Sunday 15 November 2015
7.30pm
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The world premiere of Melinda Maxwell’s Fractures: Monk Unpacked in tonight’s programme was made possible with the support of a wide range of individuals through Sound Investment. Sound Investors provide the essential financial support for BCMG to commission more music than would otherwise be possible, enabling us to bring our audiences the most exciting and thrilling new music.

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Audience Exchange Stay on after tonight’s concert for an informal discussion with fellow audience members, facilitated by Dr Jonathan Gross. Buy a drink from the bar, or just pull up a chair, and exchange ideas on this evening’s programme for up to an hour from the end of the performance.

Tonight’s programme

Sunday 15 November 2015, 7.30pm
CBSO Centre, Birmingham

Conductor: Oliver Knussen
Tenor: Tom Raskin *
Tenor: Andrew Mackenzie-Wicks *
Bass: Colin Campbell *
Bass: Charles Gibbs *
(Singers courtesy of RSVP Voices)

Gunther Schuller
Games (7’)
(UK public premiere)

Arnold Schoenberg arr. Hans Abrahamsen
Vier Stücke – aus 6. Kleine Klavierstücke op. 19 (8’)

Hans Abrahamsen
Liebeslied (3’)

Julian Anderson
The Comedy of Change (23’)

Interval

Patrick Brennan
Polly Roe (5’)
(BCMG/SaM Apprentice Composer-in-Residence)

Melinda Maxwell
Fractures: Monk Unpacked (c10’)
(World premiere / BCMG Sound Investment commission)

Igor Stravinsky
Renard * (20’)
Rob Johnston, RSVP director and conductor, has acted as chorus master for this performance of Renard.

bcmg.org.uk/soundinvestment
Gunther Schuller (1925-2015)

Although he was 89 years old and had been unwell for several years, it was nevertheless a shock when Gunther Schuller passed away in June. He had been such a huge presence in so many areas of music in the United States that it seemed he would always be there. I personally lost a mentor and friend of 45 years’ standing, but also a role-model – his teaching and the rehearsals I observed at Tanglewood in the early 1970’s set so many of the standards I have tried to hold for myself since then. Most of all, the astonishing fecundity of his musical and instrumental imagination has been a continuing (if intimidating!) source of inspiration to me.

Gunther was curiously reticent about promoting his own music – even to me! – and it has been a big consolation, since his death, to encounter many works I did not previously know and revisit the ones I did, and to realise what an astonishingly high level he managed to maintain across his huge output (some 250 works in virtually every genre). This is surely an important body of work ripe for (re-) discovery.

In the last three years of his life, following the success of the orchestral work *Dreamscape* in 2012, Gunther managed to fulfil well over a dozen commissions, including two major orchestral scores and many pieces for ensembles of various shapes and sizes. Several of these are unusually playful in character, while always rooted in his own distinctive, richly chromatic palette (he had employed the same 12-tone series since 1976!). One of them, for example (*Magical Trumpets*), is written for 12 trumpets of every conceivable kind; while tonight’s mixed ensemble piece, *Games* (2013) is dense with bizarre allusions and non-sequiturs.

I am most grateful to Stephen Newbould for allowing me to change our planned programme to include this piece, in Gunther’s memory and in celebration of what would have been his 90th birthday on November 22nd.

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) arr. Hans Abrahamsen (b. 1952)

During the 1990s, when Hans Abrahamsen was composing almost nothing of his own, he kept his hand in by making arrangements of music by others. With this Schoenberg group from 1998 there is a particular irony, for Schoenberg similarly ran into a fallow decade, and at a very similar age, shortly after writing the original piano pieces in 1911. The first rush of excitement released by the venture into atonality, only three years before, was spent. It had offered freedom but, for the moment, no enduring guidelines, without which compositional efforts tended to falter. Hence these tiny movements.

Two of them – the fourth and fifth – are too fast and pianistic to be altered, but the others, Abrahamsen shows, can be treated as stencils through which to create patterns in the new colours provided by an instrumental ensemble.

The first piece is also magically decelerated, its chords, figures and progressions turned into drifting clouds, their notes extended to show how much Schoenberg at his most revolutionary lingers in the old tonality. There are typically Schoenbergian touches to the instrumentation – a solo for flutter-tongue flute, a celesta ostinato – as well as exquisite dovetailings of harmonies that take Schoenberg into another world. The slow speed, too, emphasizes how the composition comes to cadence and restart.

Abrahamsen’s take on the second piece, with its pulsing staccato thirds, brings out a perhaps unexpected wit in the music. Deeper and richer, the harmonies of the third piece are further enriched by the orchestration, and Abrahamsen’s colouring turns the bell chords of the finale, written under the immediate impression of Mahler’s funeral, into light.

© Paul Griffiths

Hans Abrahamsen (b. 1952)

For the silver jubilee concert of the Ensemble Recherche, who had brought his *Schnee* to performance a couple of years before, Abrahamsen in 2010 wrote this three-minute gem. The woodwind players are all in a warm lower register, on bass flute, oboe d’amore and bass clarinet; the piano remembers the snow, now falling almost weightlessly; the tempo hovers, and the sound shimmers. A little echo of an earlier love song, a century and a half old, is found and lost again.

