

CONCERTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH 2005-6

Lunch-hour recital

McEwan Hall, Bristo Square, Teviot Place

FRIDAY 27 JANUARY at 1.10pm

(admission free)



JOHN KENNY *bass trombone*

JOBY BURGESS *percussion*

JOHN KITCHEN *organ*

Concertino in E flat for trombone and organ, Op.4

Allegro maestoso

Andante Marcia funebre

Allegro maestoso

Ferdinand David

(1810-1873)

Ferdinand David was a German composer, teacher and violinist, a close friend of Mendelssohn and a significant figure in his day. He spent most of his working life in Leipzig where he was leader of the Gewandhaus orchestra under Mendelssohn. After Mendelssohn's death in 1847 (David was a pall-bearer at the funeral) he increasingly undertook conducting himself. The *Concertino for trombone and orchestra* (orchestra substituted by organ today) is an early work, and has been described as "a seminal work in the history of trombone repertory". Although it has echoes of Mendelssohn, it is perhaps more reminiscent of the music of Weber. The three sections make up one continuous movement.

J.Kitchen

Rebonds A for solo percussion (1987-9)

Iannis Xenakis

(1922-2001)

Rebonds is the second of Xenakis's two works for solo percussion, both of which have become pillars of the percussion repertoire. Composed between 1987 and 1989 for Sylvio Gualda, part A is scored for seven 'skinned instruments' tuned across a wide range. The complex, bursts of texture heard in the middle and end are under-pinned by a slow relentless pulse.

JB

Dark House (2003)

John Kenny

(b. 1957)

Dark House is the third movement of the song cycle *Liadain*, commissioned by the Lorient Festival Interceltique and premiered in August 2003. The complete cycle is scored for soprano voice, carnyx, percussion, and three bombardas - Breton folk instruments of extraordinary penetration and power. *Dark House*, however, requires the carnyx player to switch to recorders, whilst the percussionist plays smaller drums and ringing instruments. The texts for the songs of *Liadain* alternate between ancient Irish and Kenny's own poetry; *Dark House* is a reflection on an abandoned croft in Donegal, northwest Eire. The version premiered today replaces voice and recorders with trombone and organ, and the percussion is re-scored; the listener may, however, find the poem of the original interesting:

Dark House, John Kenny (2000)

Stones shaped by wind and ice,
Loaded creels on aching sturdy backs
Stumped weary miles

Patient eyes, gnarled hands,
Laid each one to rest, no cutting tool or
mortar.
Roof ribs of blackened bog-oak
Reed thatch a yellow living skin

One small window and a door
set in wall a man's arm deep
....Dark House...

Soot Blackened kettle and cauldron
Straddle turf fire, lit by long dead hand
Re-kindled from the dying embers
Each day, a dawn-red kiss

Passed down through generations
This flame's flicker, life breath
To croft.....

House home to man, beast and vermin
Crawler, spinner, winged
And singer at the hearth

Sea of clouds and a black dragon
(Chamber concerto for bass trombone, organ and percussion)

Sea of Clouds and a Black Dragon was originally written for the tuba in 2004 and that idea, together with the remaining combination of organ and percussion - not the exact instrumental grouping - was suggested by Matthew Chinn, now studying for a Masters degree at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. The piece is receiving its premiere this afternoon in a version for bass trombone, made at the request of John Kenny.

In the percussion instruments that are required, it is the marimba followed by the timpani that carry the meatiest music. By the very nature of the instrument, its range and sonority, the marimba forges a 'sound link' between the bass trombone and the organ, which is melodic, harmonic and most certainly rhythmic.

The aural perspective in the combination of organ and bass trombone (*tuba*) very much encouraged me to explore extremes of register and this '*sound spectrum*' materialised itself into an actual physical landscape when the piece was about half-finished. I was given a book of photographs of *The Great Wall of China* and just thumbing through it one day there was the *physical reality* in a landscape of the sort of piece I was trying to write, the title of the photo, *Sea of Clouds and a Black Dragon*.

Love, birth and death revolving
Never plenty, one time famine,
Endless toil yet always laughter
Pipes and fiddle hid on rafter.

.....
Life patterns knit by seasons' passing
Myth, faith and family formed a fabric
Rich and self sustaining -
Unravelling at the flick of a switch,
Irresistible images of a new world
Flood and overpower the old, which
Poverty held at bay.

So, now the whitewashed walls bulge out
Thatch fallen in, growing tufts and moss.
Hearth cold, peeling door ajar
Since the day the last of old ones left, feet
first.

Stones rain-washed, sliding, settling slowly
Back to ground - a house no more,
Gentle mound to cover memory,
The passing of a time and of a people.

J. Kenny

Peter Swan

In that incredibly atmospheric photograph, the Great Wall 'snakes' its way through the landscape on a high ridge beneath which mist rises almost joining the sky and the distant mountains. I think that visual image will suffice to help the listener 'navigate' through this musical composition.

PS

PETER SWAN studied music at Newcastle University gaining a Master's Degree in Contemporary Music and Composition. During this period he began the King's Hall Series of concerts which focused on contemporary music and involved groups such as the London Sinfonietta, the Fires of London and the Nash Ensemble. It was at this time that he met and worked with Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, then simply Peter (or Max), for the first time. He shared concerts with him devoted to the music Max had written for young performers and, significantly, the music of Sir Michael Tippett appeared in the same programmes.

