

BGS | NEW HORIZONS IN GUITAR PERFORMANCE



...the isle is full of noises...

new scottish music for guitar — **Allan Neave**

Allan Neave, guitar

...the isle is full of noises... new scottish music for guitar

	Edward McGuire	
1	Prelude No. 5	9.06
	Alasdair Nicolson	
2	...the isle is full of noises...	10.49
	Thomas Wilson	
	Three pieces	
3	i Allegro molto	1.55
4	ii Lento con espressione	1.48
5	iii Moderato poco rubato	2.26
	Gordon McPherson	
6	Uncanny Valley	20.46
	Edward McGuire	
7	Homage to Rodrigo	7.00
	Peter Maxwell Davies	
	Two Pieces	
8	Yesnaby Ground <i>(with Tom Kerstens, guitar)</i>	2.48
9	Farewell to Stromness	4.40

Producers

Tom Kerstens
John Taylor

Engineer

John Taylor

Recording Dates

8-9 January and 13 May 1997
in the Parish Church of the Holy Trinity,
Weston, Herts.

Photography & Cover Design

Clare Skeats
Rachel Godfrey
Bath Spa University College

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THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL

1. Edward McGuire (b.1948)

Prelude 5 (1981)

Written in 1981 Prelude 5 represents Edward McGuire's first piece for the guitar. The work was commissioned by Scottish guitarist Philip Thorne and is part of a series of short pieces for various instruments (to date the composer has written 17 such preludes, the most recent being for French Horn). The guitar prelude has strong tonal and minimalist influences, exploiting gradually changing note-clusters against more dramatic passages, together with hints of Gaelic and popular music. The work was awarded a medal from the Concours de la Guitare, Paris in 1982.

© 1997 Allan Neave.

2. Alasdair Nicolson (b.1961)

...the isle is full of noises...

This work was written during the Summer of 1996 and completed whilst I was teaching on the Young Composers Course on the island of Hoy, Orkney. To some extent, being on the island brought together a lot of musical ideas with which I'd been toying and, indeed, allowed me to distil and purify some others. Hoy is a strangely haunting place and I was able to experience moments of intense stillness and silence alongside tempestuous weather with wild wind and rain and even the

shipwreck of my host's boat. All this pointed towards the quote, which I have used as the title, which comes from Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*. The piece has the feeling of a lullaby albeit that there is a fantastical faster section in the middle. I was keen to explore the idea of single lines on the guitar and to activate natural aural resonances and therefore to imply harmony rather than to create dense chords.

"Be not afeared: the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,
That if I then had wak'd after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,
The clouds me thought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me; that, when I wak'd
I cried to dream again."

© 1995 Alasdair Nicolson

Commissioned by Allan Neave with subsidy from the Scottish Arts Council.

3-5. Thomas Wilson (b.1927)

Three Pieces for Guitar (1961)

These pieces are Wilson's first works for guitar. Originally they were better known on the continent than here, having been published and frequently performed there, but in more recent years they have become widely known here. Musically, the Three Pieces are short, but serious in intention. The first (*Allegro molto*), is a *moto perpetuo* in which an overall scherzo character occasionally erupts into moments of aggression. Gradually, however, the momentum of the music loses its edge, and the piece ends quietly and rather enigmatically. The second piece (*Lento, con espressione*) is more lyrical and song-like, while the third (*Moderato, poco vibrato*), uses a freely poetic almost recitative style.

© 1997 Tom Wilson

6. Gordon McPherson (b.1965)

Uncanny Valley (1995)

The original starting point for this solo guitar work began whilst discussing with a friend my rather strange phobia. The term phobia is perhaps rather strong, but it goes a long way to describe the uneasiness I feel when confronted with certain types of animation – stop frame animation being a particularly disturbing example.

My friend went on to explain the fascinating research done by a certain Professor Masahiro Mori at the Tokyo Institute of Technology which suggested that this uncomfortable concern was not entirely personal. His research discovered that, when confronted with images varying from basic shapes/inanimate objects to more lifelike/advanced prosthetics, a subject's graphically displayed responses showed that the more lifelike the image the greater the subject's acceptance of it, until however the point where the image could no longer be distinguished between real and simulation. At this strange juncture of perception the graph would suddenly dip. In the typically beautiful way that Japanese sometimes translates, this dip was called "The uncanny valley" – the point where the mind will not accept an image that seems so confusingly real. Although this work is not an attempt to transcribe this into a direct musical form, this way of thinking colours the whole reasoning of the piece, as by way of writing, it evolves in a manner which suggests an inanimate object, say a guitar, "becoming aware", from simply harmonic passages to outlandish virtuosity.

