottish Chamber Music

Thursday 6 November 2014
1.10pm University Concert Hall

Yann Ghire (clarinet)
Duncan Strachan (cello)
Simon Smith (piano)

Four pieces for clarinet and piano, op. 5 (8')

Alban Berg

Three movements from *Bogenstrich (15')*

Harrison Birtwistle

Ixion (15')

Stuart MacRae

Ixion was commissioned by the Court of the University of Glasgow under the terms of the McEwen Bequest.

Funded by the McEwen Bequest

Four pieces for clarinet and piano, op. 5

Alban Berg (1885-1935)

Mäßig
Sehr langsam
Sehr rasch
Langsam

The *Four Pieces* were written in 1913, although the precise date of the composition is unclear (the published score of the work gives 'Spring', early biographies of the composer have Summer, and Berg himself, in a chronology that appears in a letter to his wife, suggests June).

Unlike most of Berg's music, which is conceived on a large scale, the brief *Clarinet Pieces Op 5* are unusual in that they reflect the tendency towards writing miniature pieces that is such a feature of the music of both Schoenberg and Webern at the time. The only other comparably miniature pieces in Berg's output are the songs of *Altenberglieder Op 4*, and even there the set as a whole is framed by two large-scale songs. The Op 5 Pieces also mark the furthest step that Berg ever took in renouncing distinct thematic and motivic features in favour of a music in which the material is generated from the manipulation of small cells and in which the application of various more or less systematic techniques (wedge formations, interval series, progressive transformations) govern the smaller, and in some cases the larger, structures of the piece.

© Douglas Jarman

Three movements from *Bogenstrich* (2006–09)

Harrison Birtwistle (b. 1934)

I. Lied ohne Worte
II. Variationen
III. Wie eine Fugue

Bogenstrich is a cycle of pieces for baritone, cello and piano. Three central movements for cello and piano are framed by two settings of the same poem, *Liebes-Lied*, by Rilke: the first for baritone and piano, and second for baritone and cello.

In the context of the whole cycle, the first cello movement, *Lied ohne Worte*, seems like a variation on the preceding song, or as Birtwistle might describe it, the same object as seen from a different angle. (The cello piece was actually composed first.) The second piece, *Variationen*, is a Webernesque series of variations on a chord sequence from the middle of *Lied ohne Worte*. In the third piece, *Wie eine Fuge*, the suppressed energy of the previous pieces is unleashed in a vigorous burst of intricate contrapuntal music.

© Simon Smith

Ixion

Stuart MacRae (b.1976)

King Ixion, in Greek mythology, violated the code of hospitality by murdering his father-in-law while he was a guest at Ixion's own feast. A crime of such treachery was hitherto unknown, and Ixion was cast out. Zeus took pity on him and welcomed him, but again Ixion proved himself unworthy and lusted after Zeus's wife Hera. When Zeus proved Ixion's deceit, he punished him by binding him to a revolving, flaming wheel.

The piece is comprised of eight 'moments', discrete yet continuous sections that each focus on a particular musical trajectory or atmosphere (and the musical materials associated with these).

The first moment contains all the materials of the piece in embryo, and each subsequent moment focuses on a particular one of these – though not in the same order. These are (in order of appearance): broken chords (arpeggios) that can open out in different shapes and directions; declamatory repeated notes (first heard in the clarinet); an uneven (short-long) rhythm; a sonorous held chord; a very quiet emerging chord.

Although subsequent moments may appear to depart quite considerably from these archetypal ideas, everything in the piece stems from some extension or combination of them.

The piece does not follow a narrative; but the image of Ixion eternally turning in space on his wheel of fire (a galaxy!) was very much in mind as I composed several of the piece's moments – an image at once distant and tangible, poignant and majestic.

© Stuart MacRae 2014

The McEwen Memorial Concert of Scottish Chamber Music is curated by Dr. Jane Stanley (jane.stanley@glasgow.ac.uk)

A website dedicated to the McEwen concerts, including sound clips, information about its history, associated composers and commissioned pieces, may be accessed here: [**www.glasgow.ac.uk/mcewen**](http://www.glasgow.ac.uk/mcewen)

The commissioned composer for 2015 is Alasdair Nicolson (new work for string quartet).

With thanks to Anne Cumberland, Music in the University.

