

# MAHLER

in miniature



Presented by

**MAHLER PLAYERS** mp

BACH arr. Webern

Ricecar a 6

WEBERN

Symphony Op. 21

STUART MACRAE

Birth-Rebirth (New Commission)

MAHLER

Das Lied von der Erde

Karina Lucas mezzo-soprano, Luke Sinclair tenor  
Tomas Leakey conductor

Ullapool, Findhorn, Inverness

27th, 29th, 30th April 2016

Welcome to this evening's concert.

We are excited to be giving the first three performances of a newly commissioned work, *Birth-Rebirth*, by Inverness-born composer Stuart MacRae. The concept of rebirth – spiritual and creative – is one which ties in very closely with Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, on which we are delighted to collaborate with mezzo-soprano Karina Lucas and tenor Luke Sinclair. No one knows what kind of music Mahler would have gone on to write had he not died in 1911 at the age of fifty, but in some ways Anton Webern continues the line of Mahler more closely than anyone else. We present his Symphony Op. 21 and his astonishing orchestration of Bach's 'Ricercar a 6' from the *Musical Offering*.

We pay our first visit to two new venues in Ullapool and Findhorn and hope therefore to be playing for many people who have not heard us before. We would also like to extend a special welcome to our Patron, Sir Brian McMaster, and also to our regular audience and all those who have supported us, in a big or a small way, to make these concerts possible.

*The beloved earth all over everywhere blossoms forth in spring and greens up anew!  
Everywhere and forever brightly blue the horizons, eternally...ever... Gustav Mahler, 1908*

## PROGRAMME

### **J. S. Bach: Ricercar a 6 from the *Musical Offering* (arr. Webern)**

#### **Anton Webern: Symphony Op. 21**

I. *Ruhig schreitend*

II. *Variationen*

#### **Stuart MacRae: *Birth-Rebirth* (New Commission)**

*Interval*

#### **Gustav Mahler: *Das Lied von der Erde* (arr. Cortese)**

I. *Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde*

II. *Der Einsame im Herbst*

III. *Von der Jugend*

IV. *Von der Schönheit*

V. *Der Trunkene im Frühling*

VI. *Der Abschied*

Karina Lucas mezzo-soprano  
Luke Sinclair tenor

Tomas Leakey conductor

**J. S. BACH** (1685 – 1750) Ricercar a 6 from the *Musical Offering* BWV 1079 (arr. Webern)

*The six-voice Ricercar is among the greatest achievements of Western European civilization.* Charles Rosen, 1999

In May 1747 Bach made a rare journey from his home in Leipzig to visit Frederick the Great, King of Prussia from 1740 – 1786, in Potsdam, near Berlin. The purpose of the trip was to examine and try out the palace's new pianos. These instruments (known as fortepianos) had only recently been invented. The King, who was himself an amateur composer and gifted flautist, wanted a display of Bach's reputed skill as an improviser and so gave him, on the spot, a theme on which to play a fugue. Bach did so, improvising a three voice fugue. Asked subsequently for a six voice fugue Bach politely said he would need more time. He travelled home and two months later had completed the *Musical Offering*, a large collection of pieces based on this 'Royal' theme. The work included ten canons, a trio sonata featuring the flute and two fugues, which were both given the archaic title 'Ricercar'. The first of these, the 'Ricercar a 3' is in three voices and is likely to be similar or identical to the fugue Bach had improvised in the court of Frederick the Great. The second, the 'Ricercar a 6' which will be performed this evening, is in six voices and is one of the most extraordinary displays of contrapuntal skill, as well as sheer beauty of music, ever produced.

Like many composers, Webern had a thorough knowledge of the works of Bach and he regularly conducted Bach's music in the decade or so before 1934/35 when he orchestrated the Ricercar a 6. Orchestrations of Bach were by no means a novel thing at this time - for example Elgar and Schoenberg had both recently orchestrated major organ works - however Webern's arrangement is not only an orchestration but also a re-imagining. Although he does not change a single note from the original, Webern orchestrates in such a way that each musical line or 'voice' is constantly exchanged between different instruments, resulting in a perpetual, kaleidoscopic variation of the timbre. It is a use of the *Klangfarbenmelodie* (literally 'tone-colour-melody') technique developed by Schoenberg. Webern also used this way of orchestrating in his original works (notably the first movement of the Symphony Op. 21) and therefore listening to the Ricercar can help to make comprehension of the Symphony easier. Webern also adds detailed instructions of dynamics as well as a number of tempo and rubato markings.

The first performance was in April 1935 in London with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Webern himself conducting.

