

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES AUTUMN · WINTER 2011

# Concerts at The University

Friday 14 October 2011

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

## **Fidelio Trio**

Darragh Morgan · violin

Robin Michael · cello

Mary Dullea · piano

**Programme of works by JUDITH WEIR,  
ALASDAIR NICOLSON and NIGEL OSBORNE.**



With the support of the Holst Foundation

## Piano Trio Two (2003-4)

Judith Weir (b.1954)

1. How Grass and Trees Become Enlightened
2. Your Light may go Out
3. Open your own Treasure House

The three movement titles of this Piano Trio are taken from a collection of Zen stories; very short anecdotes which resonate in the memory but do not reveal their secrets easily.

'How Grass and Trees become Enlightened' presents a series of extreme contrasts between high and low, loud and soft. The musical material is one of my own original songs, written to an African text, which in this version has started to sprout energetic vegetation.

In 'Your Light may go Out', the violin and cello, very closely intertwined, begin by presenting a dark musical line imprinted with the ghostly image of an English folk tune. The piano, playing chords, adds ever-increasing illumination to the music, until the end, where darkness and brightness meet.

'Open your own Treasure House' is a joyous dance, built on a scale pattern of my own invention; an imaginary raga, perhaps.

Piano Trio Two was commissioned for the 2004 Spitalfields Festival by George Law, in celebration of his 75th birthday.

JW

## Piano Trio No.1 'Half Told Tales' (2011)

Alasdair Nicolson (b.1961)

1. Grey Dawn
2. Stolen
3. To the dark hill
4. Ghost lullabies
5. Danced below the moon
6. Twilight shadows

This series of short movements takes as its starting point tunes from old Gaelic lullabies. The subject matter of these lullabies is often magical and macabre with loss and disappearance, supernatural malevolence, murders and deaths being the cautionary tales used to send a child to sleep. The supernatural fairy world appears a great deal - in Gaelic tradition fairies are seen as dangerous, willful and vengeful beings from the spirit world. Each individual title here hints at a tale in progress although much is left to the imagination and there is only a glimpse on a world, a momentary encounter with an ongoing tale that is just as quickly dissolved back into nothing.

The songs I have used are short and mesmeric with repetitive patterns used to achieve the desired result of lulling a child to sleep and I have used the soundworld, ornamentation and patterning of fiddle and pipe music to colour the simple melodic shapes which I have extracted from the original melodies.

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## The Piano Tuner (2004)

Nigel Osborne (b.1948)

1. Tuning
2. Tetrachord, Hexachord
3. Sensations of Travel
4. Sea Bird
5. Dragonfly
6. Tiger
7. Song of Loss
8. Fractal Counterpoint

This piano trio by Nigel Osborne consists of eight short movements, a combination of miniature preludes and fugues, using material from his opera of the same name. The story of the opera, based on a novel by Daniel Mason, concerns a piano tuner who is commissioned in the early 1880s to tune a piano for a British officer (in real life George Scott of Dairsie in Fife) who uses cultural activities to make peace in the Shan States of Burma. In his luggage the tuner carries a score of Bach's 48, as he travels through different worlds of acoustics, intonation and natural sound - from ocean to tropical forest. Osborne's music combines elements of both Western and South-East Asian music and these features come very much to the fore in these miniatures. Starting with the "tuning" of the strings in the opening movement, we travel through various scenes e.g. the displaced rhythms of Sensations of Travel, the virtuosic and rapid Seabird, the delicate chords and gestures of Dragonfly, the drama and energy of Tiger, and the eerie and evocative string harmonics of Song of Loss and the "natural" fugue of Fractal Counterpoint.

MD

The ...*virtuosic Fidelio Trio*... (as described in the Sunday Times) perform extremely diverse repertoire internationally and features London-based Irish musicians Darragh Morgan (violin) and Mary Dullea (piano) and Scottish cellist Robin Michael. Broadcasts include regular appearances on RTÉ Lyric FM, BBC Radio 3, WNYC, Radio New Zealand and in 2010 they were featured in a Sky Arts documentary *First Love*, with broadcaster Katie Derham.

Since their South Bank debut they have appeared at Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, Purcell Room and Royal Opera House, London, festivals including Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Brighton, Petworth and Fuse Leeds, West Cork Music, Belfast Festival at Queens and National Concert Hall, Dublin, Shanghai Oriental Arts Centre, Casa da Musica (Porto), Centre Culturel Irlandais (Paris), Contemporaneamente Festival, Lodi and Palazzo Albrizzi, Venice (Italy). They are regularly invited to appear at the UK's leading venues; Blackheath Halls, London Chamber Music Society, City Music Society, Bromsgrove Concerts and Sound Scotland. 2011 performances have included appearances at Symphony Space, New York City, MIT Boston, Davenport Artists in Residence at SUNY (State University of New York), University of Illinois, a Moving on Music tour of Northern Ireland broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and an extensive tour of South Africa.

The Fidelio Trio's discography is rapidly increasing and represents important additions to the piano trio repertoire as well as works by Irish composers. CD releases include *Bulb* (Kevin Volans, Donnacha Dennehy, Deirdre Gribbin and Ed Bennett), *My Broken Machines* (Ed Bennett) and *Bartlebooth* (Joe Cutler) all on NMC, *Metamorphoses* (Haflidi Hallgrímsson) and *The Piano Tuner* (Sally Beamish, Nigel Osborne and Judith Weir) for Delphian Records and Rob Keeley Chamber Music on Convivium. Forthcoming are the first instalment of *From Vienna* (Korngold and Schoenberg) for Naxos, the complete Michael Nyman Piano Trios for MN Records and portrait discs of Piers Hellawell for Delphian Records, Gerald Barry for Mode Records and Philip Hammond for Lorelt Recordings.

Forthcoming in 2012/13 include their Schumann + series at The Forge, Camden Town, London, concerts at St. John's Smith Square, London, the premiere of Philip Hammond's new work in memoriam of the 100th Anniversary of the Sinking of the Titanic at St Anne's Cathedral Belfast, a further tour of South Africa featuring prestigious appearances including Johannesburg Music Society, return invitations to USA, a multimedia performance at The City of London Festival and further CD recordings for Naxos. [www.fideliotrio.com](http://www.fideliotrio.com)

#### **FORTHCOMING CONCERTS:**

Tuesday 18 October, 1.10pm,

Reid Concert Hall

The Edinburgh Quartet

MOZART Quartet in G major K387. PROKOFIEV Quartet No.2

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