© 1995 Gordon McPherson

"Uncanny Valley" was commissioned by the Dundee Guitar Festival Society, with a financial subsidy from the Scottish Arts Council, and is dedicated with thanks, to Allan Neave.

7. **Edward McGuire**

Homage to Joaquín Rodrigo

Commissioned 1996 by Bath International Guitar Festival. The music of my "Homage" conveys a warm tribute to the long creative life of a master. It celebrates his style and while not quoting any of his music, hopefully carries the vivacity of his spirit. As a flute player, I admire his flute concerto so not only guitar music has inspired my new piece. Celtic and Iberian rhythms and motifs are wedded here – they were never far apart anyway!

© 1996 Edward McGuire

The assistance of the Scottish Arts Council is gratefully acknowledged for "Homage to Rodrigo" and McGuire's other commissioned works.

8-9. **Peter Maxwell-Davies**

Yesnaby Ground and Farewell to Stromness

Farewell to Stromness and Yesnaby Ground are both short pieces from The Yellow Cake Review, a sequence of cabaret-style numbers protesting against uranium mining in the Orkney Islands. The Revue was first performed at the St Magnus Festival, Orkney, by Eleanor Bron, with the composer at the piano, in June 1980.

Thomas Wilson was born in America but settled in Scotland at an early age. A graduate of Glasgow University, he taught there and was given a personal Chair in 1977. He has held executive positions with many organisations, including the Arts Council and the Composers Guild of Great Britain, and is a founder member of the Scottish Society of Composers. His huge list of works has been performed throughout the world, including a recently completed Guitar Concerto, and in 1990 he was awarded a CBE.

Glasgow born **Edward McGuire** studied composition at the Royal Academy of Music and with Swedish composer Ingvar Lidholm in Stockholm. His violin piece Rant won a competition to find a test piece for the 1978 Carl Flesch International Violin Competition. Recent works include the highly acclaimed Peter Pan for Scottish Ballet and A Glasgow Symphony for the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland. He has been a featured composer at many festivals, including the International Guitar Festival at Bath in 1996, and is also renowned as a flautist with the successful folk group the Whistlebinkies.

Gordon McPherson was born in Dundee and is a leading figure in the younger generation of Scottish composers. He studied at the Music Department at the University of York returning there to complete his Doctorate. His music has won awards and been frequently performed and broadcast in the UK and abroad. Recent works include On E (1994) commissioned by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the large scale Handguns: A Suite *(1995) and a new study test piece for the 1997 International Guitar Festival at Bath. He has recently become associated with the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, where he teaches composition.

Alasdair Nicolson was born in 1961 in Inverness and brought up on the Isle of Skye and the Black Isle. He studied music at Edinburgh University and later became Shaw McFie Lang Fellow there working in composition and music theatre. He has written music for the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Platform Ensemble, Joanna MacGregor and Oystein Birkeland amongst others. In 1993 he was awarded the IBM Composer's Prize for his work The Tree of Strings. In 1996 there are premieres of new works for the BBC SO, the Emperor String Quartet and the St Magnus Festival. Nicolson has a strong commitment to promoting new music and co-founded Platform Festival in London in 1991. He is currently writing an opera for Opera Circus.

Allan Neave is one of Britain's outstanding guitarists. After studies at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and the Royal Northern College of Music, he has achieved great renown and critical acclaim as both performer and educator. He performs regularly at many of the worlds leading musical events including the Sonorities, ICMC, Tychy, Bath and Cheltenham Festivals. He has worked with many influential musicians and composers including Nikita Koshkin, Edward McGuire, Alasdair Nicolson, Gordon McPherson and James MacMillan.

Allan also founded the Dundee International Guitar Festival and has been it's Artistic Director for the last ten years. He is presently a faculty member at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and Napier University.

Allan recently received the runners up prize in the Glenfiddich / Scotland on Sunday 'Spirit of Scotland' Awards 2000. These awards are set up to recognise individuals who lead the way in Scottish Culture.

www.allanneave.co.uk

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