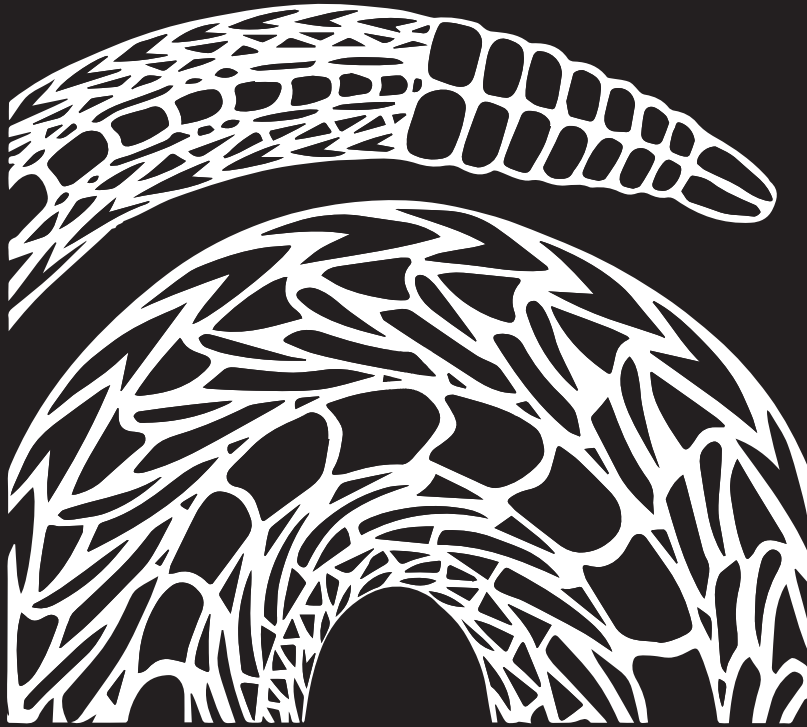




ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE



SNAKEBITE

STEPHEN MONTAGUE AT 80



Stephen Montague - 10 March 1944
Baldwinsville, NY

WELCOME

It is an honour this evening to have all of you here in St John's Smith Square for my 80th birthday concert. As I developed this event I have been deeply impressed by the quality and commitment of my friends, colleagues, students, St John's, and Southbank Sinfonia for undertaking this ambitious programme. It's immensely exciting to have a birthday gift of this magnitude realized in this glorious space by such a wide spectrum of talent from professionals to young performers.

I feel like I have lived most of my 80 years looking forward. I've embraced each day like there'd always be tomorrow. What I hadn't really heard was Father Time's footsteps quietly creeping up from behind. Now it comes almost as a surprise that I find myself suddenly four score - 80. A moment to pause at least briefly and reflect on the rich and bountiful life I have lead. This concert is a good representation of the work I have done and I think reflects the joy and excitement I had making it. Tonight it will leap off the stage and then disappear. I like that.

I have lived here in Britain since 1974, but was born in Syracuse, NY on March 10, 1943. My father was a restless college music teacher who carved a large arch around the USA as he sought to improve our family's life. We lived in New York, Michigan, Idaho, New Mexico, West Virginia, and Florida all before I was 16. I studied piano, composition, and conducting at Florida State University and later at Ohio

State University before coming to Europe as a Fulbright Scholar in Warsaw, Poland working behind the Iron Curtain at the Experimental Music Studio of Polish Radio, 1972-74.

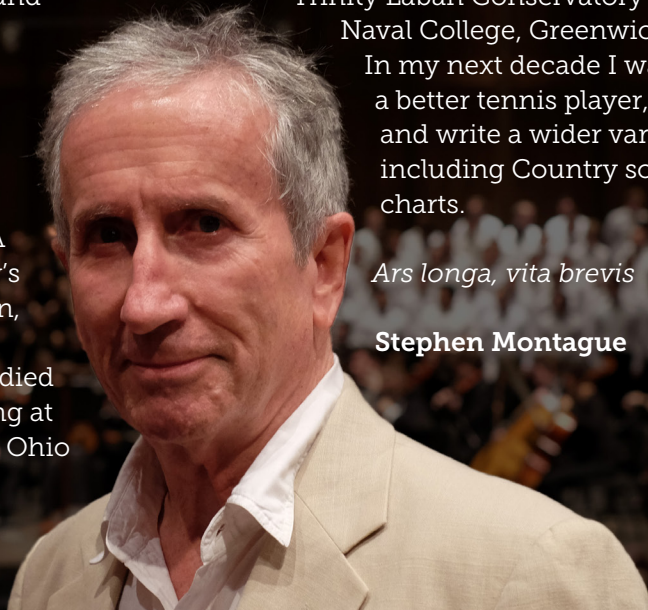
On my way back to America I stopped off here in London for a long weekend and my life changed. A chance phone call suddenly gave me the opportunity to work with a small dance company touring the UK and Europe. I took the job and never made it back to America – my life as a freelance musician had begun in earnest. Work as a pianist gradually evolved into a life of composing as commissions started to appear. From soloists to chamber groups, the BBC Proms to the London Symphony Orchestra, The Royal Ballet and many, many others I have had the great good fortune to write music for some of the finest and most inspirational musicians and ensembles of our time, and couple that with the joy of teaching the next generation of composers at

Trinity Laban Conservatory in the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich. What a treat!

In my next decade I want to become a better tennis player, travel more, and write a wider variety of music including Country songs and big band charts.