Stuart MacRae (b.1976) has established himself as one of the most distinctive composers of his generation, writing music of elemental power and emotional subtlety. His works include a Violin Concerto (2001), *Hamartia* for cello and ensemble (2004), and *Gaudete* for soprano and orchestra (2008), all of which have been performed at the BBC Proms. Works for the stage include the opera *The Assassin Tree* (2006) to a libretto by Simon Armitage, and the dance-opera *Echo and Narcissus* (2007). The opera *Ghost Patrol* (2012), a collaboration with writer Louise Welsh for Scottish Opera and Music Theatre Wales, won the 2013 South Bank Sky Arts Award for Opera and was shortlisted for an Olivier Award.

Stuart's music has also been performed at the Linbury Studio of the Royal Opera House and the Edinburgh International Festival, and by ensembles including the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Ensemble, Hebrides Ensemble, BCMG and London Sinfonietta, as well as numerous orchestras.

Stuart was Composer in Association with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra from 1999 to 2003. He was resident composer at the Spannungen Kammermusikfest in Heimbach, Germany in 2003, and Edinburgh Festival Creative Fellow at the University of Edinburgh from 2005 to 2006. From 2006 to 2007 he was a resident composer at Internationales Künstlerhaus Villa Concordia in Bamberg, Germany.

Current and recent projects include a new opera, and a setting of Wilfred Owen's poetry to mark the 100th anniversary of World War I.

Yann Ghiro (clarinet) was born in 1971 in Nice and began clarinet lessons at the age of eleven. After studying for 6 years at the Paris Conservatoire, where he gained first prize in clarinet, bass clarinet and chamber music, Yann furthered his studies at the Prague Mozart Academy where he studied with artists such as Sandor Vegh, Gabor Takacs, Philippe Hirschhorn and Steven Isserlis. A Fulbright Scholarship then allowed him to undertake studies at the Juilliard School of Music in New York, graduating in 1996.

On his return to France he became principal bass clarinet in the Padeloup Orchestra in Paris, whilst also appearing regularly with Paris Opera, Orchestre de Paris, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra and the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra.

As an orchestral musician, he has played under great conductors such as Georges Pretre, Armin Jordan, Pierre Boulez, Emmanuel Krivine, Sir Georg Solti, Carlo Maria Giulini, Sir Charles Mackerras, Frans Brüggen, Semyon Bychkov, Franz Welser-Möst and Lorin Maazel.

Since 1998 Yann has been the principal clarinet in the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra with which he is regularly performing and recording as a soloist. He has also appeared as guest principal with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the Northern Sinfonia, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Philharmonia Orchestra and The Cleveland Orchestra.

Yann is also a lecturer at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Simon Smith (piano) was born in Northumberland in 1983. At St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh he studied piano with Richard Beauchamp and composition with Tom David Wilson. At Cambridge University he studied composition with Jeremy Thurlow and Giles Swayne.

As a pianist he has performed many of the landmarks of the 20th-century piano repertoire, most notably many of Karlheinz Stockhausen's Klavierstücke and the piano concerto and complete Etudes of György Ligeti, following a performance of which he was described as “a phenomenon – nothing daunts him, technically or musically” (The Scotsman). For Delphian Records he has recorded solo music by James MacMillan, Stuart MacRae, Haflíði Hallgrímsson and Thomas Wilson. His most recent recording, a two-disc set of the complete piano music of Alfred Schnittke, was acclaimed as “compelling and utterly persuasive” (BBC Music Magazine) and for its “extraordinary sensitivity, detail and emotional commitment” (The Independent). A disc of piano music by Valentin Silvestrov will be released in 2015.

Following the premiere of his orchestral piece *Paragon* by the Meadows Chamber Orchestra in 2001, Simon was recognised as “clearly a composer determined to go places – and fast” (The Scotsman). He has gone nowhere fast; but a number of pieces have emerged arduously since, mostly for orchestra.

Simon also works professionally as an editor and music engraver, having produced scores of numerous large-scale works by Harrison Birtwistle, James MacMillan and Karlheinz Stockhausen, among others.

Duncan Strachan (cello) began playing cello under the guidance of Audrey Scott at Lochaber Music School, before going on to study at St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh, studying cello with Pat Hair. He subsequently read music at St Catherine's College, Oxford where he studied with Colin Carr, and later at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with Robert Irvine, where he was selected as a Young Artist in Residence in 2011. During his studies he received numerous prizes and awards including a Busenhardt Morgan-Evans Award from the Worshipful Company of Musicians, and the Waddell Prize from the Edinburgh Society of Musicians.