© Paul Griffiths
The Comedy of Change

(2009)

Julian Anderson (b. 1967)

The music takes as its starting principle the idea that all things change. Looking at nature – whether at animate or inanimate – proved a vital stimulus for developing various kinds of musical change and evolution. What intrigues me about animate nature is the way daily needs can provoke change of both behaviour and physical appearance. This is one of the first things Charles Darwin noticed on the Galápagos Islands: some giant tortoises had evolved sharply curved shells and longer necks to enable them to feed on vegetation.

However – and this is something perhaps Darwin himself was puzzled by – the extreme and strange lengths to which some animals will go to attract attention is beyond all purely ‘evolutionary’ needs. Hence the title: the word comedy is to be understood in all its meanings, including the old Elizabethan one of laughter and tears, a mixture of emotions.

There are seven movements in the work but some are played without a break:


Perhaps I was trying in the first movement to illustrate the unpredictable nature of change in a single musical statement – evolving gradually from very short sounds into a lively polyphonic dance: 20 million years in 3 minutes, as it were! And perhaps the extremely slow second movement was inspired by the lumbering movements of the Galápagos’ giant tortoises. Perhaps too the movements, songs and flights of birds were behind some of the faster movements: the lively repeated clarinet melodic figure in the fifth movement may be a case in point. But in general I preferred not to be too literal or illustrative: I hope the musical harmonies, textures, rhythms and melodies will be vivid enough to suggest to listeners their own images; or else heard as the abstract music they perhaps essentially are.

© Julian Anderson

Polly Roe

(2014)

Patrick Brennan (b. 1985)

Polly Roe is an internet alias of my oldest friend. I believe it was also the name of her late grandmother. The piece was written as a tribute to Harrison Birtwistle in his 80th year and makes several explicit references to this composer’s work – the instrumentation is the same as that of Tragoedia (but for the addition of a double bass) and the music features a brief rhythmic quotation from Carmen Arcadia Mechanicae Perpetua. Most important, though, is Birtwistle’s famous obsession with the note E4; this is what gave me the idea of basing my whole piece around a single “anchoring” pitch (imagined here as the flat 7th partial of a harmonic series on F 3/4 Sharp).

Rhythmically and structurally, Polly Roe deals with independently expanding and contracting phrases of short and long notes. The first section, following a short introduction, places a rhythmic sequence on its retrograde. The two layers are transposed independently (one going up, the other down) as the music progresses, and points of symmetry are highlighted when they occur. The following flurry of notes is based on the proportions which result from combining neighbouring groups of short and long notes from the previous section. The mechanistic character of the piece is carried through to the coda – here the music oscillates between two complex chords and is intended to evoke the pops, clicks and soft whirring of a delicate piece of machinery which has become caught in a complicated loop.

© Patrick Brennan

Fractures:

Monk Unpacked

(2015)

Melinda Maxwell (b. 1953)

Commissioned by Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, with financial assistance from the following individuals through BCMG’s Sound Investment Scheme:

Robert Adediran, Catherine and Derrick Archer, Paul and Jean Bacon, Samantha Bird, Paul Bond, John and Wendy Buckley, Alan S Carr, Christopher Carrier, David and Angela Carver, Simon Collings, Alan B Cook, Anne Fletcher, Elizabeth Hurst and Stephen Burrowes, Colin and Belinda Matthews, Frank and June North, Rosalyn and Philip Phillips, David Sawer, Michael B Squires, Stephen Slaite, Gwendolyn Tietz and David Lewis, Dr Hannah Vlcek, Harry and Doreen Wright, Richard and Carolyn Sugden.

In the last few years two experiences have influenced my state of mind. The first was the completion of a Masters degree in Jazz in 2013 and the second was an untimely fall from a stage on January 1st 2014 when I broke my right leg. When I started thinking about this commission certain thoughts around these experiences began to come together.

During my jazz studies I inevitably explored the music of Thelonious Monk. His style and music beguiled me because of its exploitation of major/ minor harmony beloved of the bebop jazz of the 1940s/50s. Then, jazz was the new music of America and its influence spread in all sorts of interesting ways. Monk also used daring shifts to a more diverse and colourful language that for me hinted at the new modern classical music of, for instance, Varese and Messiaen. These crossovers connections between jazz and modern music induced a fertile musical mix in my mind. I became revitalized and tremendously excited by these links and relationships, not only in my jazz studies, but also in my own practice, playing, teaching and general music-making.

The alluring ballad by Monk Round Midnight drew me into its world of a shifting chromaticism with an Eb minor/D major axis. I began my piece with this in mind by deconstructing and unpacking this ballad and adding modes on Eb and E to create my own harmony with a semitone pull. I improvised two contrasting melodies in each mode with the ballad in my ear, and with this gathered material I began my search and explorations. I set myself some limitations and the material led the way and revealed its course and direction. As I progressed a one movement structure developed.

The experience of my broken leg got me thinking about fracture and fissure, broken bones and broken lines hence the melodies in Fractures being interrupted and split up.

There are two sections within the single movement entitled Chase and Bone Waltz. The horn and percussion tend to signal events, and there are dialogues between duets of instruments and the piece resolves with a short Chorale. The double bass has the first and last word. The piece is a septet of oboe, clarinet/bass clarinet, horn, violin, cello, double bass and percussion. I decided to add an oboe, and therefore myself, to experience it from the inside.

I would like to thank Olly for inviting me to do this and believing I could do it (because its been a while since I last composed to this degree), and BCMG for commissioning the piece and supporting me all the way. I have dedicated the piece to Oliver Knussen, Jackie and Stephen Newbould.