Teaching and education in general then occupied a significant part of his life during which, for eighteen years, he combined a dual role including the organisation and artistic planning of the Northern Junior Philharmonic Orchestra. He worked with conductors such as Jacek Kaspszyk, Elgar Howarth, Oliver von Dohnanyi, John Carewe, Daniel Harding and George Benjamin and the composer Colin Matthews was commissioned to write a major work for the NJPO. In his last years Sir Michael Tippett became involved as the NJPO's Honorary Patron and for three years his music was featured. Composing and private teaching are now important aspects of Peter Swan's life. Recently completed pieces include Prelude & Fandango for Trombone, Harp and String Quartet and Japanese Lyrics for Soprano & Guitar.

JÓBY BURGESS is one of Britain's most diverse percussionists, one half of the innovative duo new noise, and a member of Britain's leading percussion quartet ensemblebash. Since the year 2000, Joby has been involved in premiering more than 150 new works, collaborated with artists including Django Bates, Nitin Sawhney, Hilliard Ensemble and James Wood, and has notably performed to an audience of some 60,000 with Stewart Copeland at la Notte della Taranta, Italy. As a soloist Joby has made several broadcasts for BBC radio, and given performances in London, Europe and the USA. Recent highlights have included a 'sell out' performance at the RhythmSticks festival, London with his new multimedia collaboration PowerPlant featuring the Elysian Quartet; a UK tour of Bach's *The Art of Fugue* with Joanna MacGregor, Andy Sheppard and the Britten Sinfonia; and concerts with Sarah Leonard and John Kenny at the New Haven Festival of Arts & Ideas, USA & Celtic Connections, Glasgow.

Joby has also worked with the London Sinfonietta, Endymion, Composers Ensemble, National Theatre Ensemble, Gemini, ECAT Ensemble, Sculpted Sound, Brunel Ensemble, Continuum Ensemble and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Joby's recording work has included albums with ensemblebash, Michael Finnis, Robert Tear, Stewart Copeland, Joanna Macgregor, Ixion and Lontano. In 2003, Joby co-founded NNL records. As an educator Joby currently teaches at Junior Trinity College of Music and at Radley College, Oxford. Each year Joby is involved in numerous education events, including workshops focussing on composition, rhythm, West African music and improvisation; at institutions including Dartington International Summer School and Goldsmiths College University, London. He is also an adjudicator for the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition. Joby studied at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London.

Joby is endorsed by Meinl percussion and plays an Adams Robert Van Sice Artist Series Marimba

JOHN KENNY was born in 1957 in Birmingham. Internationally recognised for his interpretation of contemporary music, he also performs jazz and early music. As a composer, he is particularly active in collaborations with dance and theatre, and this love of theatre is often an important feature of his recital output. His past commissions have included the London Contemporary Dance Theatre, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, the International Trombone Association, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, ECAT, Chamber Group of Scotland, Dance Umbrella, American Drama Group Europe, The New Haven International Festival of Arts and Ideas (USA) and the Festival d'Angers, France. Commissions in 2005 have included a sonata for contra-bass trombone for the American virtuoso David Bobroff, premiered at the Glasgow Brass Explosion Festival; HeadSpace for trumpet, trombone, sound designer, and the new HeadSpace device for quadriplegic musician Clarence Adoo, designed by Rolf Gehlhaar, premiered at the St. Magnus Festival in June. In July, a CD of setting of poems by the American poet Grantly Marshall as jazz songs, and an animated short film in collaboration with Welsh artist Sean Harris. In autumn 2005 Kenny was commissioned to compose a cantata for solo trombone and choir for Vokal Nord, Norway, and a dramatic setting of the Revelation of St. John for trombone, organ, and actor for the Landshut Festival, Germany, premiered in December.

After studying with Harold Nash at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and then on an Arts Council bursary with James Fulkerson, Kenny worked as an actor/musician with the Bubble Theatre in London, then made his debut as a soloist in the Purcell Room in 1982. In 1983 he was a prize-winner at the Gaudeamus International Competition in Holland, and has since given recitals and broadcast world-wide, both as a soloist and with ensembles including Ensemble Modern of Frankfurt and Ensemble Alternance of Paris, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Paragon Ensemble, and the National Orchestras of Romania and Moldova. In 1984 he was a founder member of the TNT Music Theatre Company, collaborating with playwright Paul Stebbings in productions which continue to tour hundreds of venues throughout Europe, Russia and Japan, and Korea.

In 1993 John Kenny was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, and is currently a professor at both the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, where he specialises in the interpretation of contemporary music and The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, where he concentrates on sackbut and the interpretation of early music. John Kenny lives in Edinburgh with his wife and two sons.

JOHN KITCHEN is a Senior Lecturer in Music and University Organist in the University of Edinburgh. He also directs the Edinburgh University Singers, is organist of Old Saint Paul's Episcopal Church and Edinburgh City Organist with duties at the Usher Hall. For many years he played with the Scottish Early Music Consort as harpsichordist, organist and fortepianist, and he plays regularly with several other ensembles, covering a wide range of musical styles. He gives many solo recitals both in the UK and further afield, and is much in demand as a continuo player, accompanist, lecturer, writer and reviewer.