

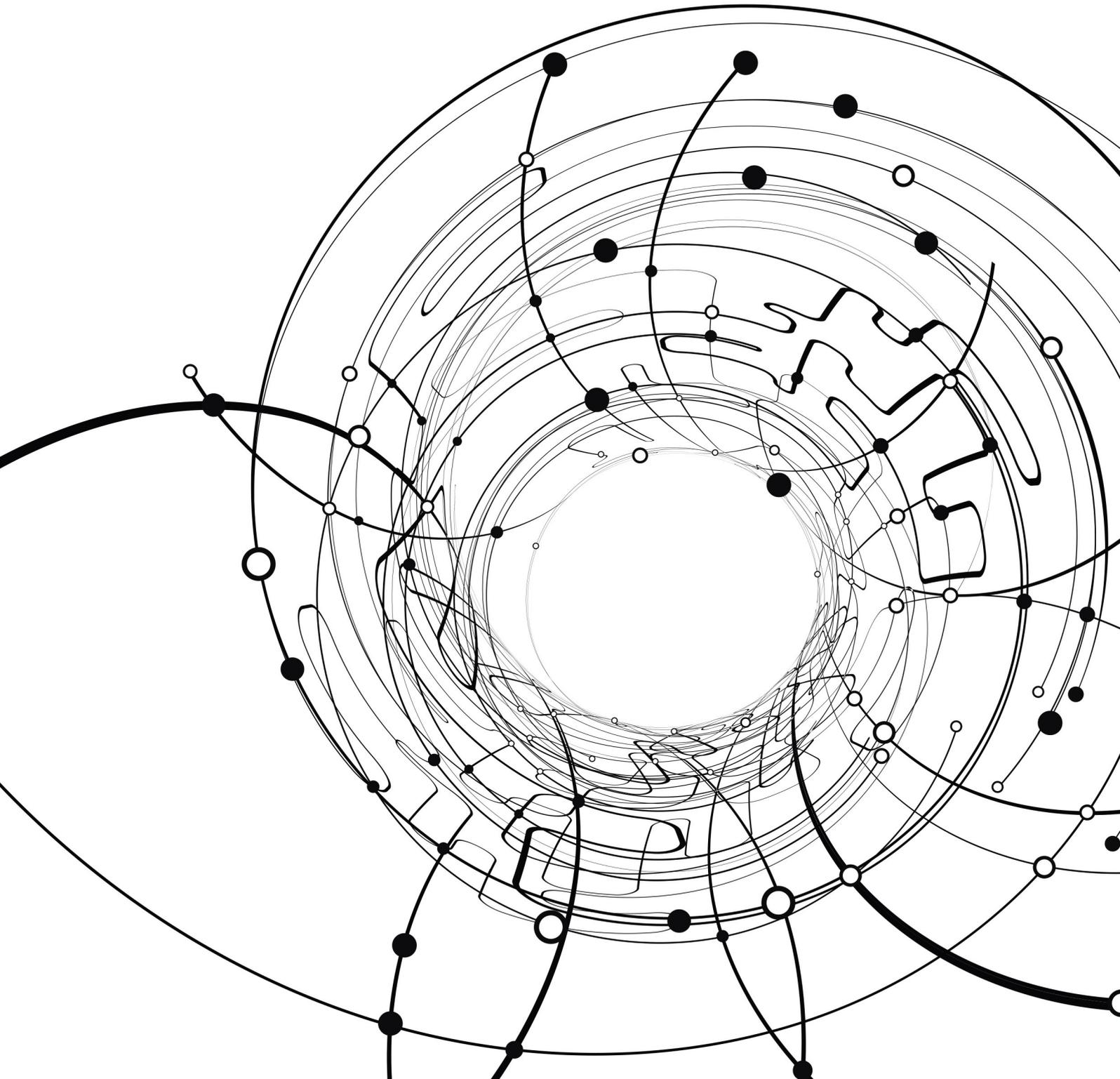


University  
of Glasgow | School of Culture  
& Creative Arts

School of Culture and Creative Arts presents

**McEwen Memorial Concert  
of Scottish Chamber Music**

Thursday, 7 November, 2013





# McEwen Memorial Concert of Scottish Chamber Music

Thursday 7 November 2013  
1.10pm University Concert Hall

Richard Craig (flute)  
Ian Anderson (viola)  
Duncan Strachan (cello)  
Ian Watt (guitar)  
Kevin Bowyer (harpsichord)  
Bill Sweeney (conductor)