© Melinda Maxwell
Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Living in Switzerland during the First World War, Stravinsky lived, as far as his music was concerned, in a Russia of folk rhymes, village theatre and church ceremonies. Renard (The Fox) belongs to this period. It was written in 1915-16, during a break in the composition of Les Noces, the composer’s re-enactment of a Russian peasant wedding. Since the commission had come from the great U.S.-French patron Princesse Edmond de Polignac, who wanted a piece that could be performed at her home, relatively small forces were required. Small forces were in accord, too, with the image of workaday theatre, of touring players putting on a show in a village square: you can hear them coming on in the opening march, and leaving when this march returns at the end.

Four singers – two tenors and two basses – are accompanied by a dozen or so players, making a colourful ensemble that gains a special tang from folk sources, the opportunity to intercalate new bits of music into a recycling of the old. Finally, when the Fox has been strangled, the Cat, the Goat and the Cock sing and dance.

© Paul Griffiths

The Fox

O mati moya, liutis!
Ya ne postiloja, ne mobilisya;
Pridvinnoye vremya.

Oh, dear brother Renard!
I don’t go in for fasting, and praying;
Come back some other time.

The Fox (haughtily)

O moya chado, petel!
Sudish na visosom dreve,
Dazhish miši nedobyri,
Proklatiya.

Oh, my dearest son!
You are patched up very high, but your mind is full of low, wicked thoughts.
You lot all have too many wives;
some of you have ten, and some have as many as twenty, or even forty at a time!

The Fox

O moye chado, querel!
Sudish na visosom dreve,
Dazhish miši nedobyri,
Proklatiya.

Oh, dear brother Renard!
I don’t go in for fasting, and praying;
Come back some other time.

The Cock

Ponesla meny lisa,
Ponesla petuksa,
Pokrutim berezham,
Pos vosiskom goram,
V chuzhien zemli,
V dalneiki strani,
Za tri deryo chem,
V tridestyotskiy trastvi,
V tridestyotskiy gosudarstvi.

The Fox has grabbed me, He’s dragging the poor Cock,
Over the high hills,
over the steepest mountains,
into unknown parts,
into distant lands,
into far countries,
into farther kingdoms,
into the farthest empires,

Kot da baran,
Kotchok sest meny lisa?
Kot da baran,
Kotchok sest petuksa?
Kot da baran,
Otimite meny?

Dear Cat, dear Goat,
the Fox wants to eat me!
Dear Cat, dear Goat,
he wants to eat the poor old Cock!
Dear Cat, dear Goat,
get me out of here!

The Cock

Pridvinnoye vremya.

Oh, dear brother Renard!
I don’t go in for fasting, and praying;
Come back some other time.

The Fox

O moya chado, querel!
Sudish na visosom dreve,
Dazhish miši nedobyri,
Proklatiya.

Oh, my dearest son!
You are patched up very high, but your mind is full of low, wicked thoughts.
You lot all have too many wives;
some of you have ten, and some have as many as twenty, or even forty at a time!

The Fox

O mati moya, liutis!
Ya ne postiloja, ne mobilisya;
Pridvinnoye vremya.

Oh, dear brother Renard!
I don’t go in for fasting, and praying;
Come back some other time.

The Fox (haughtily)

O moya chado, querel!
Sudish na visosom dreve,
Dazhish miši nedobyri,
Proklatiya.

Oh, dear brother Renard!
I don’t go in for fasting, and praying;
Come back some other time.

The Cock

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Pokrutim berezham,
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Dear Cat, dear Goat,
get me out of here!

The Cock

Pridvinnoye vremya.

Oh, dear brother Renard!
I don’t go in for fasting, and praying;
Come back some other time.

The Fox

O moya chado, querel!
Sudish na visosom dreve,
Dazhish miši nedobyri,
Proklatiya.

Oh, my dearest son!
You are patched up very high, but your mind is full of low, wicked thoughts.
You lot all have too many wives;
some of you have ten, and some have as many as twenty, or even forty at a time!
O, o, o, o, o …

Zdes lisa podzhidayet
Shatayeshsya?
Khvost podzhala,
Otkul vzyalsya krasnaya
Otkul vzyalsya lisitsa,
Kurochek ryabushechek.
Svodil kïchetok za soboy,
So dvora …

Skhodil kïchetok so dvora,
Usyo skhvatïvala golovki.

'Ne khochu myastsa
Ne yesh menya, krasnaya!
U ney bïla da, u ney bïla da,
I sebya velichala.
Krasnaya ozornichala
Zatreshchal natoshchak.
Al ne vedayesh Y ermak
Deshevoye;
and the Goat dance.)
(The Fox lets the Cock go and runs away. The Cock, the Cat
and the Goat dance.)

Sizhu na dubu,
Sizhu, dom stroego,
Psenyu poyu.
(They see each other coming)

The Fox
Kukuareku petushok,
Zolotolya grebeshok,
Chyosanna golouvsushka,
Shyolkova borodushka,
Viglyani v okoshko.
(Kukuarek comes in)

The Cock
Khochet syest menya lisa!
Kot da baran,
Khochet syest petukha!
Kot da baran,
Otkomenny menya!

(Cock faints. The Cat and the Goat appear. They sing a
pleasant song to the Fox, accompanying themselves on the gusli.)

