

Red Note Ensemble – World Premiere



Photo by
Malcolm
Crowther

Once again Scotland's most inimitable contemporary music ensemble, Red Note, are taking their unique brand of music and performance on tour around Scotland. This autumn, John Adam's brilliant Shaker Loops for single strings and Gavin Bryars' evocative Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet have been paired with a new Red Note/sound Festival commission for Gabriel Jackson.

Dedicated to developing and performing interesting and significant contemporary music, co-directors John Harris and Robert Irvine are, this autumn, celebrating classic minimalism, an underground music scene that started in the early 1960's in San Francisco and New York and then soon became the most popular experimental music style of the late 20th century. This October the Red Note Ensemble are delighted to be opening the 6th sound Festival in Aberdeen on Wednesday 20th October with the World Première of Gabriel Jackson's new work alongside two of the greatest minimalist pieces ever composed and to be bringing it to Edinburgh only two days later.

Gabriel was born in Bermuda in 1962 where his father, an accomplished pianist and music lover, was a clergyman at Bermuda cathedral. After spending 3 years as a chorister at Canterbury Cathedral, Gabriel studied composition at the Royal College of Music. His music has been performed and broadcast around the world, most recently his BBC commission In nomine Domini premiered at the BBC Proms on 4th September.

Winner of the 2009 BASCA British Composer Award and composer in residence of the BBC Singers, Gabriel Jackson said: "Over the last few years I have been fortunate to enjoy many fruitful relationships with Scottish musicians and artists, and so I am very excited about this collaboration with Red Note. I am particularly thrilled to be working again with Robert Irvine, who I met on our first day at the Royal College of Music in London, and who premiered one of my first pieces as a student."

"The title – Doonies Hill Antiphon – refers to three of my particular preoccupations: the poetry and magic of names, the technological miracle and heroism of aviation, and the ornate, endlessly mellifluous music of the early Tudor period. I was thinking a lot about the Battle of Britain when planning this piece, and Doonies Hill in Aberdeen was the name (and site) of an RAF radar station, serving to protect the people of Eastern Scotland from attack. Stringed instruments are surely closest to the human voice, and the piece, with its alternation of duos and trios with extended tuttis, of folk-fiddling filigree and ecstatic polyphony, is a kind of secular votive antiphon."

John Harris, co-artistic director of Red Note, said: "It's so exciting to be performing these fabulous pieces alongside Gabriel's new commission. Gabriel is one of the brightest stars writing music in the UK at the moment, his career is taking off worldwide, and we're thrilled to be playing our part in his success by being the first to play his new work. "

John Adams is one of America's most admired and respected composers, a musician of enormous range and technical command and one of the founders of Minimalism. His works, both operatic and symphonic, stand out among contemporary classical compositions for their depth of expression, brilliance of sound, and the profoundly humanist nature of their themes. Shaker Loops was composed in the autumn of 1978 using fragments from a string quartet, Wavemaker and featured in the

cult movie *Barfly* with Mickey Rourke and Faye Dunaway.

Whilst living in London, Gavin Bryars was working on a film about people living rough in the area around Elephant and Castle and Waterloo Station. In the course of being filmed, an old man started to sing the religious song "Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet". Later at home and on noticing the first section of the song – 13 bars in length – formed a loop, Gavin improvised a simple accompaniment.

Convinced of the emotional power of the music and of the possibilities offered by adding a simple, though gradually evolving, orchestral accompaniment that respected the tramp's nobility and simple faith, Gavin's original recording was never heard by the old man who died before he could hear it. Originally recorded on Brian Eno's *Obscure* label in 1975, and a substantially revised and extended version for *Point Records* in 1993, the piece remains as an eloquent, but understated testimony to the old man's spirit and optimism.

Red Note will be joined by Aberdeen University music students Rona Cook on horn and Immanuel Voigt on piano for their performance of Gavin Bryars' evocative *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet*.

John Harris said: "As a professional performing group, we're not just about making great music. We're also committed to giving the next generation of brilliant young musicians their first professional experiences working side-by-side with top-flight players. We hand-pick student players who we reckon are going to make it as the key professionals of the future, and it's always a pleasure to see them step up to the mark with us and deliver."

The Red Note autumn tour promises audiences witnessing these pieces close up a powerful experience. The music does not pull any emotional punches, it is stunningly virtuosic to play, and enthralling to watch and listen to. You are to expect an

“intense, magical musical experience”.

Friday 22nd October 2010 – 8:00pm Traverse Theatre, 10
Cambridge St, Edinburgh EH1 2ED

Ticket Prices £16, £12 conc (school groups 6 / ticket) + HOT
TICKETS! Limited number of discounted tickets, £10 (£6)
purchased before Friday 15th October.

Tickets & Information: 0131 228 1404 / www.traverse.co.uk