Ars longa, vita brevis

Stephen Montague

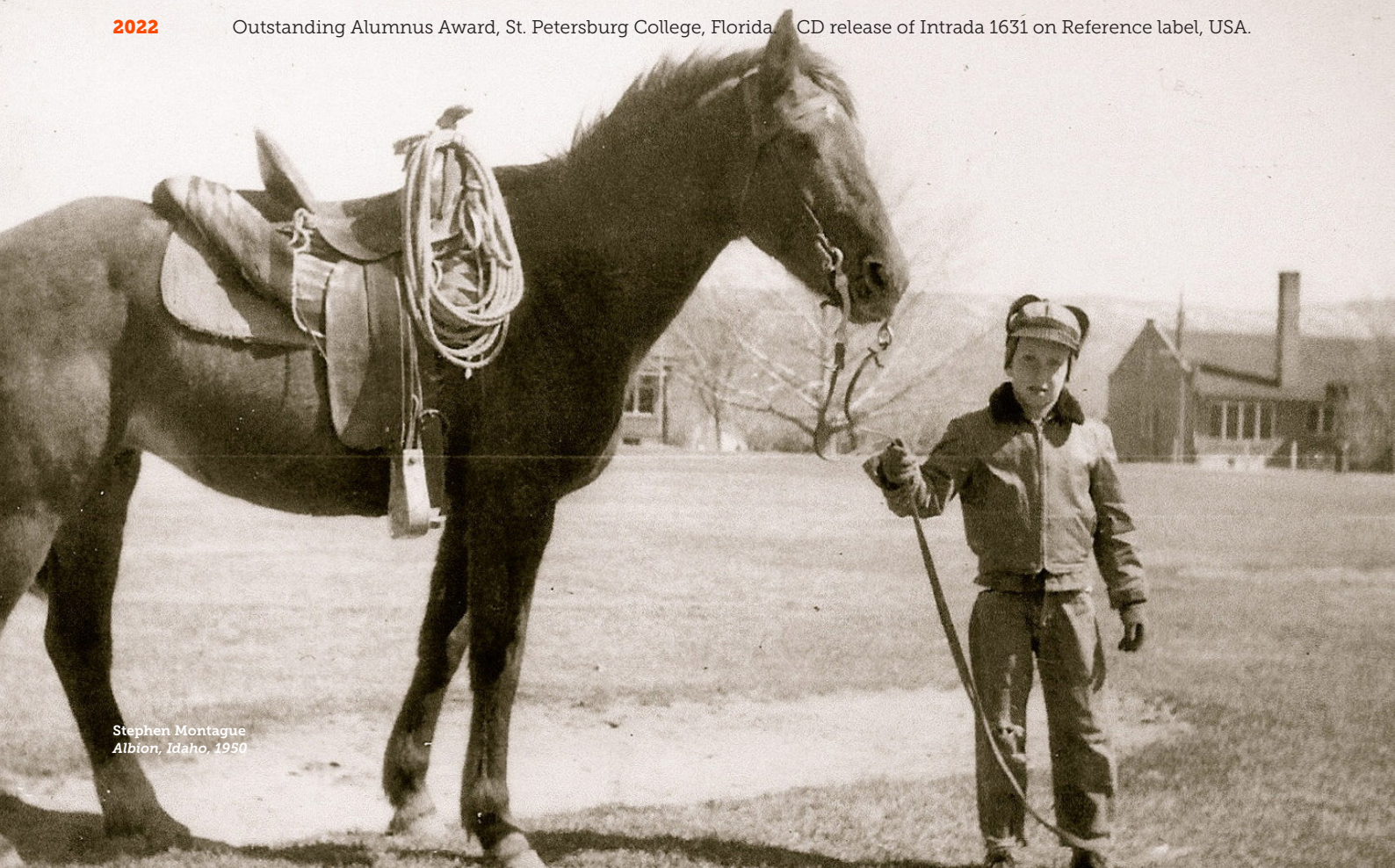


TIMELINE

- 1943-61** A brilliant childhood with a father who was an excellent musician but would rather have been a cowboy and a mother who kept his urges at bay. We were always on the move in a large arch around America: New York, Michigan, Idaho, New Mexico, West Virginia, Florida all before I was 16.
- 1957** Six weeks at Florida State University Summer Music Camp at age 13 made me realize what I wanted to be- a musician. Ernst von Dohnányi showed me how to conduct 4/4 and 3/4 time and told me I'd probably never encounter 5/4.
- 1960** First professional piano recital (Schubert & Chopin): Snell Island Women's Club, St. Petersburg, Florida, \$15 and lunch. Junior Choirs Director, St. Luke's Methodist Church, St. Petersburg, Florida.
- 1961-63** Fourth Horn, Tampa Philharmonic Orchestra, Alfredo Antonini, conductor. Barbershop Quartet and Eagle Scout Scholarships to St. Petersburg Junior College, Florida.
- 1962** Florida State Junior College Tennis Champion.
- 1963** Tennis and music scholarships to Florida State University. Activist in the Civil Rights marches and protests in Georgia, Alabama, and north Florida.
- 1964** 14-week packhorse trip with my father and brother riding horseback from the middle of Wyoming to Montana.
- 1965** Graduated from Florida State University with Honours.
- 1966** Conducting Certificate, Mozareturn, Salzburg, Austria.
- 1969** Fired from Butler University, Indiana, where I could easily have fallen asleep for 40 years and never known what opportunities lay outside the American Midwest. Hitch-hiked across North Africa.
- 1972** Active participant in the massive anti-Vietnam march on Washington, DC. Completed a doctorate in composition at Ohio State University.
- 1972-74** Behind the Iron Curtain: Fulbright Scholarship for the Experimental Music Studio of Polish Radio, Warsaw.
- 1974** Arrival in London for a long weekend. A chance encounter with The Strider Dance Co. (Richard Alston and co) employed as a pianist/composer for a UK and European tour. Freelance career began.
- 1975** Working, touring with John Cage (from 1975 to 90). Formed The Barton Workshop Ensemble with James Fulkerson touring and recording in the UK and Europe.
- 1976** Artist in Residence, piano soloist, Anton Webern Chamber Orchestra, Venice Biennale, Italy.