V izh viatrom,
Kot da baran,
V izh viatrom,
Tyuk, tyuk, guseltsï,
V izh viatrom,
Da so svoimi malïmi
detushkami?

V gosti podzhidayut.

(The Fox appears, this time without his monster's costume.)

Tenor 1 (shouted)
Ne oskoromsya Lisinka!
Don't break your fast, Renard!
(The Cock jumps.)

Tenor 2 (shouted)
Komu skoromnomu, a nam
zdorovye!
We love it when it's
forbidden!
(The Fox seize the Cock and parades round the stage
holding him under his arm. The Cock struggles desperatly.)

(The Fox has grabbed me, he's dragging him far away
the Cock, the Cat
and the Goat dance.)

V tridesyatoye
V tridlatoye tsarstvo,
Za tridevyat zemel,
Po vïsokim goram,
V chuzhiya zemli,
Over the high hills,
into distant lands,
into unknown parts,
Over the high hills,

Tyuk, tyuk, guseltsï,
V izh viatrom,
Da so svoimi malïmi
detushkami?

V gosti podzhidayut.

(The Fox has got his claws into
it's you I want to eat, Cock!'

V tridesyatoye
V tridlatoye tsarstvo,
Za tridevyat zemel,
Po vïsokim goram,
V chuzhiya zemli,
Over the high hills,

Tyuk, tyuk, guseltsï,
V izh viatrom,
Da so svoimi malïmi
detushkami?

V gosti podzhidayut.

(The Fox seizes the Cock and parades round the stage
holding him under his arm. The Cock struggles desperatly.)

Tenor 1 (shouted)
Ne oskoromsya Lisinka!
Don't break your fast, Renard!
(The Cock jumps.)

Tenor 2 (shouted)
Komu skoromnomu, a nam
zdorovye!
We love it when it's
forbidden!
(The Fox seize the Cock and parades round the stage
holding him under his arm. The Cock struggles desperatly.)

The Fox
Ponesla menya lisa, Ponesla petukha.
The Fox has grabbed me, he's dragging him far away

Po krutim berezhkam,
Visokochem goram,
V chuzhiya zemli,
Over the high hills,

Tyuk, tyuk, guseltsï,
V izh viatrom,
Da so svoimi malïmi
detushkami?

V gosti podzhidayut.

(The Fox has grabbed me, he's dragging him far away
the Cock, the Cat
and the Goat dance.)

V tridesyatoye
V tridlatoye tsarstvo,
Za tridevyat zemel,
Po vïsokim goram,
V chuzhiya zemli,
Over the high hills,

Tyuk, tyuk, guseltsï,
V izh viatrom,
Da so svoimi malïmi
detushkami?

V gosti podzhidayut.

(The Fox seizes the Cock and parades round the stage
holding him under his arm. The Cock struggles desperatly.)

Tenor 1 (shouted)
Ne oskoromsya Lisinka!
Don't break your fast, Renard!
(The Cock jumps.)

Tenor 2 (shouted)
Komu skoromnomu, a nam
zdorovye!
We love it when it's
forbidden!
(The Fox seize the Cock and parades round the stage
holding him under his arm. The Cock struggles desperatly.)

The Fox
Ponesla menya lisa, Ponesla petukha.
The Fox has grabbed me, he's dragging him far away

Po krutim berezhkam,
Visokochem goram,
V chuzhiya zemli,
Over the high hills,

Tyuk, tyuk, guseltsï,
V izh viatrom,
Da so svoimi malïmi
detushkami?

V gosti podzhidayut.

(The Fox has grabbed me, he's dragging him far away
the Cock, the Cat
and the Goat dance.)

V tridesyatoye
V tridlatoye tsarstvo,
Za tridevyat zemel,
Po vïsokim goram,
V chuzhiya zemli,
Over the high hills,

Tyuk, tyuk, guseltsï,
V izh viatrom,
Da so svoimi malïmi
detushkami?

V gosti podzhidayut.

(The Fox seizes the Cock and parades round the stage
holding him under his arm. The Cock struggles desperatly.)

Tenor 1 (shouted)
Ne oskoromsya Lisinka!
Don't break your fast, Renard!
(The Cock jumps.)

Tenor 2 (shouted)
Komu skoromnomu, a nam
zdorovye!
We love it when it's
forbidden!
(The Fox seize the Cock and parades round the stage
holding him under his arm. The Cock struggles desperatly.)

The Fox
Ponesla menya lisa, Ponesla petukha.
The Fox has grabbed me, he's dragging him far away

Po krutim berezhkam,
Visokochem goram,
V chuzhiya zemli,
Over the high hills,

Tyuk, tyuk, guseltsï,
V izh viatrom,
Da so svoimi malïmi
detushkami?

V gosti podzhidayut.

(The Fox has grabbed me, he's dragging him far away
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and the Goat dance.)

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V tridlatoye tsarstvo,
Za tridevyat zemel,
Po vïsokim goram,
V chuzhiya zemli,
Over the high hills,

Tyuk, tyuk, guseltsï,
V izh viatrom,
Da so svoimi malïmi
detushkami?

V gosti podzhidayut.

(The Fox seizes the Cock and parades round the stage
holding him under his arm. The Cock struggles desperatly.)

Tenor 1 (shouted)
Ne oskoromsya Lisinka!
Don't break your fast, Renard!
(The Cock jumps.)

