



**Contemporary
Music
Venture**

Concert 1

Steve Rockey (Trombone)

Jonathan Godsall (Snare Drum)

Wednesday 02 February 2011

8pm Victoria Rooms

Generously supported by Bristol University Music Department, Racks Wine Bar, Monday Morning Music on Burst Radio, and the Octogenarian

The Contemporary Music Venture

The Contemporary Music Venture is a series of concerts run by postgraduate students of Bristol University Music Department. The venture aims to provide students the opportunity to have their music performed to the highest standard by the Department's finest performers at a public concert, as well as offering audiences the occasion to hear some of the best established contemporary repertoire.

The Programme

Kim – Áskell Masson

Áskell Másson is an Icelandic composer whose catalogue includes extensive writing for percussion. *Kim*, written in 2001, is an incredibly musical piece that sets the bar for what can be achieved with just a single snare drum. It makes use of a wide range of techniques, including the application of a practice pad on top of the playing surface. **JG**

Fantasy for Trombone – Malcolm Arnold (1921-2006)

Part of an instrumental series of pieces written between 1966 and 1987, Arnold eventually wrote one for all the wind instruments of the symphony orchestra as well as for guitar, harp and cello. Although often likened to the Berio *Sequenza* series of pieces, Arnold's are very different in conception, being written in 'traditional' notated style and also tonal. Starting in a sedate 6/8 time, Arnold quickly develops the opening theme, changing rhythms and wandering harmonies. This is then followed by a central lyrical section, very short, leading into a final Allegro – Presto firmly established in the key of B flat major. **SR**

Solo For Sliding Trombone (from Concert for Piano and Orchestra) – John Cage (1912-1992)

This work consists of pages 173 to 184 from Cage's score of *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*. The player can play any pages he feels necessary, and each silence is only as long as the player decides in performance. Many found objects can be used, although Cage asks for a conch shell specifically; it is used sparingly. The structure of the piece is open and therefore can be as short or as long as the player wishes: it is a masterpiece of indeterminacy. **SR**

Snarle – Laura Bell (premiere)

Snarle is a programmatic theatre piece that depicts a lion on the hunt. First the lion is on the prowl looking for his next victim. The hungry lion becomes frustrated in his search but sees something in the distance and gradually creeps up on it until it is in a full-out sprint chasing its pray. The lion, finally satisfied, relaxes after his efforts... but always alert for his next strike! **LB**

Snareata: Timmy Mallet Paints Box Bush – Arthur Keegan-Bole (premiere)

The main challenge of this piece was finding an approach to the snare drum as a solo instrument. I have tried to assert a sense of 'melody' as one of its key components. Challenging/fighting the historically-enforced tendencies of the drum has led to a

fascinating composing process - I must thank Jonathan Godsall for all of his help (and patience!) in developing the piece. **AKB**

Obsidian (two parts) - Kostas Tsioulakis (premiere)

'Obsidian' is a volcanic stone (glass) used by the Ancient Greeks and Persians to make the first primitive mirrors. Those mirrors provided a reflection that was neither accurate nor symmetrical... The idea of 'distorted reflections' and asymmetrical shapes that appeared on those ancient hand-made mirrors was the first inspiration for this two-part "dance", as I prefer to call it. Via the slow 'Lento', the hidden rock gradually starts to become visible in a dark and promising scenery. Smooth and blurry at first, it becomes glassy and sharp, as the 'Allegro' reveals the volcano's eruption and the reflective stone of Obsidian becomes active. The reflections, under the mask of the motif imitation, lie somewhere between the accuracy and the distortion of the mirror. The final part of the 'Allegro' stands as an almost absolute reflection (palindrome) of its first bars. The modes used are taken from the Eastern-Mediterranean microtonal modal system. **KT**

Bovine Tremolo – Dan Wheltman (premiere)