*Programme note by Tomas Leakey*

**ANTON WEBERN** (1883 - 1945) Symphony Op. 21

*Doomed to failure in a deaf world of ignorance and indifference, he inexorably kept on cutting out his diamonds, his dazzling diamonds, of whose mines he had a perfect knowledge.* Stravinsky on Webern, 1945

The traditional label given to Webern within the Second Viennese School is that his music pointed to the future, paving the way for techniques used by avant-garde composers such as Boulez, Stockhausen and Cage in the 1950s and 60s. The assumption is made that his

music is largely abstract, mathematical and, above all, 'difficult' – perhaps to be admired more on the page than in realized sound. Whilst there may be some truth in this regarding a small number of his later works, it misses an important part of Webern's makeup as a composer and human being. He was an incurable Romantic, obsessed with Wagner, and writing numerous sumptuous Lieder in the style of Strauss and Wolf. He was a passionate follower of Gustav Mahler. Webern's letters imply that much of his mature music was intimately connected to his sense of 'Heimat' ('home'), which meant his parents' idyllic 'Preglhof' estate and the Austrian mountains (he was, like Mahler himself, a very keen hill-walker). Equally important in his later music was the sense of loss and nostalgia in relation to the death of his mother in 1906, when Webern was only twenty-three, and his father's sale of the estate in 1912.

Notwithstanding the above, there is no doubt that the current work features a high degree of abstraction. Lasting only ten minutes, the Symphony Op. 21 was composed in 1927/28 and premiered in New York in December 1929. It was written using the 'twelve-tone' technique developed by Schoenberg in the early 1920s. Characteristically of Webern, this work displays an extreme economy of means. For example, although it is scored for nine instruments, it is all written strictly in two, three or four 'voices', with each line (as in the Ricercar a 6) constantly exchanged between instruments. This is not the place for a detailed description of the techniques that Webern used, but the most important thing to point out is the regular appearance of palindromes and, above all, canons. Indeed, Op. 21 has been described by Webern scholar Kathryn Bailey as "an anthology of canonic techniques rivalling Bach's *The Art of Fugue* in its comprehensiveness and ingenuity". However, it is only possible to appreciate this extraordinary skill in full by careful study of the score because Webern frequently ensures that the canons and palindromes are not aurally perceivable. Like with any great composer, his technique is there to serve the music not the other way round.

Composer George Benjamin vividly describes the effect of all this: "*Gone is the mono-directional thrust of Classical and Romantic music; in its place a world of rotations and reflections, opening myriad paths for the listener to trace through textures of luminous clarity yet beguiling ambiguity*".

*Programme note by Tomas Leakey*

### **STUART MACRAE** (b. 1976) *Birth-Rebirth* (New Commission)

The idea of writing a new piece to sit alongside *Das Lied von der Erde* and Webern's Symphony led me to something that could be symphonic in its own way, despite its modest scale. So the piece contrasts sections of music that move at various different speeds, each of which gathers momentum and then gives birth to either a new idea or a new version of an earlier one. The piece ends with nervous fragments of fast music against a background of overlapping, slowly changing chords, ending – perhaps – just before the beginning of another regeneration.

*Programme note by Stuart MacRae*

*This new commission has been made possible by the Britten-Pears Foundation and the RVW Trust.*

**GUSTAV MAHLER** (1860 – 1911) *Das Lied von der Erde* (arr. Cortese)

*Das Lied von der Erde* is the most marvellous creation that exists...it cannot be described in words. What power exerts itself here! Anton Webern, November 1911 in a letter written following the premiere of *Das Lied*.

*Das Lied von der Erde*, regarded by many as Mahler's most perfect work, was composed in the summer of 1908. It was an astonishing response to the devastating personal crises of the previous year. His resignation from the Vienna Court Opera, under pressure from the anti-Semitic elements of the Viennese press and establishment, was closely followed by the tragic death of his eldest daughter Maria from scarlet fever. Soon afterwards a routine medical check-up uncovered a heart-valve defect which, whilst not terminal in itself, left him susceptible to fatal infections such as the one which ultimately killed him in 1911. Almost as damaging as the diagnosis itself were the doctor's orders that came with it: Mahler was forbidden from taking the long and vigorous walks in the hills which he considered so essential to his ability to compose. "At a single stroke", he wrote to Bruno Walter in 1907, "I have lost any calm and peace of mind I ever achieved. I stand *vis-à-vis de rien*. ('face-to-face with nothing')."

It is not surprising therefore that *Das Lied von der Erde*, and in particular its last movement *Der Abschied* ('The Farewell'), is sometimes viewed as Mahler's own farewell to the world. However, the summer of 1908 when *Das Lied* was composed in six miraculous weeks was as much a time of re-birth for Mahler as anything else. He had a new position as Music Director of the Metropolitan Opera in New York, which afforded him a smaller workload with more time to compose. He had gradually adjusted to the new health regime. Above all, the development in his musical language from the 8<sup>th</sup> Symphony of 1906 to *Das Lied von der Erde* of 1908 is profound.

At the same time, it is clear that this is a work deeply concerned with human mortality. The texts are taken from a volume published in 1907 by Hans Bethge called *Die chinesische Flöte* ("The Chinese Flute"), a collection of free translations of ancient Chinese poetry from the era of the Tang dynasty (c.600 – 900AD). Mahler must have been particularly receptive to their sense of disenchantment when he received the book in the autumn of 1907.

