

Red Note Ensemble at Greyfriar's Kirk 12 May 2011

Scotland's professional contemporary music ensemble [Red Note](#) continue their bold path of presenting rarely-heard classics of international new music alongside new work by UK composers.

Red Note Tour May 2011, which runs from 11th – 14th May, and includes an appearance in Edinburgh tomorrow night, will perform Italian composer Salvatore Sciarrino's extraordinary *Infinito Nero*, an "ecstasy in one act" based on the evocative visions of the early seventeenth-century mystic St Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi. Riding alongside this and other classic works by Sciarrino and fellow Italian Luciano Berio will be the world premiere, of a new Red Note commission, *Out of the Ashes*, by Scottish composer and viola player Carolyn Sparey.

The players will be directed by international Scottish conducting star Garry Walker and joined by soprano Angela Tunstall, world-class contemporary performer and long-time artistic collaborator of Karlheinz Stockhausen.

John Harris, Director, Red Note said: "It's a fantastic thing to be able to bring together Scottish-based performers to perform this world-class repertoire, and to commission and perform new music from Scottish composers. We're promising a great evening for our audiences, who have come to expect nothing less than the finest music-making and the most stimulating programming."

Infinito Nero ("Eternal Blackness") is based on the words of Saint Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi, the daughter of an aristocratic Florentine family who began having visions ("ecstasies") as a teenager, and entered a convent. The ecstasies continued; in these frequent states, words flew out of her mouth so quickly that it took eight novices at a time

to write them down. In her thirties, she became physically ill, the ecstasies ceased, and she spent the last five years of her life in great physical pain. She was beatified and eventually canonized as a saint.

Sciarrino's musical interpretation of her ecstasies is wonderful, atmospheric and incredibly eerie. Singer Angela Tunstall alternates between stunned silence and rapid-fire incantation of the extraordinary text.

Angela Tunstall is best known for her work with the "Godfather of Contemporary Music", Karlheinz Stockhausen. He was so inspired by her remarkable abilities as a singer he invited her to create the role of Eva in his Opera 'Freitag aus Licht'. She began her career studying at the

Guildhall school of Music and Drama and subsequently concentrated exclusively on performing contemporary works.

Angela Tunstall, Mezzo-soprano said: "I first worked with John Harris and Gary Walker on George Crumb's Ancient Voices of Children. I hadn't come across the piece before, and it was exciting to be introduced to such a wonderful piece. They both have a very strong and genuine commitment to modern music which suits me. I am looking forward to bringing *Infinito Nero* to life. When I first spoke to Carolyn Sparey about the Chopin Nocturne influence and Holocaust subject of her piece, I was very moved, as I had by chance just finished reading Primo Levi's terribly sad account of his time in Auschwitz. If this is a Man and had been listening to one of my sons practicing Chopin's C min Nocturne for weeks and had come to adore it."

Scottish composer and BBCSSO viola player Carolyn Sparey's new Red Note commission *Out of the Ashes* is based on the history of Chopin's beautiful Nocturne in C sharp minor and its relationship with the pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman, featured in the film "The Pianist", to whose memory the work is dedicated. Wladyslaw Szpilman first performed the Nocturne on the radio's

last pre-war live recording the day the station went off the air, more than 100 years after Chopin composed it for his sister Ludwika in 1830.

Carolyn began composing in 2001 following an esteemed career as the principal viola with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and has previously collaborated with the Red Note Ensemble who performed her short trio, "Kaleidoscope" at the Traverse Theatre and the Arches last year.

Carolyn says: "The compulsion to write music arrived suddenly when I left the BBCSSO, although I'd written bits and pieces when I was a teenager. I had spent my professional life on the other side of the 'great divide' performing music by other people, so it was greatly encouraging as a very new composer to find that my music was acceptable to such fine musicians as the Fitzwilliam Quartet and Rivka Golani. By a wonderful stroke of luck, I answered a call for scores by the Red Note Ensemble for one of their Traverse Theatre Noisy Nights, and as a result John Harris offered me a commission for their May 2011 tour, a collaboration which is proving to be tremendously rewarding."

Along with two other classic works – Luciano Berio's Differences and Le Voci Sottovetro ("The voice under glass"), Red Note will bring you an evening of the very finest music making of the most intriguing and thought-provoking kind. Prepare to be entertained, stimulated, and delighted.

Red Note Ensemble, Hear Us First.

Thursday 12th May 2011 7:30pm: Greyfriars Kirk, 86 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh EH1 2QA. Tickets via [The Queen's Hall](#), Edinburgh 0131 668 2019