Tenor 2 (shouted)
Komu skoromnomu, a nam
zdorovye!
We love it when it's
forbidden!
(The Fox seize the Cock and parades round the stage
holding him under his arm. The Cock struggles desperatly.)

The Fox
Ponesla menya lisa, Ponesla petukha.
The Fox has grabbed me, he's dragging him far away

Po krutim berezhkam,
Visokochem goram,
V chuzhiya zemli,
Over the high hills,

Tyuk, tyuk, guseltsï,
V izh viatrom,
Da so svoimi malïmi
detushkami?

V gosti podzhidayut.

(The Fox has grabbed me, he's dragging him far away
the Cock, the Cat
and the Goat dance.)

V tridesyatoye
V tridlatoye tsarstvo,
Za tridevyat zemel,
Po vïsokim goram,
V chuzhiya zemli,
Over the high hills,

Tyuk, tyuk, guseltsï,
V izh viatrom,
Da so svoimi malïmi
detushkami?

V gosti podzhidayut.

(The Fox seizes the Cock and parades round the stage
holding him under his arm. The Cock struggles desperatly.)

Tenor 1 (shouted)
Ne oskoromsya Lisinka!
Don't break your fast, Renard!
(The Cock jumps.)

Tenor 2 (shouted)
Komu skoromnomu, a nam
zdorovye!
We love it when it's
forbidden!
(The Fox seize the Cock and parades round the stage
holding him under his arm. The Cock struggles desperatly.)

The Fox
Ponesla menya lisa, Ponesla petukha.
The Fox has grabbed me, he's dragging him far away

Po krutim berezhkam,
Visokochem goram,
V chuzhiya zemli,
Over the high hills,
The Fox

Kto tam pesni poyot?
Da uzhe kto tam lisu zovot?

Who’s that singing out there?
What do they want of me?

The Cat, The Goat

Idut zveri na pryatka,
Nesut kosu na plechak,
Khochut lisinku poschii,
Pozamia plechii.

We’ve caught up with you now
we’ve brought along this big scythe
and we’re going to slice you up
into little pieces.

(They produce a large scythe.)

The Fox (terrified)

Akh! Vi moj glazyonki,
I chto vi moj miliye, delali?
Chto vï moi nozhunki,
– Mï bezhali, bezhali,
Selo tro blinov,
Obyvitisya na pletchii,
Liske to s pechi,
Zakamshili.

Oh, my eyes, my precious eyes,
what have you been doing for me?
– We’ve been running, running,
to make sure the animals don’t
catch you.
And you, my tail, my lovely brush?
– In the brambles, in the bushes,
the branches I got stuck,
so the animals could catch you,
and finish you off.

(Enraged, the Fox lashes his tail, crying out:)

Da zakamshili.
Chtob lisu zveri khvatili,
Da sobaki na vezli,
Nayekhali boyare,
Da sobak na vezli,
So zveri lisku ne syeli.

So the animals could catch you,
and the dogs went wild,
and the dogs went wild,
and the animals don’t
get you.

The Cock, the Cat, and the Goat dance.

(Enraged, the Fox lashes his tail, crying out:)

Da sobaki na vezli,
Nayekhali boyare,
Da sobak na vezli,
So zveri lisku ne syeli.

And they can smell the fox.

The Cock, the Cat, and the Goat

Lisinka, lisitsa,
Podi po voditsu.
Ne dorogo volki.
Gorodk molotili.
Lisinki srezali,
Liske to skazali,
Oblomala plechi.
Sym, sym, sym,
Persyemy, persyemy.
Na lapotke izpechyon.
Muzhik pesnya spel,
Sym, sym, sym,
persyemy,
Na kapustnik sel.
Sym, sym, sym,
Persyemy,
Persyemy.

Oh, my legs, my precious legs,
what have you been doing for me?
– We’ve been running, running,
to make sure the animals don’t
catch you.
And you, my tail, my lovely brush?
– In the brambles, in the bushes,
the branches I got stuck,
so the animals could catch you,
and finish you off.

(Enraged, the Fox lashes his tail, crying out:)

Da zakamshili.
Chtob lisu zveri khvatili,
Da sobaki na vezli,
Nayekhali boyare,
Da sobak na vezli,
So zveri lisku ne syeli.

So the animals could catch you,
and the dogs went wild,
and the dogs went wild,
and the animals don’t
get you.

The Cock, the Cat, and the Goat dance.

(Enraged, the Fox lashes his tail, crying out:)

Da sobaki na vezli,
Nayekhali boyare,
Da sobak na vezli,
So zveri lisku ne syeli.

And they can smell the fox.

The Cock, the Cat, and the Goat

Lisinka, lisitsa,
Podi po voditsu.
Ne dorogo volki.
Gorodk molotili.
Lisinki srezali,
Liske to skazali,
Oblomala plechi.
Sym, sym, sym,
Persyemy, persyemy.
Na lapotke izpechyon.
Muzhik pesnya spel,
Sym, sym, sym,
persyemy,
Na kapustnik sel.
Sym, sym, sym,
Persyemy,
Persyemy.

Oh, my legs, my precious legs,
what have you been doing for me?
– We’ve been running, running,
to make sure the animals don’t
catch you.
And you, my tail, my lovely brush?
– In the brambles, in the bushes,
the branches I got stuck,
so the animals could catch you,
and finish you off.

