

Concerts at The University

Friday 19 March 2010

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Hebrides Ensemble

Krysia Osostowicz · violin

Jessica Beeston · viola

William Conway · cello

Alec Frank-Gemmill · horn

Simon Smith · piano

Programme of works by HANS ABRAHAMSEN, HARRY WHALLEY, LUKE DRUMMOND and LINA TONIA.



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**Storm and Still (for solo cello),
Hymn (for solo viola) and
Capriccio Bagatelles (for solo violin) (1994)**
(all solos performed together simultaneously)
Hans Abrahamsen (b.1952)

Diaphanous (2010) for Horn, Piano and Cello
Lina Tonia (b.1985)

This work is based on the idea of creating music colours through the use of the techniques of instruments and contrasts in dynamic. It also uses canons of clusters and pedal notes. Every instrument becomes a shadow of the others creating a ritual and dramatic sense in music.
L.T.

**Two Studies for Piano Solo from *Ten Studies for Piano*
Riviere d'oubli No.8
Cascades No.9**
Hans Abrahamsen

These piano studies – not technical etudes in the strict sense, rather a series of character studies – work their way systematically from four sensitively romantic studies with German titles through three more mechanical ones with English titles and two in the French spirit, to a single, bright Italian study. The first seven studies were composed before the break in my compositional output in the 1990s, as was the tenth, which was however first performed together with the eighth and ninth studies in the course of the 1990s.

Hans went back to the first four of the *Ten Piano Studies* from the beginning of the eighties, wishing among other things to use the expansion to add extra emotional nuances. The idea of recomposing the piano studies for a large orchestra had already occurred to Abrahamsen during the writing of the studies in the 1980s.

Horn Trio
Harry Whalley (b.1984)

I was drawn to this particular instrumentation, having never written for horn before (most of my previous compositions being for jazz ensemble). This performance is a premiere of the piece as well as the first time my music has been publicly performed in Edinburgh. After reflecting on the composition, I think it is possible to find some moments influenced by Charles Mingus.
H.W.

Schnee (Snow) Canon 1a (2006) from *10 Canons for 9 Instruments*
Hans Abrahamsen

Continuum
Luke Drummond (b.1985)

I have always been interested in the electronic and digital manipulation of sound, particularly where it is possible to explore a perceptive boundary. The fine distinctions we make as listeners between noise and timbre, as well as the natural crossovers between resonance, pulse, pitch and other greater durational aspects of musical structure are some of the things I have explored in my most recent work as a composer.

Continuum is an attempt to create a synthesis between the somewhat mutually exclusive aesthetics of Acousmatic Music and Music Concrète within the framework of instrumental music. I used Alvin Lucier's *I am sitting in a room* as a formal model, and used the process as a generator of harmonic, structural and rhythmic material. In this iterative process, overtones otherwise on the threshold of perception are brought to life. Rhythmic, and harmonic deconstruction of the material is repeated in parallel to the introduction of more complex iterations of the spectra which then finds its own return to its original form.
L.D.

6 pieces for Horn, Violin and Piano (1984)
Hans Abrahamsen

My *6 Pieces for horn, violin and piano* was written in 1984 as a commission from the Danish Radio for a concert where Ligeti's horn trio would receive its Danish premiere played by Danish musicians.

My trio is based on my work *Studies for Piano*. While I wrote these studies I tried to 'conjure up' instrumental parts inside the piano movement. When I received the commission for a horn trio I turned to six of the studies and deepened them by 'screening them' so that their parts and moods appeared in a clearer way. Furthermore I changed the order of the movements so a new unity appeared, beginning with a steadily hesitating 'Serenade' in slow-motion followed by the 'Arabesque' which hardly gets started before it stops. Then 'Blues', a melancholy melody and 'Marcia Funebre', like a fossilized picture with a dramatic threatening outburst ending with a quiet but majestic melody in violin and horn, a melody that disappears in the chords of the piano. Before the last movement 'For the Children' is a large 'Scherzo misterioso'.
H.A.

Hans Abrahamsen started by playing the French horn, but even at a very young age he showed a remarkable talent for composition. In 1969 he began to study French horn at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen, but already in 1970-71 he had his first lessons in composition with Niels Viggo Bentzon. In 1971 he studied composition at the Royal Academy of Music in Århus where he was taught composition by Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen. He has also studied with Per Nørgård and György Ligeti. From 1975-81 he went back to Copenhagen to study music history and music theory. In his early career Hans Abrahamsen was a key figure in the Danish *New Simplicity* movement which reacted against the complexities of the Darmstadt school. Despite the small scale and brevity of many of his works, his music often has an epic quality,

creating the impression that behind the scarcity of material lie expansive concepts and dense thought. Since 1995 Abrahamsen has himself taught instrumentation and composition at the Academy of music in Copenhagen. He has received among other honors *Carl Nielsen and Anne Marie Carl-Nielsens Hæderspris* (1989) and the Wilhelm Hansen Prize (1998).

Originally from Belfast, **Harry Whalley** moved to London in 2004 where he played keyboards in jazz and funk groups. He later became the music teacher in an independent school in Brighton before moving to Edinburgh, in October last year, to continue his own study.

Lina Tonia was born in Greece, in 1985. She studied composition with Professor Christos Samaras in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She was awarded the title of "Young Composer 2008" from the Union of Greek Music and Theatre Critic. She is a PHD student in composition in Edinburgh University under the supervision of Professor Nigel Osborne. She has been participating in National and International composition competitions acquiring many prizes. Her works have been performed in Thessaloniki, Athens, Edinburgh, London, Moscow, Plovdiv, Belgrade, Tirana, Boston (USA), Weimar and Vienna.

Luke Drummond is currently studying for a Masters Degree in Composition at the University of Edinburgh, under the tutelage of Nigel Osborne after successfully completing an Honours degree there. He has been lucky enough to work with the Hebrides Ensemble once before when they played his *String Quartet Movement* in 2007. The same piece later won a place as part of The York Spring Festival of New Music - in a workshop with the Kreutzer Quartet - and was then performed at Kings Place in London by the Edinburgh Quartet in 2009. Luke has recently written this new piece, *Continuum* to replace the String Quartet, and although hopeful, doesn't expect the same mileage from this one. Luke is currently president of Composers' Orchestra, where students are active in promoting a forum to rehearse and experiment in new music.

Edinburgh-based **Hebrides Ensemble** is Scotland's foremost contemporary music group, specialising in new, twentieth and twenty-first century chamber music, music theatre and chamber opera. Led by the cellist and conductor William Conway and drawing upon the finest musicians within Scotland and Europe, Hebrides Ensemble tours frequently to venues as far-flung as St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, Orkney to the Wigmore Hall in London, performs at international festivals and broadcasts and records regularly. Acclaimed for its imaginative and innovative programming and outstanding quality of performance, the group has recently been invited to join the prestigious Re:New network of European contemporary music ensembles.

This project is part of Hebrides Ensemble's membership of **RE:NEW MUSIC**, which supports the circulation and performance of existing high quality ensemble repertoire, and aims to build wider European collaboration between composers and performers. Hans Abrahamsen has come from Denmark to work with Hebrides Ensemble and perform his works with the support of the RE:NEW network.