

ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY CONCERT SERIES 2018 – 2019
In association with THE SOUND FESTIVAL 2018

NEW VOICES
with PETE STOLLERY (sound diffusion)

BUTCHART CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
Thursday 1st November, 2018

NEW VOICES presented six pieces by young electro acoustic composers with sound diffusion controlled for most by Professor Pete Stollery.

Annette Vande Gorne is an established composer from Belgium. **‘Ce qu’a vu le vent d’est’** takes its inspiration from the music of Debussy. Water had an important sound role in this piece as did the idea of wind and rain. The background sounds were full of swish with musical notes originally in the distance but growing and then receding. Some of these sounds had a metallic quality but there was a full orchestral tremolo. Different musical notes came through and this was definitely a music based piece as the composer suggested.

Elainie Lillios is another well established composer, this time from Ohio in the USA. **‘Dreams in the Desert’** was in at least three sections. To begin with, water especially bubbling water was paramount. I suppose that in the desert that is exactly what you would dream of. Music was heard almost subliminally in the background. There was a sense of continuous development and then in a second section dry crackling took over. More percussive music filtered through with waves of full orchestral sound. In a third section soft bell like sounds and distant voices took over.

The next two composers were centred in Birmingham although Brona Martin now teaches in Southampton. **‘Nightscape’** used quiet background insect sounds to set the atmosphere, crickets perhaps. Later on mechanical sounds disturbed the quiet nightscape, lorries or later more like passing planes – a bit like the 3am one in Aberdeen just as I am going to bed after writing another review. I thought this was an attractively atmospheric piece.

Roz Coull’s **‘Kunchey’** takes its title from a North Indian or Pakistani game of marbles and indeed those marbles rolling could be heard quite clearly. There was running water perhaps and just the merest suggestion of voices. Later the click of the marbles could be heard along with voices singing? A sustained note completed the piece.

‘Homo Machina’ by Louise Rossiter an Aberdeen graduate now working at De Montfort University in Leicester was the piece that impressed me the most. It is part of the suite *Der Industriepalast*. Louise writes that she was inspired by Fritz Kahn’s life-sized poster, *‘Der Mensch als Industriepalast’*. Full of mechanical sounds, Morse code, klaxons or car horns I felt the sounds were assembled in a very musical way making this a kind of industrial symphony.

‘White Velvet’ by Bea Dunsmore took us to a quite different world. The words at the head of her programme note could be clearly heard, *“Look through the frosted window, a Pine Marten dashes upon the white velvet”*. The white velvet is of course the snow and we could hear the feet of two people crunching through that snow. Voices of a man and woman could be heard but only some of the words were clear. Elsewhere only the timbre and the rhythms of the voices mattered. They were used musically in that sense. The outdoors atmosphere was powerful in the piece and finally one sentence came through with special clarity to conclude the work, *“Red squirrels always travel light”*. An interesting thought to go of home and think about.

I enjoyed the considerable variety of method and the different sound worlds evoked by all these female composers. We remember that the compositions of female composers is one of the principal themes of this year’s **sound**.