- 1980** Piano soloist, 2-month tour of South America, Josef Anton Riedl Multi-media Ensemble (Munich, West Germany).
- 1981 & 83** The MacDowell Artists' Colony, Peterborough, New Hampshire, USA.
- 1982** IRCAM Computer Music Bursary Award, Paris, France.
- 1986 & 89** The birth of my two children, Toby (now graphic designer, London) and Tessa (scientist at Columbia University, NYC).
- 1990** Gian Carlo Menotti Artist in Residence, Charleston, South Carolina.
- 1992 & 95** Guest Professor, University of Texas, Austin.
- 1994** First Prize, Bourges Electroacoustic Music Competition, France.
- 1995** Ernst von Dohnányi Citation for Excellence in Composition. The premiere of Dark Sun-August, 1995 CoMA Summer School, Bretton Hall College, Yorkshire.
- 1996** The Creatures Indoors premiere, London Symphony Orchestra, Barbican Centre, London plus 14 subsequent performances around the UK by Britain's leading orchestras including Royal Philharmonic, City of Birmingham, The Hallé...
- 1997** BBC Proms commission, Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Rolf Hind, soloist, Orchestra of St John's, John Lubbock, conductor, Royal Albert Hall, London. BBC broadcast. Visiting Professor, University of Auckland, New Zealand.
- 1998** Horn Concerto for Klaxon horn and an orchestra of automobiles, Centennial commission, ISCM Festival, Manchester.
- 2000** Outstanding Alumnus Award, Ohio State University. Visiting Guest Professor, University of Texas, Austin.
- 2004** Directed Cage's Musicircus with 341 performers, for the BBC Symphony Orchestra's John Cage UnCaged Composer Weekend at the Barbican Centre, London.
- 2006** International Piano Magazine Award: Best New Piano Music Recording - Southern Lament, Philip Mead, piano.
- 2007** Bike Concerto for piano, 8 motorcycles & percussion. James Toesland (World Superbike Champion), soloist, Royal Albert Hall and Brands Hatch Race Track.
- 2009** Featured Composer, Weiner Musik Tage Austria, complete piano works.
- 2010** BBC Proms commission, Wilful Chants, by BBC Symphony Chorus, brass, percussion, Royal Albert Hall.
- 2012** Directed Musicircus at English National Opera with 147 performers for the John Cage Centennial Celebrations, also at the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich with 325 performers.

- 2013** A Florida jungle adventure which ended abandoning canoes in heavily downed timbre and wading cautiously out of the jungle and through the swamp in the fading light.
- 2015** The world premiere of The King Dances by the Birmingham Royal Ballet at the Birmingham Hippodrome and Sadlers Wells, London. Choreographed by Sir David Bintley, filmed for the BBC TV.
- 2016** Artistic Director, Cage- Musicircus, Centre Pompidou/Metz, France. Music Director, The Royal Opening of The Crick Institute, London with HM the Queen.
- 2017** Professor of Composition, Trinity Laban Conservatory, London.
- 2018** 75th Birthday Concert: 6 orchestral and chamber music concerts over 2 days at St John's, Smith Square, London. 75th Birthday Event in Singapore conducting the ReSound Chamber Orchestra.
- 2018-19** Visiting Guest Professor, Florida State University, Tallahassee.
- 2022** Outstanding Alumnus Award, St. Petersburg College, Florida. CD release of Intrada 1631 on Reference label, USA.



Stephen Montague
Albion, Idaho, 1950

PROGRAMME NOTES

Introduction (1976) 4'00"

Stephen Montague COMPÈRE
Kornélia Nemcová ELECTRONICS

Introit St. John's (2022) 7'00"
Symphonic brass & percussion
(Premiere)

Southbank Sinfonia BRASS
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of
Music & Dance PERCUSSION
Contemporary Music for All
Kentish Town Cantorum
Augustina Kapoti CONDUCTOR

Snakebite (1995) 14'00"
Chamber orchestra

Southbank Sinfonia
Rob Smith CONDUCTOR

Beyond the Stone Horizon (2006
revised 2022) 21'00"
Symphony orchestra
(Premiere)

Southbank Sinfonia
Richard Heason CONDUCTOR

Interval (30 mins)

Introit. The word *Introit* comes from the Latin word, *Introitus*, meaning "entrance", but over the years introit has also come to mean special music for the opening of an event. The progenitor of my Introit St John's was a 4-minute brass quintet I wrote in 2016 for one of the UK universities' 60th anniversary. The challenge of the original commission was their desire to have the short work somehow musically reflect their strong departments of astrophysics, nursing, and further education and also no more difficult than Grade 4. The original musical material has evolved several times since and morphed into music for further celebratory occasions including The Royal Opening of The Francis Crick Institute by HM The Queen in 2017. This latest version begins like the original but strays off the path for rough walk on the wild side. The work is dedicated to Richard Heason, the former Artistic Director of St. John's Smith Square.