(Enraged, the Fox lashes his tail, crying out:)

Da zakamshili.
Chtob lisu zveri khvatili,
Da sobaki na vezli,
Nayekhali boyare,
Da sobak na vezli,
So zveri lisku ne syeli.

So the animals could catch you,
and the dogs went wild,
and the dogs went wild,
and the animals don’t
get you.

The Cock, the Cat, and the Goat dance.

(Enraged, the Fox lashes his tail, crying out:)

Da sobaki na vezli,
Nayekhali boyare,
Da sobak na vezli,
So zveri lisku ne syeli.

And they can smell the fox.

The Cock, the Cat, the Goat

Oh, my eyes, my precious eyes,
what have you been doing for me?
– We’ve been running, running,
to make sure the animals don’t
catch you.
And you, my tail, my lovely brush?
– In the brambles, in the bushes,
the branches I got stuck,
so the animals could catch you,
and finish you off.

(Enraged, the Fox lashes his tail, crying out:)

Da zakamshili.
Chtob lisu zveri khvatili,
Da sobaki na vezli,
Nayekhali boyare,
Da sobak na vezli,
So zveri lisku ne syeli.

So the animals could catch you,
and the dogs went wild,
and the dogs went wild,
and the animals don’t
get you.
Patrick Brennan was born in Derry, Northern Ireland. Following an undergraduate in piano performance at the Royal College of Music, he went on to study composition with Julian Anderson and Hans Abrahamsen at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the Royal Danish Academy of Music respectively.

As a composer, his music has received national and international attention, with recent commissions and performances coming from orchestras and ensembles including the London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and the Internationale Ensemble Modern Akademie. He has worked with several leading conductors and international ensembles including the London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and regularly performs as principal with the London Sinfonietta.

She has taught at the Royal Academy of Music and Trinity College, London, and is Consultant in Woodwind Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester. She also coaches at the Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies in Snape, Suffolk, and is the oboe tutor for the National Youth Orchestra. Several works have been written for her, including Pulse Sampler by Harrison Birtwistle; Banshee, Sphinx and Disparate / Disparate Dos by Simon Holt; and pieces by Simon Bainbridge, Nicholas Maw, Howard Skempton, Robert Saxton, Jo Kondo, Philip Cashian and Wilfred Mellers. A composer herself, her works include Pibroch and Song for Sidney for solo oboe; Crane Dance for double-reed ensemble; several pieces for string ensemble; and Singla Rock for mixed quintet. In June 2013 she was awarded a MMus in Jazz Studies from the Birmingham Conservatoire.

Melinda Maxwell read music at York University and studied in Germany with Ingo Goritzki and Helmut Winnscherrmann. She has performed as soloist at many leading festivals, including the Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, Holland and Aarhus Festivals. In addition to her work as a chamber musician and recitalist, she is principal oboe of the Endymion Ensemble and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and regularly performs as principal with the London Sinfonietta.

She was appointed BCMG/SaM Apprentice Composer-in-Residence for the 2015-16 season. As a composer, her music has received national and international attention, with recent commissions and performances coming from orchestras and ensembles including the London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and the Internationale Ensemble Modern Akademie. He has worked with several leading conductors and international ensembles including the London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and regularly performs as principal with the London Sinfonietta.

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Gunther Schuller's orchestral works include some of the classics of the modern repertoire written for the major orchestras of the world. Prominent among these are several masterful examples in the ‘Concerto for Orchestra’ genre, though not all of them take that title. The Boston Symphony Orchestra and James Levine premiered Where the Word Ends in February 2009. Semyon Bychkov and the WDR Symphony Orchestra brought Where the Word Ends to the 2010 Proms in London. More recent is Dreamscape (2012), commissioned to celebrate the Tanglewood Festival’s 75th anniversary. An earlier work is Spectra (1958), alongside such works as the Concerto for Orchestra No. 1: Gala Music (1966), written for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; Concerto for Orchestra No. 2 (1976) for the National Symphony Orchestra; and Farbenspiel (Concerto for Orchestra No. 3) (1985), written for the Berlin Philharmonic. The title of the latter, translatable as ‘play of colors’, echoes the visual metaphor of Spectra.

An educator of extraordinary influence, Schuller served on the faculties of the Manhattan School of Music and Yale University; he was, for many years, head of contemporary music activities (succeeding Aaron Copland) as well as a director of the Tanglewood Music Center, and served as President of the New England Conservatory of Music.

Igor Stravinsky, born in 1882, read law at St. Petersburg University and had private composition lessons with Rimsky-Korsakov. In 1909, the famous Russian choreographer, Diaghilev, commissioned him to orchestrate two pieces for his Chopin ballet Les Sylphides and then to write an original ballet score, Firebird. This marked the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship with Diaghilev’s company, Ballet Russes. During this time he wrote Petrushka and The Rite of Spring, which gained him international recognition and by 1914, at the age of 32, he was widely regarded as one of the leading modernist composers. In 1940 he immigrated to America and settled in Hollywood. He died in 1971.
About tonight’s performers

Oliver Knussen CBE (born in Glasgow in 1952), one of the pre-eminent composer-conductors in the world today, grew up near London (where his father was principal Doublebass of the London Symphony Orchestra) and now lives in Suffolk. He is presently Artist-in-Association with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and Richard Rodney Bennett Professor of Music at the Royal Academy of Music.