*Toward the Sea* (11')

Toru Takemitsu

*Before the Dark* (5')

Simon Smith

*Libertango* (3')

Ástor Piazzolla

*Tristia II* (20')

Hafliði Hallgrímsson

Commissioned by the Court of the University of Glasgow under the terms of the McEwen Bequest.

*Funded by the McEwen Bequest*

### ***Toward the Sea***

**Toru Takemitsu**

The work is divided into three sections—*The Night*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Cape Cod*. These titles are in reference to Melville's novel *Moby Dick, or The Whale*. The composer wished to emphasise the spiritual dimension of the book, quoting the passage, "meditation and water are wedded together". He also said that "the music is a homage to the sea which creates all things and a sketch for the sea of tonality". *Toward the Sea* was written at a time when Takemitsu was returning increasingly to tonality after a period of experimental composition.

### ***Before the Dark***

**Simon Smith**

The title of this short solo cello piece alludes to the title of a forthcoming book by the American fantasy and science fiction writer Stephen Donaldson, *The Last Dark*, the concluding volume in a ten-book series he has been writing since the 1970s, and it is in part offshoot of my orchestral work *Against All Things Ending*, which takes its title from the preceding book in the series. A predominantly elegiac feel is the uniting factor.

### ***Libertango***

**Ástor Piazzolla**

*Libertango* is a composition by Ástor Piazzolla, recorded and published in 1974 in Milan. The title is a portmanteau merging "Libertad" (Spanish for liberty) and "Tango", symbolizing Piazzolla's break from Classical Tango to Tango Nuevo.

### ***Tristia II***

**Hafliði Hallgrímsson**

*Tristia II* op. 48 for flute, guitar, viola, cello and harpsichord, is a fairly close but all the same a rather distant relative to an earlier composition of mine entitled *Tristia* op.8a, for guitar and cello. This original version was composed especially for the Icelandic guitarist Pétur Jónasson and myself, to perform at the Reykjavík Arts Festival in 1984.

It is a common practice among painters, to paint not only the same model several times, but also to paint familiar landscapes or objects again and again. Cézanne and Mount Saint-Victoire, and Monet and his paintings of haystacks come to mind. The nearest composers come to this way of working, brings to mind the variation form, when a theme is revisited several times and transformed into a set of variations, each of which is different but related through the repeated use of a basic theme. *Tristia II* is perhaps the closest I have come to working in that way, by taking an old composition of mine and reworking it in a relatively free variation form.

This McEwen commission has given me the opportunity to revisit the original *Tristia*, composed in 1983, with my aim in mind, to bring this original composition closer to its innate potential, and to allow old material to prosper in a new way, not only by adding flute, viola and harpsichord, but also by varying, extending, and creating a much richer and more interesting sound world.

*Tristia II* is in six contrasting movements. All the instruments are given prominent roles throughout the whole piece, both as soloists as well as partnering other instruments in duos and trios, and lending colouring to often rather dense accompaniment. *Tristia II* is also more energetic and rhythmic in some of the movements. In the quieter movements there is certain emphasis on colour and atmosphere, which has its origins in the original composition, which I saw then as an imaginary visit to Iceland, my country of birth.

### **Hafliði Hallgrímsson**

Hallgrímsson began his musical life as a cellist, spending twenty years playing with orchestras in Iceland, England and Scotland. A lifelong interest in writing music, and studies with Peter Maxwell Davies and Alan Bush, led him to give up his performing career in 1983 to compose full time. Unsurprisingly, works for strings are central to his catalogue, most of his large ensemble works being for strings only. Often inspired by visual art (Hallgrímsson is himself an accomplished painter), his unique language is both eerie and paradoxical; with repeated listening, the seemingly simple can unveil mysterious depths, and the impenetrable can reveal itself with unexpected clarity.