Snakebite. The inspiration for writing *Snakebite* came from a five month visit in 1995 to

one of the great watering holes for country music, Austin, Texas. I spent the daytime teaching 'classical' composition at the university, but the real excitement was at night listening to country fiddlers like Alvin Crow at The Broken Spoke playing 'Texas Style' while the local cowboys put headlocks on their girlfriends and wives to dance the Texas Two-step on the beer-stained floor.

The title was inspired by a visit my family and I made to the Rattlesnake Roundup in Sweetwater, Texas. During the bizarre week of rattlesnake festivities, an old cowboy who'd lost an arm in a near fatal rattlesnake bite told us how the plains Indians dealt with such a calamity. Once bitten they'd lie down quietly on the desert floor, trying not to panic. For 18 hours they'd will their heartbeat to drop sufficiently to dissipate the painful poison blackening their body and inflaming their limbs. This gave them a 50/50 chance for survival.

I translated this grim image to a moment in *Snakebite* when

Almost a Lullaby (2006) 5'00"
Toy piano, wind chimes, music box

Xenia Pestova Bennett TOY PIANO

Dark Sun - August, 1945 (1995) 20'00"
Large orchestra, chorus, 3 radios & percussion

Southbank Sinfonia
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance
Centre for Young Musicians
Lambeth Music Service
Contemporary Music for All
Kentish Town Cantorum (Lynda Richardson DIRECTOR)

Stephen Montague CONDUCTOR

Mirabella - a tarantella for toy piano (1995) 3'00"

Xenia Pestova Bennett TOY PIANO

the *Dusty Miller* fiddle tune runs into the 'poison' of an alien tune attacking it in a different key. The conductor's arm slowly passes around the orchestra as the 'poison' might through a body. *Dusty Miller* nearly dies but ultimately survives.

Snakebite was commissioned by the Orchestra of St John's, Smith Square for a UK tour which required my using the same modest instrumentation as the other work on tour, Haydn's *Farewell Symphony*.

Beyond the Stone Horizon.

"Who pays the piper calls the tune": Commissions come with a variety of briefs ranging from a simple table rasa to those with a more challenging list of specific requirements. Julian Blackwell, owner of Oxford's Blackwell Book Stores, asked for a new work that reflected his keen interest in the music of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms as a commission for the Dorchester Abbey Festival. In our discussion he lamented the paucity of "elegance and beauty"

in contemporary classical music and wanted a new work that would draw from the best strands of Western classical music but also provide the audience with a uniquely 21st C musical experience. It was to be tonally based, patriotic in the grand English tradition of Elgar and Holst, and "beautiful" with a melody that would reach out to a general public. Somewhere in the work he asked that "we have a tingle factor where the hairs stand up on the back of your neck!" As an homage to Bach, wanted a fugue "where two themes intertwined and made love". The finale was to be a rousing climax in e minor, the key of his favourite symphony, Brahms' 4th. It was quite a challenge and a tall order checking all the boxes, but a lot of fun.

The title of the new work came from a Caspar David Frederick-like image I formed as I began to write the piece. The image was a vast plain with a grand mountain range in the distance. The mountains stood silent, mysterious, a barrier beckoning exploration. At the peak was a magnificent view both beyond to the future and behind to the past. That image became



the metaphor for the musical structure.

Beyond the Stone Horizon is a chaconne, which is often defined as a chord progression over which a set of variations are made. In my work, however, the chord progression itself is the subject for variations. My musical material is taken from the chaconne in the last movement of Brahms' *Symphony No. 4* which was itself taken from the chaconne in Bach's Cantata BWV 150 thus connecting the 18th and 19th centuries to the present scene as requested by the commissioner. In 2022 I substantially revised the 2006 work and rescored it for a larger orchestra as part of my 80th birthday celebration at St. John's, Smith Square, London. The work is dedicated to Alex Julyan as part of her 60th birthday celebrations.

Almost a Lullaby. *Lullaby* is a beautiful onomatopoeia suggesting peaceful slumber and a quiet rest.

Dark Sun - August, 1945. On 6 August 1945 a single American B-29 Superfortress bomber, the Enola Gay, dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima.

It detonated at 09:15:15, nine hundred metres above the city instantly incinerating 78,150 of the 240,000 inhabitants (including 23 American prisoners of war). Over 70,000 further inhabitants were critically burned and gravely injured in the world's first nuclear attack

Dark Sun is a threnody for this tragic event, and the victims as well as survivors of the nuclear age. The recordings you will hear nestled in the orchestral textures are from radio broadcasts of the period and at another point in the work individual members of the orchestra create a collage of music which might have been played somewhere in the world on the 6 August 1945.

The radio to your right is a Japanese propaganda station featuring *The Zero Hour* with Tokyo Rose as she was known to the Allied soldiers. Her mission was to make the Allies homesick with popular music of the day and stories from "back home". The central radio is the BBC with broadcasts from the war in the Pacific, ending with an RAF observer's laconic account of the atomic bomb that fell

three days later on Nagasaki. The radio station to your left plays an American children's programme called *Terry and the Pirates* set against a backdrop of the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s and a little later *Hop Harrigan - America's Ace of the Airwaves*. These old radio broadcasts are used as additional audio textures in the larger sonic fabric - a distant resonance, crackling in and out of focus, from a dark period of the world at war.

Dark Sun was commissioned in 1995 by Contemporary Music for All (CoMA) with funds provided by the Arts Council of England. It is scored for a large orchestral and vocal ensemble of flexible instrumentation and varying individual performance standards. The work is dedicated to Chris Shurety, Founder and Artistic Director of CoMA.

Mirabella - a tarantella for toy piano. The tarantella is a legendary Italian folk dance which claims to cure the poisonous bite of the large, hairy tarantula.

