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# CONCERTS AT THE UNIVERSITY

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Spring - Summer 2016

Tuesday 26 January 2016

1.10pm

City of Edinburgh Methodist Church

Alec Frank-Gemmill · horn

Alasdair Beatson · piano

Programme of works by **BEETHOVEN**,  
**JOHN CASKEN** and **SCHUMANN**.



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH  
Edinburgh College of Art

## Horn Sonata in F major, Op.17

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

- (i) Allegro moderato
- (ii) Poco Adagio, quasi Andante
- (iii) Rondo, Allegro moderato

## Serpents of Wisdom (2015) for horn and piano

John Casken (b.1949)

The title of this piece comes from *Celtic Cross* by Norman MacCaig, a poem that brings to life the symbols of an earlier time, carved in stone, entwined and plaited in abstract forms, yet "in links of song", as "Serpents of wisdom whose cool statements show Such understanding that it seems like love."

The opening phrase of the piece is responsible for much of the musical material for the whole piece - a strong and vibrant phrase in which I wanted to capture something of the essence of these noble creatures on Celtic crosses. The idea of plaiting and entwining plays an important part in the unfolding of the piece, and the 'sweet strong choruses' that MacCaig refers to create moments of repose.

The work was commissioned by the BBC and Royal Philharmonic Society for BBC Young Generation Artist Alec Frank-Gemmill in his forthcoming Wigmore Hall recital with the pianist Alasdair Beatson on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016.

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## Adagio and Allegro Op.70 in A flat major

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Horn player **Alec Frank-Gemmill** is recognised internationally for the exceptional breadth and depth of his music-making. Principal Horn of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, he divides his time between concertos, recitals, chamber music and orchestral playing. A proponent of the historical natural horn as well as of the modern instrument, his repertoire stretches from the baroque era to the latest contemporary compositions.

Alec has appeared as soloist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the Düsseldorfer Symphoniker and Sinfonietta Köln. He also regularly performs concertos with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Highlights include the Ligeti *Hamburg Concerto* under Principal Conductor Robin Ticciati and Mozart's *Horn Concerto K. 417* on the natural horn directed by Richard Egarr. Alec's recording of the *Concertino for Horn* by Weber released by Linn records has met with great critical acclaim.

Artist in Residence at the 2013 Lammermuir Festival, Alec made his Wigmore Hall debut that same year. He has gone on to perform as a soloist in numerous festivals including Spitalfields, Ryedale, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and St. Magnus. A regular at Open Chamber Music at Prussia Cove, Cornwall UK, Alec is highly sought-after to perform chamber music. His collaborators include pianist Alasdair Beatson and violinists Alexander Janiczek, Philippe Graffin and Pekka Kuusisto.

Having himself studied in Cambridge, London and Berlin, Alec was recently appointed Professor of Horn at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. His teachers have included Hugh Seenan, Radovan Vlatković and Marie-Luise Neunecker. Alec is the recipient of a Borletti-Buitoni Fellowship 2014 and is a member of the BBC New Generation Artists scheme.

Pianist **Alasdair Beatson** is highly regarded as a distinctive and vibrant musician. Recent and forthcoming highlights include a sixth solo Wigmore Recital, performances of the complete Beethoven cello sonatas with Pieter Wispelwey, and collaborations with such artists as Adrian Brendel, Philippe Graffin, Erich Höbarth, the Nash Ensemble and the Doric String Quartet. A new CD released on Claves features Mozart and Stravinsky works for violin and piano with Swiss violinist Esther Hoppe, and joins a solo piano discography of Mendelssohn, Thuille, and four Opus 1's (Brahms, Berg, Grieg and Schumann).

Recent concerts include appearances as soloist with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, the Scottish Ensemble, and performances as soloist in Messiaen's *Oiseaux Exotiques*,

conducted by George Benjamin. As one of the most established chamber pianists of his generation, Alasdair works in a wide and varied repertoire with some of today's finest musicians. Recent festival appearances include Aldeburgh, Bath Mozartfest, Music at Plush, Resonances (Belgium), Ernen (Switzerland), Delft and Oxford Chamber Music. A regular participant of IMS Prussia Cove, Alasdair was invited to join their touring groups in 2007 and 2011. He is Artistic Director of the chamber music festival *Musique à Marsac*.

Alasdair enjoys a regular association with the Scottish Ensemble. In addition to numerous chamber music projects, he returned in Autumn 2014 for a third project as soloist, touring concertos of Mozart and Haydn throughout Scotland and at Wigmore Hall.

#### FORTHCOMING CONCERTS:

Friday 29 January

1.10pm

Playfair Library Hall, Old College, South Bridge

Laura Sergeant (cello) and Ian Watt (guitar)

Music by VIVALDI, SIMPSON, VILLA-LOBOS, GNATTALI, SMITH-BRINDLE and SQUIRE

Admission Free

Tuesday 2 February

1.10pm

Methodist Church, Nicolson Square

David Gerrard (harpsichord)

Music by J.S. BACH, J.KUHNAU and J.C.F. FISCHER

Admission Free

Friday 5 February

1.10pm

Greyfriars Kirk, Greyfriars Place

Students from the Reid School of Music

Music will include MILHAUD Suite for violin, clarinet and piano Op.157b and BRAHMS Clarinet Sonata

Admission Free