

XENIA PESTOVA

Piano

“Everything is connected. Our daily lives are a testimony to this simple wisdom – manifestations of surprising interconnections between apparent strangers, childhood experiences influencing our likes and aversions, strange laws of cause and effect; past, present and future. In music, we find it impossible to isolate ourselves from other traditions: we exist in an interconnected web that knits together musicians from bygone eras with those working today, while also stretching out a bridge to the future.”

Xenia Pestova

Gothic (2008) – NZ premiere

Ed Bennett

Gothic was written while I was artist in residence at the Irish Cultural Centre in Paris in the autumn of 2008. I lived very close to Notre Dame Cathedral and walked passed it almost everyday, occasionally dropping in to see what was going on. The music is perhaps an image of that huge, resonant space at night when it's not full of tourists, just quiet hunchbacks, ghosts and gargoyles.

Prélude: La Cathédrale engloutie (1910)

Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)

Sonatas in D minor, K9 and K10

Domenico Scarlatti (1685 - 1757)

Étude d'après Scarlatti (2002) – NZ premiere

Patricia Alessandrini

Étude No.1 takes materials directly from an existing work, Scarlatti's Sonata No. 10 in D minor, book one. The upper voice of the polyphonic line of the first measures is isolated in notes played directly on the strings (pizzicato, with glissandi), and the sequence of 32-note figures appears in its entirety. The interest of the piece lies not so much in the gestures themselves, but in the changes of color that take place in the spaces between them.

After brin (2000) – NZ premiere

Daria Dobrochna Kwiatkowska

When I struggle with a new composition, my husband jokes: “write a D!” But pitches do not matter; gestures do. Individual notes have no meaning; but groups of them have the power of stirring your senses due to relationships of distance, length, dynamics, etc. Music happens between the notes. This has always been clear to me, but never clearer than when I was asked by my late mentor and teacher Steven Stucky, along with a group of other students, to write a piece based on Berio's *brin*. It is a simple piano piece, whose pitch content consist entirely of 12 different pitches distributed in a particular order through several octaves, concentrated on small clusters of notes and at one point emphasised the dominant seventh-like sonority, giving the piece a strangely Romantic twist at its climactic point.

Six Encores:**Luciano Berio (1925 – 2003)***Brin* (1990)*Feuerklavier* (1989)*Wasserklavier* (1965)***Mind Springs (2016-17) – premiere performance* *Glenda Keam***

The initial images that preceded the composition of this work were of water springing and bubbling from the ground, and New Zealand's geysers with their accompanying babbling flow of mineral-laden water that over time build sinter structures and pathways. Also, a boiling kettle (for a cup of tea – a necessity in the compositional process); when Xenia and I sat down to look at early "chunks" of the piece last year, we drank fruit tea.

But as the piece took form it became clear this was not made of bold, grand explosions but rather a more contemplative series of leaps that were inward-looking. The work leaps (springs) between sections that are harmonically unified but texturally and gesturally quite disparate, with interruptions from some rather demanding birds, sections that motor along, and thick chordal sections like a small forest of shadowy statues.

Sechs kleine Präludien,***J.S. Bach***

No. 6 in C Minor BWV 999

INTERVAL***RCSC (2001) – NZ premiere******Annea Lockwood***

Commissioned by American pianist Sarah Cahill as one of a set of seven short pieces by women composers in honour of Ruth Crawford Seeger. The title is a near palindrome of their names, and for its pitch content the piece draws on a ten-note row from the final movement of Crawford Seeger's beautiful second string quartet.

Sechs kleine Präludien***J.S. Bach***

No. 5 in E Major BWV 937

No. 6 in E Minor BWV 938

Two and a Half Miniatures: I (2005) – NZ premiere***Heather Hindman***

This collection of pieces arose from a desire to create music based on extreme subtlety, where the listener is directed towards details that in other contexts could be easily overlooked.

Sechs kleine Präludien,***J.S. Bach***

No. 4 in A Minor BWV 942

No. 5 in C Major BWV 943

Birds and Insects (2003 - 2015) - NZ premiere

Arlene Sierris

Painted Bunting

Cikada Sketch

Titmouse

Birds and Insects is a set of two albums (some ten works in all) composed from 2003 to 2015. Each piece features distinct characteristics to fit the bird or insect of its title. *Painted Bunting* is the first movement from *Birds and Insects, Book 2*, and is dedicated to Xenia Pestova.

Sechs kleine Präludien

J.S. Bach

No. 4 in D Major, BWV 936

Prelude and Fugue No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 16

Clara Schumann

The Grey Ghost (2017) - premiere performance

Miriama Young

The Grey Ghost is a meditation in piano and electronics drawing on the ancient song of the once prolific North Island Kōkako. The bird's distinctive call closely resembles that of its possibly extinct South Island cousin, known as 'The Grey Ghost', last officially recorded at Mount Aspiring National Park, 1967. Renewed efforts are currently in place to confirm the presence or extinction of this species. (see SouthIslandKokako.org for more information).

Using your smartphone, the electronic part for this piece can be streamed by the audience during the concert performance. The App with its embedded audio is available for free download from the iOS Appstore or Google Play, by searching for *SyncSound*. Once downloaded, follow the downbeat of the Pianist to press 'play'. Download of this App, and playback during the concert, is entirely voluntary.

Recordings of North Island Kōkako were supplied by the New Zealand Department of Conservation *Te Papa Atawhai*. Other bird sounds recorded by the Composer. Thank you to Chamber Music New Zealand, and VCA & MCM at The University of Melbourne for supporting this project. Also, delighted thanks to Jessie Eastwood for recorded vocals.

Xenia Pestova's commitment and dedication to promoting music by living composers led her to commission dozens of new works and collaborate with major innovators in contemporary music. Following childhood music education in Russia, Xenia's studies took place with Judith Clark (University of Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand), Philip Mead and Ian Pace (London), Hakon Austbo (Amsterdam), Yvonne Loriod-Messiaen (Avignon and Paris), Louise Bessette (Montreal) and Sara Laimon at McGill University, where she was awarded a Doctor of Music degree. From 2011-2015 she was the Head of Performance at Bangor University, where she founded and directed the highly successful INTER/actions Festival and Symposium for interactive electronic music. Currently, she is the Director of Performance at the University of Nottingham, and continues to mentor emerging musicians in workshops at conservatories and universities around the UK, Europe, Canada, New Zealand, USA and Brazil.

This concert is presented in association with Chamber Music New Zealand.