SNAKEBITE! COMPOSER STEPHEN MONTAGUE AT 80

An interview with Robert Hugill

If you ask composer Stephen Montague about the style of his music, his response is likely to echo the maverick American composer Henry Cowell (1897-1965) who wanted to live in the whole world of music, not just one corner. Stephen is 80 this year and remains just as much a free musical spirit as before. I recently met up with him to chat about his forthcoming birthday concert at St John's Smith Square, where Southbank Sinfonia will be joined by an array of conductors and other performers to celebrate Stephen with a programme of his music ranging from the 1990s to recent works.

When it comes to music, Stephen admits that he is interested in too many things, which is unfashionable at the moment; composers such as Philip Glass and Steve Reich have made names for themselves by cultivating a particular corner of the musical landscape. But Stephen likes writing everything, something that he feels he takes unconsciously on board, so his style can be experimental or tonal and use functional harmony, esoteric or full

Hollywood-style film score. This has been unfashionable during Stephen's lifetime and has applied to the visual arts too.

But every piece has Stephen's hallmark on it in some way, he feels that he tends toward recognisable harmonies and any dirty dissonances often resolve. He now does exactly what he wants to do and can take the consequences, and like Mozart, he knows for whom he is writing and the sort of music needed. Stephen recently wrote a large-scale ballet for Birmingham Royal Ballet; being a ballet dance piece, he clearly understood that this was not the time for experimentalism and that dancers have to be able to count so it wasn't time for irregularity.

Stephen has been working as a freelance composer and teacher for fifty years. His father, who was a college professor, never understood and would constantly ask when Stephen was getting a proper job. His father could not grasp the concept of writing a piece of music, getting it performed, receiving the fee and simply moving on. He enjoys following

his instincts and interests, so he would love to write a Country music song and write for a big band. He was not written in either of these styles and would love the challenge.

For his 70th birthday, Richard Heason (then director of St John's Smith Square) did a celebratory concert and it was around the time of the John Cage centenary. Stephen had worked with Cage, so the 2013 birthday celebrations included two concerts, one of which was a theatrical event that Stephen had created, *A Dinner Party for John Cage*, [see Frances Wilson's review on Bachtrack] and the other was a concert of Stephen's orchestral works. The celebrations went well, and Richard invited Stephen back for his 75th birthday, and these celebrations included six concerts over two days including an all-night performance of Satie's *Vexations*, plus chamber music, videos, installations, and concerts including children under the age of nine.

Again, the concerts went well, but they were hard work; there were some 200 performers

involved and the organisation of the events was something of a tour de force. So, for his 80th birthday, the idea was to do something far simpler. Then St John's Smith Square joined forces with Southbank Sinfonia, which is now resident at the hall. Southbank Sinfonia is an orchestra that provides experience for young players recently out of college, and as such Richard thought Stephen's music with its wide variety from 'weird stuff' to conventional would be great experience for the players. Hence, the idea for an 80th birthday concert with Southbank Sinfonia focusing on a wide variety of Stephen's work.

Richard wanted to include Stephen's *Dark Sun - August 1945* in the concert. Richard had performed the work before; it was written for CoMA (Contemporary Music for All) in 1995 and it is certainly not a birthday piece, being written for the fiftieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. It requires massive forces and Stephen thought that it would be a one-off, but it is relatively open score with quite a bit of freedom about what notes are played, so it has had many subsequent performances. The orchestral forces are based on a core of professionals

surrounded by amateurs of all levels from the highly proficient to the novice. As part of its residency at St John's Smith Square, Southbank Sinfonia is reaching out to the community for performances, so this style of the piece was ideal.

The performers in *Dark Sun - August 1945* will thus include Southbank Sinfonia, members of CoMA, students from Trinity Laban including Stephen's student composers, 17 and 18-year-olds from Lambeth Music Service, young players from the Centre for Young Musicians and more mature singers from Kentish Town Cantorum. Thus it becomes a flagship work for what Southbank Sinfonia is trying to do, mixing young and old, professional and novice, including people like a friend of Stephen's from his tennis club!

Dark Sun will be in the second half, so Stephen has leavened this half with two pieces for the toy piano, played by Xenia Pestova Bennett. As he wryly puts it, 'what's not to love about a toy piano'. First comes *Almost a Lullaby* which will segue into the opening, bone-crunching chord of *Dark Sun*, played by 140 people. Then at the end of *Dark Sun*, the music will move directly into *Mirabella*: a

Tarantella for toy piano and the evening ends with a surprise!

Part one of the concert is somewhat lighter. It begins with the world premiere of *Introit for St John's*, a new incarnation of an older piece. It began as a commission for brass quintet from the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, and Stephen then expanded it for the opening of the Francis Crick Institute, and he has created a new version again for St John's. As Stephen describes it, the work begins as a normal brass fanfare, but then goes off the rails and percussionists placed in a circle around the performers at balcony level bring the piece to an end with a sort of percussion Mexican wave.

This is followed by Stephen's 1995 piece, *Snakebite!* for chamber orchestra and folk fiddler. It was commissioned to go with Haydn's *Farewell Symphony* and uses the same sized orchestra, but Stephen's piece is based on the American folk tune, *Dusty Miller* and so would have formed quite a contrast with the Haydn. The piece arose from Stephen's experiences whilst teaching in Texas in 1995. The joy of being there was being able to listen to the Country fiddlers, and

Stephen decided he wanted to create a concert work with a Country flavour. The title was inspired by the Rattlesnake Roundup, in Sweetwater, Texas. And an old Country fiddler told him how the plains Indians survived a snake bite by lying still and slowing their heartbeat down for 18 hours till the poison had passed through them. And in Stephen's piece, there is a musical evocation of the passing of this poison through Dusty Miller.