The best way to gain an understanding of *Das Lied von der Erde* is to read the texts. There are six movements, sung alternately by the tenor and mezzo-soprano, the last of which takes the same time to perform as the first five combined. A fusion between song-cycle and symphony, scholar Donald Mitchell has even compared the structure of the last movement, with its alternation of recitatives, 'arias' and *tuttis*, to a Bach cantata. The music, whilst instantly recognisable as Mahler, also makes use of the pentatonic scale, heavily used in Chinese folk music, and there is evidence that Mahler listened to original Chinese music on phonograph cylinders during the year he was composing *Das Lied*.

Tragically, Mahler never had the chance to conduct this work. The premiere was given in November 1911, six months after his death, in Munich, with Bruno Walter conducting the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra. Anton Webern and Alban Berg were in the audience.

*Programme note by Tomas Leakey*

## **I. Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde**

Schon winkt der Wein im gold'nen  
Pokale,  
doch trinkt noch nicht, erst sing' ich  
euch ein Lied!  
Das Lied vom Kummer soll auflachend  
in die Seele euch klingen.  
Wenn der Kummer naht,  
liegen wüst die Gärten der Seele,  
welkt hin und stirbt die Freude, der  
Gesang.  
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.

Herr dieses Hauses!  
Dein Keller birgt die Fülle des goldenen  
Weins!  
Hier, diese Laute nenn' ich mein!  
Die Laute schlagen und die Gläser  
leeren,  
das sind die Dinge, die zusammen  
passen.  
Ein voller Becher Weins zur rechten Zeit  
Ist mehr wert als alle Reiche dieser  
Erde!  
Dunkel is das Leben, ist der Tod.

Das Firmament blaut ewig und die Erde  
wird lange fest steh'n und aufblüh'n im  
Lenz.  
Du aber, Mensch, wie lang lebst denn  
du?  
Nicht hundert Jahre darfst du dich  
ergötzen  
an all dem morschen Tande dieser Erde!  
Seht dort hinab! Im Mondschein auf den  
Gräbern  
hockt eine wildgespenstische Gestalt .  
Ein Aff ist's! Hört ihr, wie sein Heulen  
hinausgellt  
in den süßen Duft des Lebens!  
Jetzt nehmt den Wein! Jetzt ist es Zeit,  
Genossen!  
Leert eure gold'nen Becher zu Grund!  
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod!

## **II. Der Einsamme im Herbst**

Herbstnebel wallen bläulich überm See,  
vom Reif bezogen stehen alle Gräser;  
man meint, ein Künstler habe Staub von  
Jade  
über die feinen Blüten ausgestreut.

Der süße Duft der Blumen ist verflogen;  
ein kalter Wind beugt ihre Stengel nieder  
bald werden die verwelkten, gold'nen  
Blätter  
der Lotosblüten auf dem Wasser zieh'n.

## **The Drinking Song of Earth's Sorrow**

Now the wine beckons in the golden  
goblet,  
but do not drink yet, first I'll sing you a  
song!  
The song of sorrow, bursting with  
laughter, shall resound in your soul.  
When sorrow comes, then lie waste the  
gardens of the soul,  
then dry up and die both joy and  
singing.  
Dark is life, and also death.

Master of this House!  
Your cellar harbours the wealth of  
golden wine!  
Here, this lute I call mine!  
To stroke the lute and empty the  
glasses,  
those are the things that go together  
well.  
A brimming cup of wine at the right time  
is worth more than all the riches of this  
earth!  
Dark is life, and also Death!

The heavens are ever blue, and the  
earth will long abide  
and blossom forth in spring.  
But you, O man, how long then do you  
live?  
Not even for a hundred years may you  
delight  
in all the rotten trumpery of this earth!  
Look down there! In the moonlight on  
the graves  
crouches a wildly-ghostlike-eerie figure!  
It's a monkey! Just hear how his howling  
shrieks forth into the sweet scent of life!  
And now for the wine, now it's time,  
comrades!  
Empty your golden cups to the bottom!  
Dark is life, and also death.

## **The Lonely One in Autumn**

Autumn hazes well up bluish o'er the  
lake,  
covered with frost stands all the grass;  
one would think an artist had strewed a  
jade powder over the fine blossoms.  
The sweet scent of the flowers has  
vanished;  
a cold wind bends their stems down.  
Soon will the withered, golden petals  
of the lotus blossom float upon the  
water.

Mein Herz ist müde. Meine kleine Lampe  
erlosch mit Knistern, es gemahnt mich  
an den Schlaf.

Ich komm' zu dir, traute Ruhestätte!  
Ja, gib mir Ruh', ich hab' Erquickung  
not!

Ich weine viel in meinen Einsamkeiten.  
Der Herbst in meinem Herzen währt zu  
lange.

Sonne der Liebe, willst du nie mehr  
scheinen, um meine bitteren Tränen mild  
aufzutrocknen?

### **III. Von der Jugend**

Mitten in dem kleinen Teiche  
steht ein Pavillon aus grünem  
und aus weißem Porzellan.