I had always associated the trombone with idiosyncratic glissandi and outlandish effects. I felt no desire to pursue this direction, but instead a curiosity to explore a more restrained side of the instrument while still allowing for an expressive performance and a harmonically interesting composition. I therefore began writing what in essence is a two-part invention in the manner of Bach but compressed to one instrument. I allowed myself to stray from any given path with chromaticism and musical non-sequiturs; I tried also to write quickly and instinctively, to put down a stream of musical thoughts. I have left the performance dynamics in the hands of the player in order to see what would be added through their own interpretation of the phrasing. The title is an anagram of 'I love trombone'. **DW**

What Hope? – EduardoVC (premiere)

Inspired by the sadistic wave of violence that now deforms the face of Mexico as a result of the war on drugs declared by its President, *What hope?* takes extracts from Felipe Calderon's speech explaining his war (televised on June 2010 on all Mexican networks), interviews with members of his cabinet (Medina-Mora Icaza, Attorney-General) and foreign political figures (Janet Napolitano, US Secretary of Homeland Security), and brews them into an acoustic critique. Whilst encouraging the interpreter to project his own opinion on the subject by choosing the moment at which to trigger different effects, this piece uses synthetic environments and perhaps resigned humor to answer the question: "What gives you hope on Mexico's current situation?" **EVC**

Extrusions – Vyvyan Hope-Scott (premiere)

'Extrusions' addresses some essential problems of writing for a solo monophonic instrument like the trombone: how to suggest harmonies and how to generate interesting rhythms. It begins by establishing a simple minor chord, then gradually the melodic contour extends to imply more exotic harmonic possibilities. As with any such solo piece, it is the listener who actually creates these harmonies, by retaining the memory of notes and phrases and sustaining them over what follows. Rhythmic patterns evolve at the same

time, so what starts as a simple, chant-like metre gradually becomes more driven and syncopated. VHS

Elegy for Mippy II – Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

Mippy was a favourite name used for dogs in the extended Bernstein family, the Elegies were written for Leonard's brother Burtie to commemorate his mongrel dog who died in 1948. *Elegy for Mippy* was for Horn and piano, *Mippy II* for solo trombone, and *Mippy III* for tuba and piano. All pieces are a fusion of classical and jazz idioms, and all have a solemn tone to them. In *Elegy for Mippy II*, the performer is instructed to accompany himself by "... tapping one foot, *mf*, four to the bar." SR

A Minute of News – Eugene Novotney

American composer Eugene Novotney's *A Minute of News* (1990) focuses on the rhythmic possibilities of the snare drum, drawing from Latin and funk styles and bringing to mind the instrument's use as part of the standard drum kit. Its musical material is in fact rather limited, but is continuously re-orchestrated by asking the player to change the implement in his or her left hand. JG

The Players

Jonathan Godsall (Snare Drum)

Having previously completed both undergraduate and Masters study here in the Music Department, Jonathan is now a musicology research student looking at the use of pre-existing music as film score. As a performer, he is a recipient of both the Department's Sir Thomas Beecham Scholarship and University Centenary Prize, and has been a regular fixture in many of the University's ensembles, as well as undertaking freelance work in the local area and beyond.

Steve Rockey (Trombone)

Born in Stoke on Trent, Steve took up the trombone at age 13 and by 16 was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. In 1980 he joined the Royal Air Force as a musician, and played over a great deal of the world: Hong Kong, Hungary, China and most of Europe. He finished his RAF career in the Central Band of the RAF, as Chief Librarian and Staff Arranger. Since his demob, he became a student at the University of Bristol. Since obtaining his first degree, he has continued with post-graduate studies and is now working towards a PhD in Composition. He is still active as a semi-professional player, as well as arranging and composing music for various amateur and professional groups. When not composing, he likes to tinker with motorcycles and occasionally plays the trombone!

**Thanks for coming! Join us for drinks and jazz – provided by
Waistcoat Collective – across the road at Racks.**

**A retiring collection will be made to cover the costs of the CMV
concert series.**