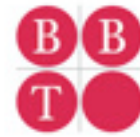


Press Release date: 31 March 2008

Simon Holt's percussion concerto world premiered by Colin Currie and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra 14 May 2008



a table of noises is the title of a new work by Simon Holt, co-commissioned by the CBSO and the Borletti-Buitoni Trust for percussionist Colin Currie. The world premiere performance will take place at Symphony Hall Birmingham on 14 May and will be conducted by Martyn Brabbins.

Inspired by the composer's great Uncle Ashworth Hutton who was a taxidermist, this is a 21-minute, six-movement work with five brief instrumental 'ghosts'. Currie is seated for much of the time on one of his instruments, a cajon - essentially a wooden box, often used in flamenco, with the addition of guitar strings and bells inside to add to the general timbre and colour. Apart from the xylophone, the rest of his instruments – made of glass, metal and wood – are all on a table (similarly, one-legged Uncle Ash had everything he needed for his daily life and work on his own parlour table).



Colin Currie is constantly adding new works to the percussion repertoire (he has already used part of his 2005 Borletti-Buitoni Trust award to commission two pieces from Dave Maric and Lukas Ligeti) and is particularly ambitious for his concerto repertoire as he especially enjoys working with orchestras. He has worked closely with Simon Holt to develop the piece and joyfully professes "*there is no other concerto like this one, anywhere - for any instrument!*"

a table of noises is part of Holt's growing focus on orchestral work: he has recently re-worked two orchestral scores, *Syrensong* and *Walking with the River's Roar* and a new commission will be announced on 9 April at The Proms launch. His last orchestral work, *witness to a snow miracle*, was also premiered by a Borletti Buitoni Trust Award winner, German violinist Viviane Hagner, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jonathan Nott and was awarded best orchestral work at the 2006 Composer Awards.

The six main movements of a *table of noises*, interspersed with instrumental 'ghosts', are described by the composer as follows:

1] **jute** is what my great uncle Ash (Ashworth Hutton, who was a taxidermist, amongst many other things) would stuff the animal skins with.

2] **fly** was the name of his dog who used to fall asleep standing while staring into the fire. This movement involves a virtuoso part for the percussion playing only xylophone.

3] **a drawer full of eyes** In searching for fresh bedding, my mother opened a drawer in Ash's bedroom tallboy and discovered thousands of false eyes for foxes, kingfishers, stoats, etc. staring back at her.

4] **skennin' Mary** was my great uncle's neighbour who had a glass eye which would spin when she got angry, hence her nickname.

5] **cadenza: table top** Uncle Ash was severely crippled in one leg and walked everywhere on a crutch swinging his gammy leg about him and so needed everything at hand on one table.

6] **under glass** which was where a lot of his stuffed animals ended up, usually with photos of loved ones propped up against them. He gave me a stoat with a grass snake wrapped round it under a glass dome. It was on my bedside table throughout my early teens.

Orchestration:

2pic+afl.3.Ebcl+bcl.0+cbn/3.3.2+btbn.1/2perc/hp.cel/str(0.0.10.8.8)

Further press information:

Debra Boraston (Borletti Buitoni Trust)

Tel. 020 7483 1950 Email: debra@henrymoorestudio.co.uk

Rachel Blackman (CBSO)

Tel. 0121 616 6500 Email: rblackman@cbsocso.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

Symphony Hall Birmingham Box Office:

Tel. 0121 780 3333 Online www.thsh.co.uk

£9.50 to £39. Performance time 7.30pm Friday 14 May 2008

Also on the programme: Suite from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *The Golden Cockerel* and Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances*.

Picture shows: Ashworth Hutton

Biographies

Colin Currie has established an outstanding reputation for his charismatic and virtuosic performances of works by today's leading composers, and has already appeared with many of the world's most important orchestras. Regularly commissioning and recording new works, he has made an inspirational and innovative contribution to the percussion repertoire. He was awarded the RPS Young Artist award in 2002 for his exceptional role in contemporary music-making.

At the age of fifteen, Colin Currie won the Shell/LSO prize and subsequently was the first percussion finalist in the BBC Young Musician competition, and was a BBC New Generation Artist from 2003-2005 appearing as soloist with the BBC orchestras and exploring new repertoire for recitals and studio recordings.

Currie has premiered new concerti written for him by Michael Torke, Steven Mackey, Jennifer Higdon, Thea Musgrave and Joe Duddell. He has appeared with orchestras such as the London Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Vienna Radio Symphony, BBC Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony and Minnesota Orchestra, among others. He gives solo and chamber recitals with artists such as Hakan Hardenberger, the Labèque sisters and the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet. Colin Currie has recorded a solo recital disc for EMI, and as concerto soloist MacMillan's *Veni, Veni Emmanuel* and Michael Torke's *Rapture* for Naxos.
More information:
www.intermusica.co.uk

Simon Holt's intensely felt, deeply affecting works have firmly established him as one of the leading British composers of his generation. He was born in 1958, and studied composition with Anthony Gilbert at the Royal Northern College of Music. He first came to prominence at the 1985 Bath International Festival, and with two early commissions for the London Sinfonietta. He has since forged strong relationships with the Nash Ensemble and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, who have both recorded portrait CDs on the NMC label. His chamber works are frequently performed by all the leading European new music ensembles.

Orchestral pieces include two works for the BBC Proms - *Syrensong* (1987) and the viola concerto *Walking with the River's Roar* (1992). His 1999 work for soprano and orchestra, *Sunrise' yellow noise* (1999), written for the CBSO, won Le Prix de la Fondation Prince Pierre, Monaco. The violin concerto *witness to a snow miracle* was premiered in February 2006 by the BBC Symphony Orchestra/Nott to huge acclaim.

Holt has frequently set texts by Federico García Lorca, whose dark, passionate and enigmatic texts have much in common with Holt's own sound world. Other sources of inspiration include Greek myth (the starting point for his *Icarus Trilogy*) and the paintings of Goya. The cycle *a ribbon of time* encompasses five works based on poems by Emily Dickinson.

More information:
www.chesternovello.com