Wie der Rücken eines Tigers  
wölbt die Brücke sich aus Jade  
zu dem Pavillon hinüber.

In dem Häuschen sitzen Freunde,  
schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern,  
manche schreiben Verse nieder.  
Ihre seidnen Ärmel gleiten  
rückwärts, ihre seidnen Mützen  
hocken lustig tief im Nacken.

Auf des kleinen Teiches stiller  
Wasserfläche zeigt sich alles  
wunderlich im Spiegelbilde.

Alles auf dem Kopfe stehend  
in dem Pavillon aus grünem  
und aus weißem Porzellan;  
wie ein Halbmond scheint die Brücke,  
umgekehrt der Bogen. Freunde,  
schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern.

### **IV. Von der Schönheit**

Junge Mädchen pflücken Blumen,  
pflücken Lotosblumen an dem  
Uferrande. Zwischen Büschen  
und Blättern sitzen sie,  
sammeln Blüten in den Schoß und rufen  
sich einander Neckereien zu.

Gold'ne Sonne webt um die Gestalten,  
spiegelt sie im blanken Wasser wider.  
Sonne spiegelt ihre schlanken Glieder,  
ihre süßen Augen wider,  
Und der Zephyr hebt mit  
Schmeichelkosen das Gewebe  
ihrer Ärmel auf, führt den Zauber  
ihrer Wohlgerüche durch die Luft.

My heart is tired. My little lamp went out  
with a crackle; it reminds me of  
sleeping.

I come to you, beloved resting place!  
Yes, give me peace, I have need of  
refreshment!

I weep a great deal in my loneliness.  
The autumn in my heart goes on too  
long.

Sunlight of love, will you never again  
shine,  
my bitter tears thus gently to dry up?

### **Of Youth**

Midway in the little pond  
stands a pavilion made of green  
and white porcelain.

Like the back of a tiger  
arches the jade bridge  
to the pavilion over there.

In the cottage friends sit,  
beautifully dressed, drinking, chatting,  
several are jotting down verses.  
Their silken sleeves slide backwards,  
their silk caps crouch amusingly low  
on the nape of the neck.

On the little pond's still water surface,  
everything appears curious  
in mirror image.

Everything is standing on its head  
in the pavilion of green  
and white porcelain;  
like a half-moon glimmers the bridge,  
its arch upside-down. Friends,  
beautifully dressed, drinking, chatting.

### **Of Beauty**

Young maidens are picking flowers,  
picking lotus blossoms  
on the shore's edge. Amidst bushes  
and leaves they sit, collecting blossoms  
in their laps and calling  
teasing banter to each other.

Golden sunlight weaves about the  
figures, mirroring them upon the  
smooth water. The sun reflects their  
slender limbs, mirrors their sweet eyes,  
and the zephyr, with coaxing caresses  
lifts up the fabric of their sleeves,  
and wafts the magic  
of their lovely scent through the air.

O sieh, was tummeln sich für schöne  
Knaben  
dort an dem Uferrand auf mut'gen  
Rossen,  
weithin glänzend wie die Sonnenstrahlen  
schon zwischen dem Geäst der grünen  
Weiden  
trabt das jungfrische Volk einher!

Das Roß des einen wiehert fröhlich auf,  
und scheut, und saust dahin,  
über Blumen, Gräser, wanken hin die  
Hufe,  
sie zerstampfen jäh im Sturm die  
hingesunk'nen Blüten,  
hei! Wie flattern im Taumel seine  
Mähnen,  
dampfen heiß die Nüstern!

Gold'ne Sonne webt um die Gestalten,  
spiegelt sie im blanken Wasser wider.  
Und die schönste von den Jungfrau'n  
sendet  
lange Blicke ihm der Sehnsucht nach.  
Ihre stolze Haltung is nur Verstellung.  
In dem Funkeln ihrer großen Augen,  
in dem Dunkel ihres heißen Blicks  
schwingt klagend noch die Erregung  
ihres Herzens nach.

### **V. Der Trunkene im Frühling**

Wenn nur ein Traum das Leben ist,  
warum denn Müh und Plag' !?  
Ich trinke, bis ich nicht mehr kann,  
den ganzen lieben Tag!

Und wenn ich nicht mehr trinken kann,  
weil Kehl' und Seele voll,  
so tauml' ich bis zu meiner Tür  
und schlafe wundervoll!

Was hör' ich beim Erwachen? Horch!  
Ein Vogel singt im Baum.  
Ich frag' ihn, ob schon Frühling sei.  
Mir ist als wie im Traum.

Der Vogel zwitschert: "Ja! Der Lenz ist  
da,  
sei kommen über Nacht!"  
Aus tiefstem Schauen lauscht' ich auf,  
der Vogel singt und lacht!

Ich fülle mir den Becher neu  
und leer' ihn bis zum Grund  
und singe, bis der Mond erglänzt  
am schwarzen Firmament!

O see, how they romp about,  
the handsome lads  
there at the shore's edge on high-  
spirited horses,  
gleaming far off like the sun's rays;  
now among the boughs of the green  
willows the fresh young clan is trotting  
over here!