The first half ends with the world premiere of *Beyond the Stone Horizon*, for full orchestra. This has its origins in an early commission which was extremely prescriptive. Fortunately, Stephen discovered the commissioner was fond of Brahms and Bach, and that whilst Brahms was working on his fourth symphony he was editing Bach's works. So, Stephen's piece is based on the *Chaconne* from the fourth movement of Brahms' *Symphony No. 4*, itself in turn based on Bach. But Stephen deconstructs it and only gradually does the *Chaconne* theme appear.

The original commission was premiered in 2006 in a venue that could only hold a small orchestra, so Stephen was not able to write for the number of players he wanted. So, though there were one or two subsequent performances, he withdrew the work. Now he has recomposed it for a far larger orchestra, expanding it in length and in terms of the forces needed, and he is now happy with the way it has turned out. Unfortunately, the original commissioner is no longer around to be able to hear the result, but it will provide a thunderous finale to the first half.

There is a range of conductors for the evening. *Snakebite!* will be conducted by a friend

of Stephen's from Texas, Rob Smith, and the other conductors are Augustina Kapoli, Richard Heason and Stephen himself (for *Dark Sun*).

When I ask about how he approaches the question of the style of a piece, Stephen gives as an example his ballet for Birmingham Royal Ballet. Commissioned for Sir David Bintley to choreograph, *The King Dances* was a ballet based on King Louis XIV's all-night spectacular, *Le Ballet de la Nuit*. David Bintley is very musical, which Stephen adds is not always a good thing, but in this case, it was. David Bintley wanted to include the full range of Louis' original from simple processions to the unbelievable, so a wide scope of emotions.

And it meant that in some movements, Stephen had scope to do something really weird and did so. The music goes from tonal to phantasmagoria, a witches' Sabbath and electronics, D minor to Bach to avant-garde.

David Bintley did not put many limits on Stephen and he has happy memories of the project. It was filmed for the BBC as part of a longer programme [the documentary, *The King Who Invented Ballet:*



Louis XIV and the Noble Art of Dance, is on YouTube, as is the ballet itself].

Stephen quotes one of his more outrageous pieces, a Manchester Festival commission, a concerto for klaxon horn and automobiles! It was a rather outrageous piece, not one he particularly wants to be known for, not one of his more profound works, but amusing. It has been done a lot, gets good publicity and good audiences.

Stephen's family left England for America in the 1630s under dubious circumstances, owing money to the parish. When Stephen married his first wife, they did so in the parish from where his ancestors had left, and during the ceremony, the vicar joked about Stephen still owing the money.

As far as Stephen himself he feels mid-Atlantic and on his best days, he can go either way. At the ISCM World Music Days, the USA would not claim him as he lives in the UK, and the UK would not claim him since he's American though now he has dual nationality. He loves living here and wouldn't trade it for anything. As a composer, he feels more American than British because he does not feel

the weight of the earlier British composers, he is not under the shadow of Elgar, Holst or Britten. He likes being a free spirit and thinks his music more reflects an American freedom to be independent, without a weight of tradition.

He went to Florida State University where the teaching under Carlisle Floyd (1926-2021) was very conservative. Then when he changed university to do his doctorate, the music was seriously 12-tone, though later there was exposure to minimalism which he embraced as an escape from the acidic hothouse 12-tone fraternity. He went to Warsaw on a Fulbright Scholarship and whilst there he went to every concert at the Warsaw Festival. He describes it as an education, but there were far too many note clusters, and when he heard a British live-electronic group, Intermodulation (co-founded by British composers Tim Souster and Roger Smalley) playing Terry Riley it felt like a revelation and he felt he wanted to do that, and Minimalism was an influence during the 1970s.

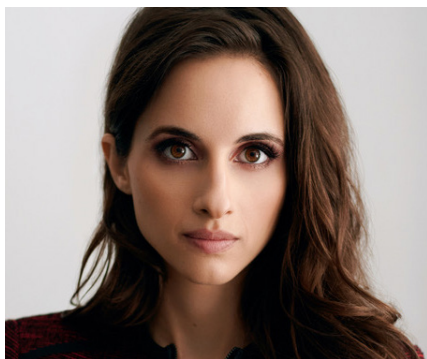
But Stephen makes an intriguing comment, that audiences will forgive any kind of dissonance so long as there is an infectious rhythm. He

is interested in the audience, though he grew up in the era of 'who cares about the audience'. His response is that he does, he cares though he doesn't pander; but he likes to take the audience from somewhere tonal to somewhere they don't know.

However, he feels the composer is not always the best person to say what a piece is about. For instance, he can say all he wants about *Beyond the Stone Horizon* being a variation on the *Chaconne* from Brahms' *Symphony No. 4*, but if the audience cannot hear this link, then perhaps it is all in his mind. And it is interesting to consider something that pleases you. The best composers often have a moment you like but cannot explain why it is magical, a combination of forces pulling in different ways. We all get the moment when the hair stands up on the back of your neck, but how to explain it? And performers can take his material and do what they want. He feels he should never be too prescriptive; in the moment, when a great performer plays your music they make you sound better. Stephen enjoys this type of collaboration, the symbiotic relationship.

www.planethugill.com

BIOGRAPHIES



AUGUSTINA KAPOTI

Augustina Kapoti has conducted orchestras and choirs throughout the United States and Europe. She was invited to give a lecture series at New York University on "Conducting and Performance Practice", while similar engagements include Berklee College of Music, Boston and the University of Tampa, Florida. Ms Kapoti was Assistant Conductor to Simon Halsey CBE, at the BBC Proms, Berlin Philharmonie, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Chorus, London Symphony Chorus, Palau de la Música Catalan, Barcelona and at Columbia University and Juilliard, with Jeffrey Milarsky. She was awarded special commendations at International Orchestral Conducting Competitions in Graz and New York and holds two Master's degrees in Conducting with full scholarship from Bard Conservatory, New York and the University of Birmingham, UK.