After an acclaimed debut at St John's Smith Square in 2012, Duncan has gone on to perform widely as a soloist and chamber musician. He has appeared at festivals including BBC Proms, Lammermuir Festival, Cheltenham Festival and SOUND Festival, and has featured in broadcasts for BBC Radio 3 and BBC Radio Scotland. He regularly appears as a concerto soloist with orchestras across the UK, performing Haydn, Schumann, Elgar concertos and numerous new works for cello and orchestra. He is cellist of the Maxwell Quartet, who are 2015 Park Lane Group artists, and as a chamber musician has worked with eminent musicians including Florin Trio, Fidelio Trio, the Edinburgh Quartet, Red Note, Lana Trotovsek, Benjamin Grosvenor, David Watkin and Ilya Gringolts. Duncan has also worked with many composers including Anna Meredith, Mena Hanna, Guy Newbury, Robert Saxton, Tom David Wilson, Rory Boyle, Tom Harrold and Simon Smith to perform new works for cello. He has given coaching and masterclasses at institutions including CoMA Summer School, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Sheffield Music Academy, and Lochaber Music School.

Duncan currently plays on 'Victoria's Cello', made by Scottish luthiers Marion Bennardo & Douglas MacArthur in 2012, commissioned by Edinburgh's Dunedin School in memory of Victoria Herrald (1980-2007).

The McEwen Bequest

Sir John Blackwood McEwen (1868-1948) bequeathed the residue of his estate to the University of Glasgow to help promote performance of chamber music by composers of Scottish birth and descent. Other composers resident in Scotland for a substantial period have also benefited from the fund. In fulfilment of the terms of the bequest the University Court commissions annually a piece of chamber music for not more than five players and every three years a work for larger forces.

1955	String Quartet No 3	Ian Whyte
1956	<i>Directions for a Map</i>	Cedric Thorpe Davie
1956	*Sonata No 2 for viola and piano	Ronald G Duncan
1956	Octet for Strings	Iain Hamilton
1957	String Quartet No 2	Robert Crawford
1958	String Quartet No 1	Thea Musgrave
1959	Sonata for cello and piano	Iain Hamilton
1959	*String Quartet No 3	Thomas Wilson
1960	String Quartet	David Gwilt
1961	Sonata for violin and piano	Thomas Wilson
1962	Chamber Concerto No 1	Thea Musgrave
1962	*Theme and Variations for clarinet quintet	Sebastian Forbes
1963	Canzona for tenor, clarinet and string trio	Buxton Orr
1964	Piano Trio	Sebastian Forbes
1966	String Quartet No 3	David Dorwarad
1967	Piano Trio	Martin Dalby
1968	String Trio op 21	John Purser
1968	*String Trio	David Gow
1968	Sinfonia for seven instruments	Thomas Wilson
1969	String Quartet	Rita McAllister
1970	<i>Quaderno a Quattro</i>	John Maxwell Geddes
1971	<i>Journeys and Places</i>	Robin Orr
1971	Piano Quintet	Frank Spedding
1972	Fantasy String Quartet	Isobel Dunlop
1973	Clarinet Quintet	John McLeod
1974	<i>Histoire</i>	David Dorward
1975	<i>Liberation</i>	Edward McGuire
1976	<i>Three Poems of Li Ch'ing-Chao</i>	Wilma Paterson
1977	<i>Almost a Madrigal</i>	Martin Dalby
1978	<i>The Ancient Pattern</i>	Morris Pert
1979	<i>Channel Firing</i>	John Hearne
1980	Wind Octet	Edward McGuire
1981	String Quartet	William Sweeney
1982	<i>Scotch Minstrelsy</i>	Judith Weir
1983	<i>Diversions</i>	John Maxwell Geddes
1984	Sonata for cello and piano	Peter Nelson
1985	<i>Strange Fruit</i>	John Lunn

1986	String Quartet	John McLeod
1987	Ricercare	Robert Crawford
1988	<i>Visions of a November Spring</i>	James MacMillan
1989	<i>El Pueblo</i>	William Sweeney
1990	<i>Dead Roses</i>	Gordon McPherson
2009	<i>Intimacy</i> for string quartet	John De Simone
2010	Piano Trio (<i>Music for the pauses in a conversation between John Cage and Morton Feldman</i>)	David Fennessy
2011	<i>Luna</i>	Helen Grime
2012	<i>Tenebrae</i>	Martin Suckling
2013	<i>Tristia II</i>	Haflíði Hallgrímsson