The horse of one starts neighing joyfully,  
and balks, and dashes off,  
with grass and flowers  
under staggering hooves  
that quickly trample in tumult  
the downfallen blossoms,  
Ho! how frenzied flutters his mane  
and hotly steam his nostrils!

Golden sunlight weaves about the  
figures,  
mirroring them upon the smooth water.  
And the loveliest of the maidens casts  
long glances of yearning after him.  
Her proud demeanor is merely pretence.  
In the sparkling of her wide eyes,  
in the darkness of her hot glance  
still lingers plaintively the arousal  
of her heart.

### **The Drunk in Springtime**

If life is but a dream,  
why then toil and torment?  
I drink 'til I no longer can,  
the whole livelong day!

And when I can drink no more  
Since throat and soul are full,  
then I stagger up to my door  
and sleep wonderfully!

What do i hear upon awakening? Listen!  
A bird is singing in the tree  
I ask him whether it's spring already.  
For me it's like being in a dream.

The bird twitters: "Yes! Spring is here,  
it's come overnight!"  
In deepest gazing I eavesdropped on  
him,  
the bird sings and laughs!

I fill myself another cup  
and empty it to the bottom  
and sing until the moon appears  
in the dark heavens!



Und wenn ich nicht mehr singen kann,  
so schlaf ich wieder ein.  
Was geht mich denn der Frühling an!?  
Laßt mich betrunken sein!

## **VI. Der Abschied**

Die Sonne scheidet hinter dem Gebirge.  
In alle Täler steigt der Abend nieder  
mit seinen Schatten, die voll Kühlung  
sind.

O sieh! Wie eine Silberbarke schwebt  
der Mond am blauen Himmelssee herauf.  
Ich spüre eines feinen Windes Weh'n  
hinter den dunklen Fichten!

Der Bach singt voller Wohllaut durch das  
Dunkel.  
Die Blumen blassen im Dämmerchein.  
Die Erde atmet voll von Ruh' und Schlaf.  
Alle Sehnsucht will nun träumen,  
die müden Menschen geh'n heimwärts,  
um im Schlaf vergess'nes Glück  
und Jugend neu zu lernen!  
Die Vögel hocken still in ihren Zweigen.  
Die Wäلت schläft ein!

Es wehet kühl im Schatten meiner  
Fichten.  
Ich stehe hier und harre meines  
Freundes.  
Ich harre sein zum letzten Lebewohl.

Ich sehne mich, o Freund, an deiner  
Seite  
die Schönheit dieses Abends zu genießen  
Wo bleibst du? Du läßt mich lang allein!

Ich wandle auf und nieder mit meiner  
Laute auf Wegen,  
die vom weichen Grase schwellen.  
O Schönheit, o ewigen Liebens,  
lebenstrunk'ne Welt!

Er stieg vom Pferd und reichte ihm den  
Trunk des Abschieds dar. Er fragte ihn,  
wohin er führe und auch warum es  
müßte sein.  
Er sprach, seine Stimme war umflort:  
Du, mein Freund, mir war auf dieser  
Welt das Glück nicht hold!

Wohin ich geh'? Ich geh', ich wandre in  
die Berge.  
Ich suche Ruhe für mein einsam Herz!

And when I can sing no more,  
then I fall asleep again!  
What's spring got to do with me!?  
Let me be drunk!

## **The Farewell**

The sun departs behind the mountain.  
Into all valleys the evening descends  
with its shadows that are filled with  
coolness.

O see! how like a silver ship soars the  
moon, up from below, upon the blue  
lake of heaven.  
I sense the breath of a gentle wind  
behind the dark pine trees.

The brook sings, full of melodious sound,  
through the darkness.  
The flowers pale in the twilight.  
The earth breathes full of peace and  
sleep. All yearning will now dream,  
the tired men go homeward,  
thus in sleep to learn anew  
their forgotten happiness and youth!  
The birds crouch silently on their  
branches. The world falls asleep!

It wafts cool in the shadow of my pine  
trees.  
I stand here and wait for my friend.  
I await his last farewell.

I long, O friend, at your side  
to enjoy the beauty of the evening.  
Where are you?  
You leave me long alone!

I wander to and fro with my lute  
on paths swelling with soft grass.  
O Beauty,  
O, through eternal love-and-life,  
drunken world!

He dismounted from the horse and  
offered him the drink of farewell. He  
asked him where he was going and also  
why, why it had to be.  
He spoke, his voice was veiled:  
You, my friend, to me in this world  
fortune was not favourable!

Where am I going? I go and wander in  
the mountains,  
I seek peace for my lonely heart!

Ich wandle nach der Heimat, meiner  
Stätte!  
Ich werde niemals in Ferne schweifen.  
Still ist mein Herz und harret seiner  
Stunde!

Die liebe Erde allüberall blüht auf im  
Lenz und grünt aufs neu! Allüberall  
und ewig blauen licht die Fernen,  
ewig, ewig!