ROB SMITH

Composer Rob Smith is Professor of Music Composition and director of the AURA Contemporary Ensemble at the University of Houston Moores School of Music. He has received numerous awards, including a Fulbright Grant to Australia and an Aaron Copland House Residency, and his highly energetic and vibrant music is frequently performed throughout the United States and abroad. Commissions have come from the Texas Music Festival Orchestra, the New York Youth Symphony Chamber Music Program, and the American Composers Forum, among many others. Boosey & Hawkes, Carl Fischer, C-Alan Publications, and Skitter Music Publications publish his music.



RICHARD HEASON

Richard studied music at the University of York and conducting with Colin Metters and Peter Eötvös. He started his career in music education, founding the community and education departments of the Orchestra of St John's Smith Square and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. He then moved to managing venues, working as Artistic Director of Blackheath Halls, Manager of Aylesbury Civic Theatre, and Director of St John's Smith Square. Richard and Stephen first met over 30 years ago, when Stephen delivered a composition workshop at the University of York. They have enjoyed creative collaborations, in concert halls and community settings ever since.



XENIA PESTOVA BENNETT

Described as “a powerhouse of contemporary keyboard repertoire” (Tempo), pianist and composer Xenia Pestova Bennett has earned an international reputation as a leading proponent of uncompromising music. Her work spans a wide range of sound worlds, styles and genres from classical to contemporary art music, free improvisation, experimental electronica and avant-pop. Xenia has performed at large festivals, for live broadcast, in major concert halls, and countless weird and wonderful venues and spaces. She has commissioned and recorded dozens of new works, collaborating with major innovators in contemporary music and exploring classical music boundaries with electronics, toy pianos, synthesizers and the Magnetic Resonator Piano.

xeniapestovabennett.com



LYNDA RICHARDSON

Lynda studied piano and singing at Trinity College London, and on graduating worked with the Royal Opera House, the ENO, the BBC Singers, was the lead soprano for John MacCarthy’s Ambrosian Singers, the Nigel Brooks Singers, and Fritz Spiegl’s vocal group The Spieglers. She starred in Friday Night is Music Night and Strike up the Band on Radio 2, and as a session singer sung on innumerable film tracks, TV jingles and concerts, also backing The Who, the Pink Floyd, Damon Albarn, Rod Stewart, Rick Wakeman, ABBA, Erasure and Paul McCartney. She was the senior singing teacher at Mountview Academy, a Professor at Guildhall and is currently Head of Vocal Studies at the Centre for Young Musicians London.



KORNÉLIA NEMCOVÁ

Kornélia Nemcová is a 3rd year undergraduate Trinity Laban composition student from Bratislava, Slovakia. Kornélia is regularly engaged in numerous activities as a composer, violinist, conductor, project manager and audio-visual engineer. For 2 years, she has been working as an Assistant Music Technology Technician at TL, taking on various roles in projects of both smaller (chamber, solo music) and larger (orchestral recordings, multimedia opera) scale.



CAMERON REED

Hailing from North Surrey, Cameron is a spirited composer and performer in his third year of study for his Masters of Music Composition at Trinity Laban Conservatoire. With a joint-honour's undergraduate degree in English and American Literature and Drama and Theatre Studies, Cameron ambitiously experiments with melding music with the multifaceted worlds of art, literature and history.



MARIKA TSUCHIYA

Marika Tsuchiya is a Japanese percussionist based in London. She finished her bachelor's degree at Tokyo College of Music in Japan. She is currently studying for a master's degree in music (performance) at Trinity Laban Conservatoire Music and Dance. Awarded Trinity College London Scholarships (21/22, 22/23 academic year) and Adam Collins Prize for Advanced Percussion (22/23 academic year).



LUIZ DE CAMPOS

Luiz first began beatboxing at the age of 12. Having taught himself many new sounds during High School, he applied for the UK Beatbox Championships in 2016 whilst studying the oboe at the Royal Academy of Music. He reached the Top 40 rankings in the country for the next three years, including a Round of 16 appearances in 2017. Since then, he has also beatboxed for television programmes like Britain's Got Talent, X Factor, and Pitch Battle. Luiz graduated from the Royal Academy of Music in 2021, and has since worked as a freelancer with numerous orchestras, including the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, London Philharmonic Orchestra, and Birmingham Royal Ballet Sinfonia.



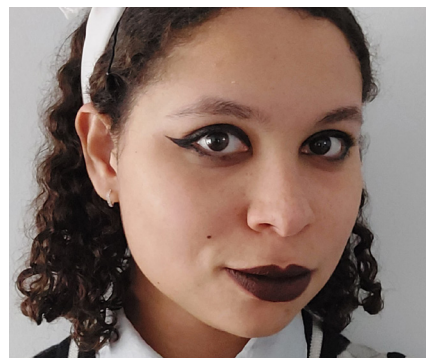
EMILY DE GRUCHY

Emily de Gruchy is a Jersey-based composer. Described as writing “assured and controlled compositions”, Emily’s music is inspired by the likes of the 1960s New York School (John Cage, Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff) and European composers Per Nørgård and Witold Lutosławski. Emily has recently completed her Masters in Composition at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance.