### **Ian Anderson (Viola)**

Ian Anderson has won international competitions for both composition and viola. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in London and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow (undergraduate and postgraduate respectively), he now splits his time between the two cities.

Ian is composer-in-residence for the Scottish chamber choir, Caledonian Voices, and is the songwriter and rhythm guitarist for the alt-rock band Idle Kings, who will be releasing their debut album in early 2014. He won the 2011 Frederic Mompou International Composition Competition (Barcelona), and the 2011 West End Composition Competition (Glasgow).

Ian was principal viola with the European Union Youth Orchestra and the European Union Chamber Orchestra, and has held viola chairs in shows in London's West End. With accordionist Rafal Luc he formed Duo Van Vliet – winners of the 2011 International Chamber Music Competition in Jawor, Poland, and finalists in the 2011 Royal Over-Seas League Ensembles Competition, London. This summer he joined the Berlin-based International Mahler Orchestra, where he participates in regular chamber music recitals, recently performing Mozart's *Duo for violin and viola in Bb* with Dutch violinist Mathieu van Bellen.

### **Kevin Bowyer (Harpsichord)**

Kevin Bowyer has been Organist to the University of Glasgow since September 2005. He accompanies the very excellent Chapel Choir and is Artistic Director of the annual International Organ Festival held in the Memorial Chapel. *The Sorabji Organ Works Project*, a five year plan supported by The Glasgow University Trust, aims to have a complete critical edition of all three of the Sorabji organ symphonies in print in 2013 as well as live performances of all three works. CD recordings of the complete Sorabji organ works will be released on *Altarus Records*, who will also produce a DVD documenting the entire project. Sorabji's massive *Second Organ Symphony* (1929-32, about 6½ hours) was performed in June 2009. The *Third Organ Symphony* (1949-54, also about 6½ hours), reputedly the most complex and technically demanding organ work ever composed, is currently undergoing conversion from the manuscript into a workable performing score and is scheduled to be surfacing in public performance in 2013.

Kevin also teaches in Glasgow for the St. Giles International Organ School. His other interests include reading widely, obscure cinema, real ale, malt whiskies and looking at the sea. His favourite pastime is sleeping.

### **Richard Craig (Flute)**

Born in Glasgow, Richard studied flute at the RSAMD with Richard Blake and Sheena Gordon, continuing his studies with the assistance of a Dewar Award, with Mario Caroli at the CNR Strasbourg.

Formative experiences include working with composers Brian Ferneyhough, James Dillon, Helmut Lachenmann and musicians Mario Caroli, Roberto Fabbriciani, Rohan de Saram and Pierre-Yves Artaud. He has been invited to perform with groups such as musikFabrik, Klangforum Wien and ELISION, embarking on several tours with these groups to festivals such as Venice Biennale, Festival d'automne, UltraSchall, Maerzmusik and Wittener Musiktage.

Richard is frequently engaged as a soloist, chamber musician giving concerts and masterclasses throughout the world. Alongside performing established repertoire, Richard commissions new work with a view to enriching the expressive range of the instrument.

He has recorded and broadcasted for the BBC, WDR Cologne, YLE Finland, Radio France, Radio Nacional de España, Swedish Radio, ARTE, and Icelandic RUV and WERGO. In April 2011 his solo disc *inward* was released on the Metier label, featuring works by Ferneyhough, Sciarrino alongside premieres recordings of Barrett, Bång, Karski, Johnson and Croft. His latest cd release is of his own compositions, under the label Amp/Al. Richard also lectures on the post-graduate performance program at Huddersfield University.

### **Duncan Strachan (Cello)**

Scottish cellist Duncan Strachan studied at St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh, before going on to read music at St Catherine's College, Oxford where he studied with Colin Carr, and later at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with Robert Irvine, where he was selected as a Young Artist in Residence in 2011. During his studies he received numerous major prizes and awards including a Busenhart Morgan-Evans Award from the Worshipful Company of Musicians, and the Waddell Prize from the Edinburgh Society of Musicians. After an acclaimed debut at St John's Smith Square in 2012, Duncan has gone on to perform widely as a soloist and chamber musician. He has appeared at festivals including BBC Proms, Lammermuir Festival, Cheltenham Festival and SOUND Festival, and has featured in broadcasts for BBC Radio 3 and BBC Radio Scotland.