After Hans Bethge's "*Die chinesische  
Flöte*"

I wander to the homeland,  
my abode!  
I will never more roam in the distance.  
Still is my heart and awaits its hour!

The beloved earth all over everywhere  
blossoms forth in spring  
and greens up anew! Everywhere  
and forever brightly blue the horizons,  
eternally...ever...

*English translation by Stephen E Hefling*

## **STUART MACRAE – composer**



Born in Inverness in 1976, Stuart MacRae has established himself as one of the most distinctive composers of his generation, writing music of elemental power and emotional subtlety. His works include a Violin Concerto (2001), *Hamartia* for cello and ensemble (2004), and *Gaudete* for soprano and orchestra (2008), all of which have been performed at the BBC Proms. Works for the stage include the opera *The Assassin Tree* (2006) to a libretto by Simon Armitage, and the dance-opera *Echo and Narcissus* (2007). The opera *Ghost Patrol* (2012), a collaboration with writer Louise Welsh for Scottish Opera and Music Theatre Wales, won the 2013 South Bank Sky Arts Award for Opera and was shortlisted for an Olivier Award.

Stuart's music has also been performed at the Linbury Studio of the Royal Opera House and the Edinburgh International Festival, and by ensembles including the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Ensemble, Hebrides Ensemble, BCMG and London Sinfonietta, as well as numerous orchestras.

Stuart was Composer in Association with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra from 1999 to 2003. He was resident composer at the Spannungen Kammermusikfest in Heimbach, Germany in 2003, and Edinburgh Festival Creative Fellow at the University of Edinburgh from 2005 to 2006. From 2006 to 2007 he was a resident composer at Internationales Künstlerhaus Villa Concordia in Bamberg, Germany.

Recent projects include the opera *The Devil Inside*, written for Music Theatre Wales and Scottish Opera, which received its premiere in 2016, and *Parable*, a setting of Wilfred Owen's poetry to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War I commissioned by the Hebrides Ensemble. Stuart is currently working on a new piece for the Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, and a second piano sonata for pianist Simon Smith.

Photo credit – *Loudon MacRae Photography*

## **KARINA LUCAS – mezzo-soprano**



Karina Lucas is from London and is of Spanish and English parentage. She studied at the National Opera Studio, where her studies were supported by the Peter Moores Foundation and Glyndebourne Festival Opera. Previously, she trained at the Royal Northern College of Music where she graduated with a First Class Honours Degree and Distinction for her Post Graduate Diploma.

She has performed in three of Jonathan Dove's Operas: the role of Flora (The Enchanted Pig) at the Linbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House and at the New Victory Theatre, 42nd Street, New York; the title role (The Adventures of Pinocchio) for Opera North and Sara (Tobias and the Angel) for the Young Vic/Opera Group of which a disc has recently been released on Chandos. Other roles include Third Lady (Die Zauberflöte) for Opera North; Witch (Macbeth) for Scottish Opera Go Round; Dorabella (Cosi fan tutte), Kitchen Boy and Third Nymph (Rusalka), Leila (Iolanthe), Maddalena (Rigoletto), Wowkle (La Fanciulla del West) and Smeraldina (The Love of Three Oranges) for Grange Park Opera; Dorabella for the Ryedale Festival and Sesto (Giulio Cesare) for the Yorke Trust.

As a Park Lane Group Young Artist Karina made her debut at the Purcell Room in January 2007 with duo partner Simon Lane, since when she has given recitals at the Brighton Festival, Leeds Lieder Festival, Ripon Cathedral, St. John's Smith Square, St. James's Piccadilly, Oundle International Festival and been invited to perform at the Wigmore Hall. Karina and Simon were amongst the small selection of artists chosen and recommended by Making Music in the Concert Promoters Network Brochure 2009-2010. They released their first disc 'From the Old World to the New', in collaboration with violist Rebecca Jones, at the end of 2011 on the Sonimage label. Karina presented a special recital in tribute to Kathleen Ferrier in 2012, to mark the centenary of her birth, with performances which included St. John's Smith Square and the Oxford Lieder Spring Series.

Other concert performances include works by Nicola Le Fanu, Judith Weir and Anthony Powers with the contemporary music group Okeanos (Gloucester Three Choirs Festival, Bmic The Cutting edge, Guildhall and Cardiff University); Young Artist recitals (Aix-en-Provence Summer Festival); Vaughan Williams' Serenade to Music (Wigmore Hall); Berkeley's Four Poems by St Teresa of Avila (Lake District Summer Music); Mahler's Songs of a Wayfarer (Stockport Symphony Orchestra) and Elgar's Sea Pictures (Bath Philharmonia).

Karina most recently performed the roles of Rosie Probert and Mrs Cherry Owen in the new opera Under Milk Wood by John Metcalf. Karina sang at the New York launch of the CD of the opera, which has been released on Tŷ Cerdd Records. The opera was a finalist in the Best World Premiere category of this year's International Opera Awards

*Tashmina Artists manages Karina's concert work, worldwide. Her opera engagements are handled by Stafford Law.*

## **LUKE SINCLAIR – tenor**



Luke Sinclair grew up in London and has recently completed his final year at the Alexander Gibson Opera School at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under the tutelage of Scott Johnson. He was generously supported by an RCS foundation scholarship, the Jim Forson singing bursary and the Sir Richard Stapley Trust.

