

hcmf //



© Manu Theobald

Arditti Quartet @ 50

Friday 15 November 2024
7pm, St Paul's Hall

Arditti Quartet:
Irvine Arditti violin
Ashot Sarkissjan violin
Pierre Strauch cello
Ralf Ehlers viola

Kaija Saariaho (Finland, 1952-2023)

Terra Memoria (2006) 20'

Terra Memoria is my second piece for string quartet, the first being *Nymphea* which was written in 1987.

Twenty years have passed since *Nymphea* and my musical thinking has evolved much in that time, but my initial interest in string instruments has remained as vivid as ever. I love the richness and sensitivity of the string sound and, in spite of my spare contribution to the genre, I feel when writing for a string quartet that I'm entering into the intimate core of musical communication.

The piece is dedicated "for those departed". Some thoughts about this: we continue remembering the people who are no longer with us; the material – their life – is "complete", nothing will be added to it. Those of us who are left behind are constantly reminded of our experiences together: our feelings continue to change about different aspects of their personality, certain memories keep on haunting us in our dreams. Even after many years, some of these memories change, some remain clear flashes which we can relive.

These thoughts brought me to treat the musical material in a certain manner; some aspects of it go through several distinctive transformations, whereas some remain nearly unchanged, clearly recognizable.

The title *Terra Memoria* refers to two words which are full of rich associations: to earth and memory. Here earth refers to my material, and memory to the way I'm working on it. © Kaija Saariaho

Unsuik Chin (South Korea, 1961)
Gran Cadenza for 2 violins (2018) 6'

Gran Cadenza, commissioned by Anne-Sophie Mutter, is a virtuoso duo for two violins. The title alludes to the tradition of virtuoso solo passages in the course of an aria, an instrumental concerto, or a chamber music work, which are either improvised by the soloist or already written out by the composer, and that as a rule offer ornamental, rhapsodic, and rhythmically free elements. Cadences were originally closely related to a culture of interpretation that displayed strong elements of improvisation and was often tolerant of free modification, a tradition that was supplanted by new ideas of faithfulness to the original and copyright in the nineteenth and at the latest in the twentieth century.

Gran Cadenza is a self-contained, written-out work, and also clearly longer than the solo cadenza of an instrumental concerto. Nevertheless, it reflects elements of free traditional musical forms such as that of a cadenza, a capriccio, or a fantasy. The connection to the cadenza becomes clear through the exhibition of the virtuoso skills of two soloists which, entirely in the sense of the Latin "concertare," alludes to competition and dispute, but also to reconciliation and cooperation. *Gran Cadenza* savors the various kinds of interactions – conflict, dialogue, and fusion; its form develops fluidly through contrasts and diverse transitions between these various states.

The piece is opened by marked and abrupt gestures of the second violin, which – in complete contrast – are juxtaposed with seemingly improvisatory, ethereal-ornamental figures of the first violin. After a while, the first violin suddenly "attacks" the second violin, and virtuoso musical skirmishes and exchanges of blows of various kinds ensue, whereby all possible cadenza-like clichés flare up as fragments.

Eventually, the two soloists come together, with series of descending chords: the entire kinetic energy comes to a virtual standstill and flows into tonally distorted, triad-like harmonies, which are presented by both violins in alternation and in competition with one another. A sudden build-up of energy, including ornamental interjections, in which short fragments flare up as echoes of earlier motifs or as anticipations of later developments.

Via an abrupt crescendo, it then comes to a contrasting middle section, a longer passage of unintentional pause in which the two violins merge into a "super instrument." The second violin performs a melody that is harmonically enveloped by overtones by the first; the tempo gradually becomes more fluid, and the two violins play two different, complementary melodic lines. The flow is again and again interrupted by reminiscences of the beginning of marked

chords, as well as of improvisatory-virtuoso fragments; finally, the two lines lead into a quick and dense motion in the middle range, which resembles a sort of carpet of sound. This texture, although interrupted by suddenly flaring fragments, spreads out inexorably in various registers and in continually more virtuoso forms until it is abruptly interrupted by pizzicatos, and the whole motion unexpectedly comes to a standstill.

© Maris Gothoni, 2021 (translation: Howard Weiner)

Chaya Czernowin (Israel, 1957)
Ezov (moss) (2024) 24' UK Premiere

String Quartet No. 4, dedicated to the Arditti Quartet

The Arditti Quartet is renowned for its unwavering commitment to contemporary music and its remarkable ability to interpret new compositions with a profound understanding of the composer's intentions. I am deeply glad to entrust them with this new piece, which relates to the plant *Ezov*, (moss) renowned for its symbolic richness in various cultures and associated with ideas of renewal, resilience, tenacity and healing through interconnectedness.

Written in a fateful time in the world, fraught with pain and suffering, *Ezov* is a piece that opens itself to an attempt of finding hope.

This commission holds special significance as it coincides with Arditti Quartet's 50th anniversary. © Chaya Czernowin

Produced by hcmf// supported by Music Finland; also supported by Hinrichsen Foundation, Vaughan Williams Foundation, Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation and hcmf// Benefactor Karen Dawe, in memory of Mervyn Dawe

***Ezov (moss)* is commissioned by Wien Modern, Philharmonie de Paris and the Arditti Quartet, with funding support from Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation**

hcmf//
huddersfield
contemporary
music festival

In partnership with
The University of Huddersfield