He is cellist of the Maxwell Quartet, who are Enterprise Music Scotland Residency Artists, as well as cellist in the Kaptén Trio. As a chamber musician he has worked with eminent musicians including Fidelio Trio, Edinburgh Quartet, Red Note, Benjamin Grosvenor, David Watkin and Ilya Gringolts, and with composers including Harrison Birtwistle, Anna Meredith, Robert Saxton, Rory Boyle, Stuart MacRae, Tim Benjamin and more. He has taught cello and chamber music at institutions including CoMA Summer School, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow University, Sheffield Music Academy, and Lochaber Music School.

**Ian Watt (Guitar)**

Born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland in 1991, Ian Watt first came to international attention when, at 18, he was awarded 2nd prize (silver medal) at the 2009 Parkening International Guitar Competition (USA), the world's preeminent guitar competition. Since then, he has appeared as a soloist throughout Europe and world. To date, in addition to the UK, Watt has performed in the USA, China, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Ukraine, Denmark, Holland, Estonia, Norway and Belgium and as a concerto soloist with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia and Scottish Philharmonic Orchestra. Despite his youth, Watt is also increasingly in demand as a teacher, regularly giving masterclasses internationally, most recently in China (at the Central Conservatory in Beijing), Germany, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

As well as his performances on BBC Radio, Watt was featured in a BBC 2 documentary which included a performance of Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* and his performances have also been seen and heard on television and radio stations in the USA, Austria and Holland. His debut album, *Invocación – Impressions of Spain*, was released by Nimbus Alliance in November 2011 and his second recording, of British guitar music, will be released by Nimbus in 2013.

A keen advocate of contemporary music, Watt took part in Peter Maxwell Davies' 75th birthday celebration concerts in Glasgow in November 2009, giving a performance of the rarely heard *Dark Angels* song cycle for voice and guitar in the composer's presence. He has since collaborated with composers Rory Boyle and most recently John McLeod, whose Guitar Concerto (dedicated to Watt and the composer's first work for the instrument) he premiered in March 2010. He also premiered McLeod's two solo guitar works, *Three Impromptus* and *Fantasy on themes from Britten's Gloriana*, in 2012.

In addition to the silver medal at the Parkening, Watt's awards and prizes include 1st prize (and the audience and junior jury prizes) at the Heinsberg International Guitar Competition 2011, 1st prize at the 'Westfalian Guitar Spring' International Competition 2010 and 2nd prize at the Vienna International Guitar Competition 'Homage to Karl Scheit' 2010.

Ian Watt plays D'Addario strings.

**Bill Sweeney (Conductor)**

Bill Sweeney was born in Glasgow in 1950. He was educated at Knightswood Secondary School, RSAMD and at the RAM, where he studied with Alan Hacker (Clarinet) and Harrison Birtwistle (Composition). He is currently Professor of Music at the University of Glasgow.

His output covers a wide range of instrumental, orchestral, electronic and vocal forces. Commissions have been from such diverse organisations as the BBC, Paragon Ensemble, St Magnus and Lammermuir Festivals, Musica Nova, Capella Nova, Mayfest, the STUC, RSAMD, McNaughten Concerts, Theatre Cryptic and the Jim Henson Organisation.

In 2006, a Creative Scotland Award lead to the creation of *Schemes, Blues and Dreams*, a composition combining live performance and electro-acoustics, exploring the sensibility of Scottish musicians of the 1960s who defined their identity through the music of Black America. The project featured internationally recognised blues harmonica player Fraser Spiers, placed in an electro-acoustic setting based on live processing of sampled and performance material.

During April and May 2010, he was in residence at the Kone Foundation's Saari Manor in South West Finland.

More recent works include a Sonata for Cello and Piano (which won a BASCA/Radio 3 British Composer Award 2011), "These Lands, This Wall", for the Lammermuir Festival 2012 and "Chelovek", for Bass Clarinet and Piano for the ensemble SCAW (2013).