Operatic roles include Rodolfo *La Bohème* (Edinburgh Grand Opera), Le Dancaire *Carmen* (Scottish Opera – Cover), Chevalier de la Force *Les dialogues de Carmélites* (Scottish Ballet), Fenton *Sir John in Love*, Le Mari *Les mamelles de Tirésias* (RCS), Don José *Carmen* (Fife Opera), Blues Singer *Paul Bunyan* (British Youth Opera), Lysander *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Co-opera Co), and Don Ottavio *Don Giovanni* (Bristol Operatic Society).

He was recently a major prize winner at the Kammeroper Schloss Rheinsberg International Singing Competition and performed the tenor lead 'Julian' in the World Premiere of Marc-Aurel Floros '*Adriana*' in Rheinsberg, Germany in the summer of 2015. Luke was also Highly Commended in the Final of the Ye Cronies Opera Award.

Luke has recently appeared as the tenor soloist in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (Aberdeen Chamber Orchestra). He will cover Tebaldo *I Capuleti e I Montecchi* at the Buxton Festival and will sing Rodolfo *La Bohème* for Szene 12 in Dresden, Germany later this year alongside appearances at Perth Concert Hall and the Edinburgh Festival.

## **TOMAS LEAKEY – conductor**

Tomas Leakey began his musical life as a trombonist in the Highland Regional Youth Orchestra. He later joined the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, playing under such conductors as Vernon Handley and Christopher Adey. At the University of Cambridge he studied Natural Sciences but was also very active on the music scene as a pianist and trombonist where he played in all the main orchestras and ensembles. In his third year he took up conducting and was the director of Christ's College Orchestra.



Tomas studied conducting with the late George Hurst at the Sherborne (formerly Canford) Summer School of Music and from 2012 – 2013 he studied with Denise Ham at the Blackheath Conservatoire in London. In the summers of 2012 and 2013 Tomas was one of the student conductors at Aberystwyth Musicfest, working with Toby Purser and the Orion Orchestra and in February 2016 he was an active participant in the prestigious Järvi Winter Academy in Estonia. Tomas has also studied privately with Susan Dingle and, most recently, with Adrian Brown. In March 2013 he set up and conducted an educational project in the Highlands, in which a full performance of Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* was taken to several local schools. In June 2013 he founded The Mahler Players, for three

performances of Mahler's Symphony No. 4. The project, *Mahler in Miniature*, has continued with performances of works including the 1st Symphony, many of the song cycles and, most recently, the 5th Symphony. Tomas was also responsible for leading the Mahler Players through a second educational project in autumn 2015, featuring William Walton's *Façade*.

Tomas was the organ scholar at Inverness Cathedral for a year from September 2012 to September 2013. As well as learning the rudiments of the organ and singing bass, he gained his first experiences of choral conducting.

Described by reviewers as 'a highly capable musician and a talent to watch', Tomas continues to play the trombone and piano in addition to his conducting and is currently undertaking study in solo playing and accompaniment with the pianist Eugene Asti.

## **THE MAHLER PLAYERS**

### **1<sup>ST</sup> VIOLINS:**

Friedegund Riehm (leader),  
Anne Wood  
Emma Donald

### **2<sup>ND</sup> VIOLINS:**

David Murray, Hazel Younger

### **VIOLAS:**

Jonathan Rutter, Rachel Farmer

### **CELLOS:**

Rick Lusher, Natalie Kilgallen

### **DOUBLE BASS:**

Tam Hardy

### **FLUTE/PICCOLO:**

Catherine O'Rourke

### **OBOE/COR ANLGAIS**

Leslie Callander, Keith Redwood

### **CLARINET, BASS/Eb CLARINET**

Mhairi Callander, James Ross

### **BASSOON/CONTRABASSOON:**

Bruce Gordon

### **HORN:**

Andy Evans, Morag Redwood

### **TRUMPET/HORN:**

Rob Farmer

### **TROMBONE:**

Mark Bell

### **PERCUSSION/TIMPANI**

Alison Russell, Gordon Tocher, Keith  
Redwood

### **HARP:**

Erica Sinclair

### **HARMONIUM/CELESTE:**

Gordon Tocher

We hope you enjoy this evening's performance. We would be grateful if you can fill in the questionnaire, which will give you the chance to enter a prize draw for free tickets to future concerts. Please leave the questionnaire by the door where you picked up tickets (Ullapool and Findhorn) or with an usher (Eden Court) as you leave or alternatively post it to us (address opposite) at a later date.

The Mahler Players have exciting plans for the rest of 2016 and 2017 including performances of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Symphonies. The average cost of a Mahler Players concert series is well above what we raise through ticket sales, so in order to bring these projects to fruition we need your support. There are two main ways you can help.