The recipient of many honours and awards, including the Nemmers Prize in 2006 and the RPS Conductor Award in 2009, he has served as Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival (1983-98), Head of Contemporary Music at the Tanglewood Music Center (1986-93), Principal Guest Conductor of the Hague Residentie Orchestra (1993-97), Music Director of the London Sinfonietta (1998-2002), and Artist-in-Association with the BBC Symphony Orchestra (2009-2014). Together with Colin Matthews he founded the Composition and Performance Courses at the Britten-Pears School in 1992 and in recent years has been invited for events in Aldeburgh, Amsterdam, Birmingham, London and Tanglewood and he has recorded more than 50 CDs for labels including Deutsche Grammophon, Decca, Virgin and NMC.

His 60th birthday was celebrated with special events in Aldeburgh, Amsterdam, Birmingham, London and Tanglewood and he has recorded more than 50 CDs for labels including Deutsche Grammophon, Decca, Virgin and NMC.

Colin Campbell is an established concert soloist and has performed all over the world in repertoire ranging from Monteverdi to Taverner. International concert performances include the arias in Bach’s St John and St Matthew Passions with Trevor Pinnock and The English Concert; Christus in Bach’s St Matthew Passion in Tampere, Finland and in Beijing, China (Chinese Premiere); Bach’s B Minor Mass in Japan and Korea with Sir John Eliot Gardiner; Beethoven’s Leonore at the Lincoln Center New York, the Salzburg Festival and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, also with Sir John Eliot Gardiner; Marcel Dupré’s cantata De Profundis in Munich with the Bayerische Rundfunk and Marcello Viotti; Handel’s Messiah in China, Israel and Poland; Telemann’s Die Grossmut with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in Magdeburg, Germany.

In the UK he has appeared at the Royal Albert Hall with the Philharmonia Orchestra and the Choir of King’s College Cambridge in Vaughan Williams’ Fantasia on Christmas Carols and with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in Mahler’s Eighth Symphony. At the Queen Elizabeth Hall Colin has performed with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in Elgar’s Dream of Gerontius and the City of London Sinfonia in Vaughan Williams’ Dona Nobis Pacem.

At Westminster Cathedral he has appeared with the Bach Choir and the English Chamber Orchestra in Fauré’s Requiem and has performed Brahms’ Ein Deutsches Requiem at Symphony Hall, Birmingham.

Colin’s operatic repertoire is extensive and he has performed with Kent Opera, English Touring Opera, Welsh National Opera, Aix en Provence Festival, Bermuda Festival and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Roles include Don Giovanni, Escamillo, Germont Pere, Marcello, Renato, Sharpless and Tarquinius. Colin created the role of Herod in Nigel Short’s opera The Dream of Herod and subsequently performed the work in Switzerland, Bermuda and the UK to critical acclaim.

Charles Gibbs was born and brought up in Bristol. After reading Modern Languages at Cambridge, he studied singing at the Royal Academy of Music, winning many prestigious prizes and playing the title roles in Mozart’s Le Nozze di Figaro and Sondheim’s Sweeney Todd.

His career has taken him all over the UK as well as mainland Europe, Iceland, Egypt, Japan, the USA and Mexico. He spent a year in Les Miserables in the West End, where he played the Bishop of Digne and understudied Javert, the experience of which led him to concentrate on his career as a concert singer, appearing with many of the country’s leading professional choirs, such as The Sixteen, The Kings Consort and the Gabrieli Consort.

In July 2006 he joined the BBC Singers, the UK’s only full-time professional choir, and in 2008 he was invited to join ‘I Fagioliini’, with whom he is able to indulge both his musical and theatrical talents.

Recent stage appearances include performances of Purcell’s King Arthur, Plutone in Monteverdi’s Orfeo, as well as the role of Coyle in Britten’s Owen Wingrave for the Nuremberg International Chamber Music Festival.
Emerging from within the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in 1987, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group quickly established a reputation for exciting performances, innovative audience-building and learning initiatives, and a central commitment to composers and the presentation of new work. The Group thrives on innovation and invention and is critically acclaimed for championing the most forward-looking music regionally, nationally and internationally.

As a world-leading contemporary ensemble, BCMG has premiered over 160 works, most commissioned through its pioneering Sound Investment scheme, with a family of Investors supporting each new piece. In addition, BCMG’s extensive Learning and Participation Programme supports young people as composers, performers and listeners of new music through an exciting range of projects in- and out-of-school. BCMG is committed to talent development and the BCMG/Sound and Music Apprentice Composer-in-Residence scheme provides access for emerging composers to the full range of the Group’s work.

BCMG features on numerous CDs, including an ongoing series of NMC discs devoted to British composers, with recent recordings of music by Charlotte Bray, Oliver Knussen, Tansy Davies, Alexander Goehr and Richard Causton. The Group has two Artists-in-Association, Oliver Knussen and John Woolrich, and Sir Simon Rattle is the Group’s Founding Patron.

‘The jewel in Birmingham’s cultural crown…’
The Birmingham Post
We are seeking passionate and influential supporters to join BCMG’s newly created Development Board

**Have you got what it takes?**

The purpose of the Development Board is to help BCMG reach philanthropists, trusts and companies, to raise funds to continue our mission of championing the most forward-looking music through an integrated programme of performances, commissions and learning activity.

We need to continue to raise money over the next two years to facilitate the creation, development and performance of innovative music for the cultural benefit of society worldwide and in particular, for our Momentum Fund.

