

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES SPRING · SUMMER 2012

Concerts at The University

Friday 23 March 2012

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Stephen De Pledge · piano

Programme of works for solo piano by
12 New Zealand composers.



Landscape Preludes 2004-2008 (programme notes by the composers)

Arapatiki

Gillian Whitehead

Arapatiki, which translates as 'the way of the flounder', is the name given to sand flats in the Otago harbour in front of my house. Material suggesting the inexorable ebbing and flowing of the tide and the call of the korimako (bellbird) are the basic ideas propelling the piece.

The Horizon from Owhiro Bay

Gareth Farr

This prelude is a musical representation of the view I see at twilight from my studio on the South Coast of Wellington - the moody dark green depths of Cook Strait, the inky blue sky, and the endless unbroken horizon dividing the two. Fishing boats sit on the horizon all lit up, looking like little gleaming gemstones in the darkness. The occasional gust of wind stirs up wild eddies on the surface of the water, and the odd rogue wave hurls itself onto the rocks and up into the air in a spectacular explosion of sea spray.

Chiaroscuro

Lyell Cresswell

Chiaroscuro is a method used in the visual arts applying light and shadow to create the illusion of three-dimensional objects. If light comes from only one source, and therefore from one direction, then all light and shadow will be determined by the rules that this implies.

A landscape with too few lovers

Ross Harris

The title "A landscape with too few lovers" is taken from the fourth panel of "Northland Panels" by Colin McCahon.

Reign

Dylan Lardelli

Reign was inspired by the imagery of the Hone Tuwhare poem Reign Again. Tuwhare's words talk of the unwavering nature of weather. On a musical level this short piece is inspired by the polyphonic keyboard works of J.S. Bach.

This liquid drift of light

Eve de Castro-Robinson

This piece takes its title from a poem by NZ poet Denys Trussell: *Spring Drift Kawhia*.

This limpid, liquid little piece attempts to evoke the play of light on the waters at Kawhia harbour, described in Trussell's poem: "Now hills half-stripped/of gods rim this liquid/drift of light, and/the sea-eye flashes/mosaic beneath a nest of cliffs/starting the shag/in its pine-black tower."

The Street Where I Live

Jack Body

I welcomed this commission to write a small piece for Stephen De Pledge, but balked a little at the idea it that should be related to landscape, a concept that easily fall into cliché. But then all physical places are in fact landscape, including the street where I have lived for the last 35 years (echoes of 'My Fair Lady'), in the city I love.

This work creates a counterpoint between my own voice and its 'musical analogue', as played on the piano.

Terrain Vague

Samuel Holloway

'Terrain vague' is marginalised urban space created by post-industrial urbanisation and often ignored in traditional architectural discourse. Terrain vague is underused or misused. It is liminal space, transitional, under construction, in process. Terrain vague presents problems and offers resistance.

Machine Noises

Michael Norris

In the book *Consciousness Explained* Daniel Dennett convincingly argues that there is nothing about human consciousness, emotion or experience that cannot be encompassed by a purely physical, biological and mechanical explanation. We do not need to refer to some 'soul' or 'mind's eye' to describe our experiences. We are, in short, machines - just very clever machines.

These three short miniatures push the performer to the limits, yet, paradoxically, a 'human' reading of the score still brings to the surface a more energetic, compelling and arguably musical performance than a merely mechanical rendition.

Sleeper

John Psathas

sleeper *noun*

a person who is asleep

a train carrying sleeping cars

a railroad tie

Dedicated to the memory of young Fergus Schulz, an intrepid traveller, still travelling....

Landscape Prelude

Jenny McLeod

...is imbued with the spirit of New Zealand's west coast on a still day. The accompanying poem begins: "barely stirs the dark ripple/through liquid bell-tones/ancient echoes/of grey-green tree-gods/high sky/wild crags and rocks/the deep earth gong beats..."

A less than reassuring human element also enters the picture...

Goodnight Kiwi

Victoria Kelly

In the days when there were only two television channels, being up late enough to see the 'Goodnight Kiwi' signal the end of transmission was a rare and exciting event. I'd lie awake for hours thinking about the Kiwi shutting down the power and climbing up to sleep in the sky. The mixture of innocence, nostalgia and finality embodied by that animation is an emotional landscape, unique to childhood in 1970's New Zealand.

New Zealand pianist **Stephen De Pledge** is one of the most exciting and versatile musicians of his generation. He studied with Joan Havill at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. His career was launched after winning the Gold Medal from the Guildhall, and the NFMS Young Concert Artists' Award, and he has since maintained a diverse and wide-ranging performing schedule, as soloist, chamber musician and song accompanist. Stephen's solo performances have taken him throughout the UK, including five solo recitals in the Wigmore Hall in London, where he made his acclaimed debut in 1999. He has also given solo performances in Hong Kong, Italy, France, Singapore, Japan, Australia and the USA. Concerto appearances include the Philharmonia, Bournemouth Symphony and New Zealand Symphony Orchestras, and he has recorded solo works of Bliss, Arvo Pärt, and Gorecki. Stephen's repertoire is far-reaching, from the music of the 17th to the 21st centuries. He has always been an advocate for contemporary music, and has given the world premiere performances of many works. He has become particularly associated with the music of Messiaen, which he studied in Paris with the composer's widow, Yvonne Loriod. Stephen has broadcast for Radio 3 and Classic FM in the UK, and also on radio in USA, Australia, New Zealand and Sweden, and for BBC Television.