Donating: If you would like to support us financially you can donate online through our Just-Giving page which can be accessed via our website: [www.mahlerplayers.co.uk](http://www.mahlerplayers.co.uk). Alternatively you can send a cheque, payable to 'Mahler Players' to the address opposite. If you are a UK tax-payer you can boost the donation by 25% by filling in the Gift Aid form opposite.

Bring your friends! The bigger the audience we get the smaller the shortfall that we have to raise by other means, so if you like what we do why not share it with others?

## **SUPPORTERS**

- The National Lottery through Creative Scotland
- The Britten-Pears Foundation
- The RVW Trust
- The Hope-Scott Trust
- The Hugh Fraser Foundation
- Highland Council
- Scott-Moncrieff Business Advisors and Accountants

## **CONTACT US**

### **Email**

[contact@mahlerplayers.co.uk](mailto:contact@mahlerplayers.co.uk)

### **Social media**

[www.facebook.com/mahlerplayers](http://www.facebook.com/mahlerplayers)  
[www.twitter.com/mahlerplayers](http://www.twitter.com/mahlerplayers)

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:**

### **Highland Chamber Orchestra**

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May, 7.30pm

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May, 3pm

Nairn Community and Arts Centre  
Strathpeffer Pavilion

**Rameau** Dance Suite

**Emma Donald** *Arthur's Seat*

**Weber** Bassoon Concerto

**Beethoven** Symphony No. 3 'Eroica'

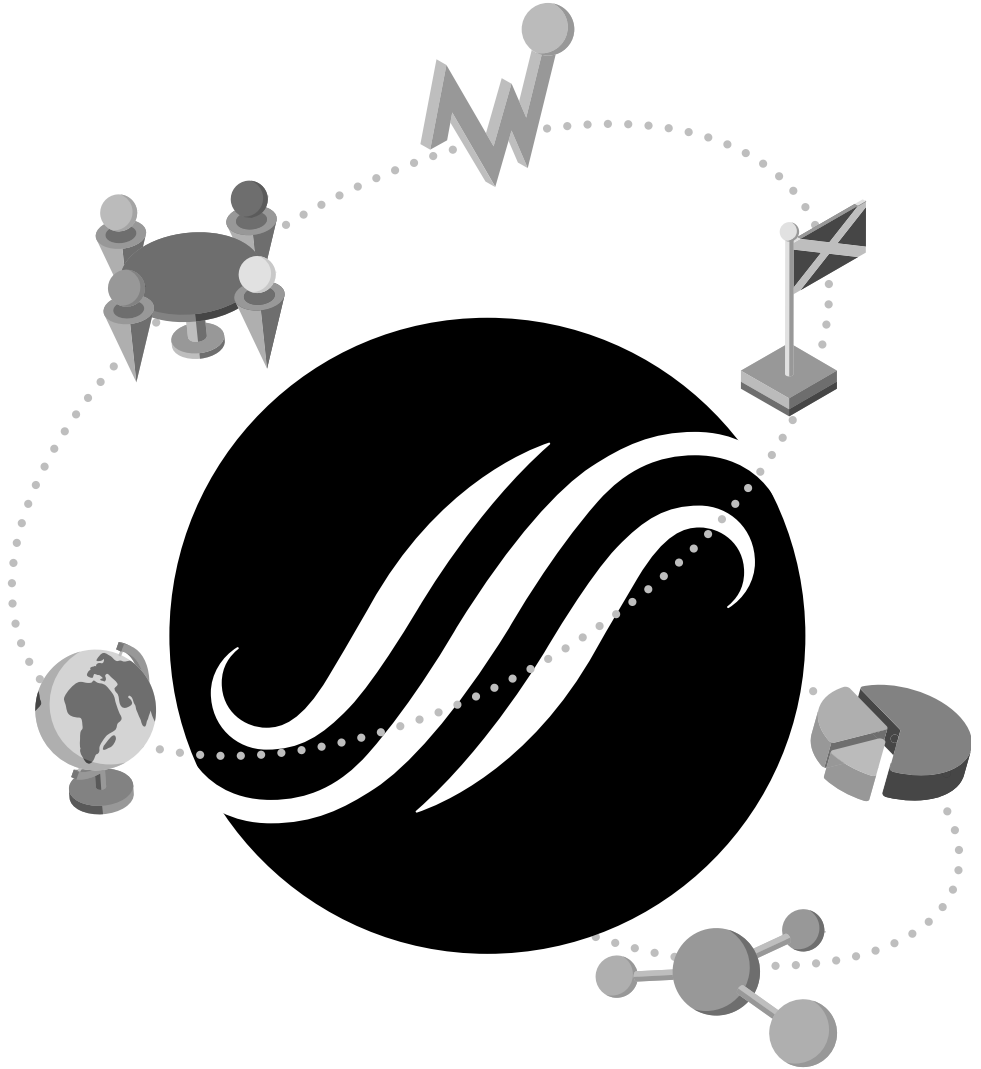
Bruce Gordon bassoon

Susan Dingle conductor

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business advisers and accountants



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