GEORGIA BARNES

Georgia is a musician, who specialises in theatrical work. She trained in composition and vocal studies at Trinity Laban. Georgia has recently worked for the Royal Opera, the London Mozart Players and the CSSD. This year, Georgia is writing for the Leeds Lieder festival, producing Opera Works for Opera Prelude and is a conductor’s assistant for Stephen’s 80th Birthday Concert.



ROSIE BRIGHTON

Rosie Brighton is a London based composer who primarily writes soundtracks for video games. She is currently studying at Trinity Laban Conservatoire under Alex Paxton and Amir Konjani. From chiptune to large-scale orchestral works, her music strives to explore and push the boundaries of game music by incorporating her training in both classical orchestration and electronic music.

ORCHESTRA

SOUTHBANK SINFONIA

FIRST VIOLIN

Sophie Hinson
Victoria Farrell-Reed
Iryna Glyebova
Alexander Casson
Raina Arnett
Lorenzo Narici

SECOND VIOLIN

Xinyue Wang
Eleanor Hill
Doris Kuo
Savannah Brown
Andrew Liddell **

VIOLA

Charles Whittaker
Aleksandra Lipke
Edward Keenan
Hannah Gardiner

CELLO

Abigail Lorimier
Reyan Murtadha
Paul Lee
Rebecca Bradley

BASS

Jakub Cywinski
Yat Hei Lee **

FLUTE

Eleanor Blamires
Sofia Castillo

OBOE

Izy Cheesman
Luiz De Campos

CLARINET

Jules Baeten
Thomas Gant

BASSOON

Ruihan Kee
Antonia Lazenby

HORN

Millie Lihoreau
Jake Parker
Máté Tözsér *
Joel Roberts *

TRUMPET

Joseph Skypala
Cameron Johnson *
Bradley Jones *

TROMBONE

Chris Brewster **
Iain Maxwell **
Jim Alexander **

TUBA

Aled Meredith-Barrett **

TIMPANI

Aaron Townsend

* SbS Alumni

** Guest Musician

TRINITY LABAN

VIOLIN

Nisa Akdag
Fenna Murcott
Eimear Murcott

VIOLA

Jacob Fitzgerald

CELLO

Peter Nagle

ELECTRIC BASS

Max West

RADIOS

Kornélia Nemcová
Franklyn Oliver

FLUTE

Ana Geoghegan
Finch Ashwood

CLARINET

Martha Clayton

ALTO SAXOPHONE

Emily Linane

TENOR SAXOPHONE

Ben Harlan

TRUMPET

Leo Holder

PERCUSSION

Marika Tsuchiya
Cameron Reed
Daniel Greenwich
Rosie Brighton
Jonah Raes
Jack Smith
Billy James
Polina Savicka
Eliana Echeverry
Zachary Wolf Quenum
Alex Cho
Melvin Chan
Georgia Morgan Turner
Max Conway Goutines

LAMBETH MUSIC SERVICE

VIOLIN

Maya Lockwood
Jerry Athymaritis
Eleanor Dang
Ariana Villazon Aranibar
Aitana Villazon Aranibar
Jermiah Robinson-Dawkins

CELLO

Joel Peck
Freya Bucknall

OBOE

Teo Luppi

CLARINET

Danielle Akintunde

SAXOPHONE

Brouke Benhur

TRUMPET

Teresa Falkenberg

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FOR ALL (CoMA)

VIOLIN

Mick Kahn
Tansy Spinks

VIOLA

Hayley Scurll
Richard Gartner

CELLO

Liz Herbert
Corinna Marlowe
Kerry Andrews
Linda Leroy
Dominic McGonigal

OBOE

Eloise Pearce

ALTO SAXOPHONE

Clive Massey

BASSOON

Nick Rampley

TRUMPET

Clark Page

E-FLAT HORN

Karen Burnell

TROMBONE

Jonathan Ticher

TUBA

Barnaby Rogers

ADDITIONAL PERCUSSION

Dominic Murcott
Rob Smith
Jack Wood
Rebecca Morée Galian
Brian Byfield



CHORUS

TRINITY LABAN

Georgia Barnes
Jacob Fitzgerald
Anna Conroy
Hibiki Takata
Martha Clayton
David Balica
Yulia Temnova
Theo Karpinski

CoMA

Taji Quaife
Caroline Curtiss
Mary Edmondson
Joanne Simmons
James Tilley
Richard Meares

KENTISH TOWN CANTORUM

Philippa Bramson
Jo Burns
Sarah Carrier
Mary Dickins
Myra Farnsworth
Christine Guedalla
Anne Hall
Eve Hazards
Clare House
Gill Jacobs
Julie Jaspert
Heather Mackay
Alison Parkinson
Lynda Richardson
Janie Shorter
Ursule Thurnherr

CENTRE FOR YOUNG MUSICIANS

Millie Hancock
Nikolay Kuznetsov
Kaela Masek
Macy O'Neill
Lily-Beatrice Osiris
Aisan Sadeghipour
Bethan Sheldon
Beatrice Stolar
Natalia Tello
Mica Isaacs
David Swaby-Thomas

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Emily de Gruchy, *Introit & Dark Sun* Performance Assistant
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Aaron Townsend, *Dark Sun* Percussion 2: Leader
Cameron Reed, *Dark Sun* Percussion 3: Leader
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Mick Kahn, Contemporary Music for All
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Almeida Festival, 1988

Cover Artwork, Julian Montague





Stephen Montague - 14 week pack-horse trip
Wyoming, 1964

stephenmontague.com