Momentum is a fund launched specifically to enable BCMG to produce exciting, ambitious, large-scale future projects. We are developing this fund so that we can continue to be pioneers for the new in Birmingham.

“BCMG has always been about bold ideas and putting the composer first. Momentum – our new ‘special reserve’ fund, will specifically support two areas we can’t fund from our regular annual budgets – artistic research and development for key composers trying new ideas and partnerships; and large-scale ambitious performance projects such as Stockhausen’s stunning work Momeinte with Ex Cathedra, planned for 2018. Supporting Momentum is about helping us go the extra mile to make exceptional projects happen.”

Stephen Newbould, Artistic Director

**Are you?**

- Passionate about contemporary music
- Willing to share networks/contacts and provide introductions to potential supporters
- Able to give and/or influence major gifts
- Influential in business/socially - strong personal networks and access to philanthropists
- Willing to commit for a minimum of one year

Each Development Board member is requested to provide support to BCMG via gifts, time and/or influence. In short, however they feel their expertise, resources and network can contribute to the development of the ‘Momentum Fund’ Appeal and the future of BCMG.

If you would like more information about this opportunity for further involvement with BCMG, please contact Carla Priddon, Director of Development, on 0121 616 2621 or by e-mail at carla@ bcmg.org.uk.

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**BCMГ Learning Resources website realises ‘long held dream’**

In October Birmingham Contemporary Music Group launched a free learning resources website to help teachers, children and young people to explore contemporary music and composing. The new micro-site has a simple aim: to make a significant contribution to bringing to life the music of our time for young people.

The site has grown out of BCMG’s extensive Learning and Participation Programme and draws on the in-depth experience of the composers, musicians, workshop leaders, researchers and teachers who deliver the programme in schools and at the CBSO Centre, Birmingham. It has been funded by a Youth Music Spotlighting grant, with additional support from the Wellcome Trust as part of the BCMG Resolution project.

The majority of the resources are designed to support young people as composers, though there are also resources for young performers of varying abilities. Initially focused on resources for teachers, the site will be added to over the coming months. Significant additions that will appear in the next year include a set of resources to support beginner instrumentalists composing from the very start of their musical lives and Music Maze Resources focused on the work of composers including Thomas Ades, Luciano Berio and Ruth Crawford Seeger.

Nancy Evans, BCMG Director Of Learning comments:

“The Launch of the BCMG Learning Resource Website represents the culmination of a long held dream to bring together all our learning resources into one place and to share our expertise, particularly in the area of young people composing, developed over many years. Studio Bonito, our web designers, have done a fabulous job in creating a website that is lively, easy to navigate and brings our resources to life. We hope the resources are a welcome addition and we are delighted to be able to share them for free. We look forward to adding more resources over the coming months and years.”

Visit the new BCMG Learning Resources website at: resources.bcmg.org.uk
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Friday 4 December 2015, 8pm
CBSO Centre

Conductor: Dominic Muldowney
Baritone: Roderick Williams

Dominic Muldowney: Five cabaret songs
Adlestrop (Edward Thomas); At Last the Secret is Out, Foxtrot, Funeral Blues (WH Auden);
Uffington (John Betjeman) *

Dominic Muldowney: Two Shakespeare settings
Winter, Fear No More

Dominic Muldowney: Smooth between sea and land (World premiere / BCMG commission) *

Howard Skempton: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (World premiere / Maurice and Sheila Millward commission)

*BCMG Sound Investment commissions 2011

BCMG premiere Skempton’s setting of Coleridge’s masterpiece The Rime of the Ancient Mariner in a programme also featuring a series of songs by Dominic Muldowney, former Music Director of the National theatre.

There will be a free pre-concert talk from 7-7.30pm with Stephen Newbould, Howard Skempton and Dominic Muldowney. Open to all ticket holders.

Box Office: 0121 345 0491
Online: bcmg.org.uk

Tickets: £15 full price / £12 concession / £5 students / £1 under 16s plus transaction fee *

Book in advance via: The Town Hall and Symphony Hall Box Office, Broad Street, Birmingham, B1 2EA

*£3 transaction fee, plus £1 (optional) postage, will be charged on all bookings except purchases made in person at the Town Hall or Symphony Hall Box Office.

Parallel Colour

Saturday 6 February 2016, 7.30pm
CBSO Centre

Conductor: Richard Baker
Soprano: Allison Bell *
Percussion: Julian Warburton –
Clarinet: Timothy Lines *

Claude Vivier: Trois airs pour un opéra imaginaire *
Tansy Davies: Dark Ground –
Edmund Finnis: Parallel Colour
(‘World premiere / BCMG Sound Investment commission

Rozalie Hirs: Platonic ID (UK premiere)
Jonathan Harvey: Cirrus Light *
Franco Donatoni: Still *

Framed by striking pieces for singer and ensemble, the symmetry of this exciting programme sees the Group journey towards premieres by Edmund Finnis and Rozalie Hirs, with works for solo percussion and solo clarinet either side.

There will be a free pre-concert talk from 6.30-7pm with Stephen Newbould and Edmund Finnis. Open to all ticket holders. Plus a post-concert Audience Exchange with Dr Jonathan Gross.

Acknowledgements

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BCMG Sound Investors
BCMG Foundation members

City of Birmingham Orchestral Endowment Fund,

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