

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES SPRING · SUMMER 2013

# Concerts at The University

Friday 22 March 2013

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

## McKenzie Sawers Duo

Sue McKenzie · soprano saxophone

Ingrid Sawers · piano

Programme of works by NIKKI ILES, GABRIEL JACKSON,  
BOB MINTZER, GEORGE GERSHWIN and GRAHAM FITKIN.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
*Edinburgh College of Art*

## Alma Venus

Nikki Iles (b.1963)

Nikki Iles combines a busy career as a jazz pianist, educator and composer, and this piece was one of her first commissions. Written in 1996 for Rob Buckland and Peter Lawson, it strikes a happy compromise between having tightly composed material and yet conveying a more fluid and languid mood, though only two short sections are actually marked to be played more freely. The influence of jazz on the harmonies, and also on the rhythm particularly in the more groove-driven middle section, is however undeniable.

IS

## The Coral Sea

Gabriel Jackson (b.1962)

*The Coral Sea* takes its title (and structure) from the prose poem of the same name that Patti Smith wrote as a memorial to the great photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, who died in 1989. (*The Coral Sea* is also the title of one of Mapplethorpe's most striking, and (for him) unusual photographs - of a battleship.) The piece's seventeen sections follow Patti Smith's division into a *Prologue*, for piano alone, *Voyage*, a series of contrasting episodes, and after a fierce climax, a final *Litany* which begins with a monody for unaccompanied saxophone.

*The Coral Sea* was commissioned by Group AG and was first performed by Martin Robertson and Antony Gray at Tate Britain on January 15th 1998.

GJ

## Sax Solo

Bob Mintzer (b.1953)

American saxophonist Bob Mintzer has won multiple awards both as a performer and composer, but is possibly most well-known for his long association with the Los Angeles group The Yellowjackets. A committed jazz teacher, he is on the staff at the University of South California, and lives in the house in LA which was home to Arnold Schonberg when he first emigrated there in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

## A Foggy Day

George Gershwin (1896-1937) arr. Michael Finnissy

Gershwin was renowned for his popular compositions but always wanted to pursue a career as a more 'serious' composer; many of the so-called serious composers of his day were envious of Gershwin's musical craft and talent (and probably of his bank balance too!). British composer Michael Finnissy (b. 1946) has continued this blurring of the genres with his series of arrangements of Gershwin songs. Whilst retaining the integrity of Gershwin's melody, Finnissy gives the underlying accompaniment his own stamp with more ascerbic harmonies and complex rhythms - what may sometimes appear as rubato is often carefully notated.

IS

## Gate

Graham Fitkin (b.1963)

This piece started from one thing - a trill. The alternation of two adjacent notes gives rise to a simple and constant grouping of beats. Place it in different temporal contexts and the inherent quality of the trill is questioned.

GF

The **McKenzie Sawers Duo** has been collaborating musically for 7 years and is passionate about presenting new music to new audiences. They are widely respected as performers, educators and innovators in their field. Encompassing classical, jazz, world and folk music they have given Scottish and UK premieres by British contemporary composers including Gavin Bryars, Graham Fitkin, Joe Duddell, Chick Lyall and Gabriel Jackson. Dedicated to commissioning and writing new music, performances have taken them to concert halls, theatres, stately homes, schools, artists' studios and even a former Victorian asylum. Forthcoming performances include University of St Andrews lunchtime recital, Sheffield Music Academy, An Tobar (Mull), Perth Chamber Music Society, and Emmanuel Church Recital Series, Loughborough. Recently they were invited to perform at the 16th World Saxophone Congress and at the International Chamber Music Matters Conference in the Merchants Hall, Glasgow. Having received funding from Creative Scotland they have just released their first album, "The Coral Sea", on Delphian Records.

Please visit their website [www.mckenziesawersduo.com](http://www.mckenziesawersduo.com) or their McKenzie Sawers Duo Facebook page or follow them on Twitter @McKenzieSawers2

**Sue McKenzie** is a graduate of the Royal College of Music (studying with Kyle Horch), a past winner of the British Clarinet and Saxophone Society Young Performers Competition and a Royal Overseas League Woodwind Finalist. As one of Scotland's leading contemporary saxophonists she has given UK and Scottish premieres of many new works for saxophone.

Sue gained a Postgraduate Degree in Jazz at Edinburgh Napier University studying with Phil Bancroft and went on to perform at the Glasgow International Jazz Festival, Isle of Wight Jazz Festival, Islay Jazz Festival, Manchester Jazz Festival and the Edinburgh International Jazz Festival. Along with Haftor Medboe Group she recorded an album for Linn Records and supported Bill Frisell and Esbjörn Svensson Trio.

Sue is also the leader of the Scottish Saxophone Ensemble who recently released their debut album "Mrs Malcolm" with Largo Music. In 2009 she was awarded a grant by the Katherine McGillivray's Get a Life Fund which enabled her to study in the US with Lynn Klock at the University of Massachusetts as well as lessons in improvisation and composition with David Murray (World Saxophone Quartet, Paris) and David Binney (New York). Sue was the Assistant Director of the 16th World Saxophone Congress, 2012. She is also in demand as an educator, teaching at St Andrews University, Edinburgh Napier University, Sheffield Music Academy and St Mary's Music School.

**Ingrid Sawers** was educated at Edinburgh University and studied piano with Peter Evans, Alexandra Andrievsky, and more recently with Roger Vignoles. She has taken part in masterclasses with Imogen Cooper at the International Musicians' Seminar, Prussia Cove, Peter Donohoe at the Edinburgh International Festival and also with lieder specialists Paul Hamburger and Malcolm Martineau, notably as a 2010 Crear Scholar. Work as a soloist ranges from Mozart *Ch'io mi scordi di te* (with soprano Lorna Anderson) to Berio *Sequenza IV* at the Queens Hall Edinburgh.

Ingrid is in demand as one of Scotland's finest accompanists and chamber musicians, performing in venues including Usher Hall Edinburgh, Glamis Castle, Scone Palace, as well as widely throughout the UK, Ireland, Denmark, Malta, Canada and Austria. Ingrid has performed extensively with television-journalist John Suchet in his talk *Beethoven - The Last Master*, and appeared in cabaret, alongside Rory Bremner, at the Savoy, London. Recently she performed for HRH Prince Charles and First Minister Alex Salmond at the Palace of Holyrood.

Recordings include works with the ensemble One Voice and music by Andrew Keeling. She has a longstanding commitment to new music and has given Scottish premieres of pieces by many composers including Thomas Ades, Graham Fitkin, Martin Butler, Richard Causton. Ingrid has a thriving practice as a teacher and coach, has been a guest coach at RSAMD, has given masterclasses / workshops at various universities, and also works worldwide as an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.