



diversions

Innovations

Kathryn Page & Murray McLachlan (piano)
Heather Corbett & Stephen Burke (percussion)

Concerto for two pianos and percussion (2005)

The Rite of Spring (1913, rev. 1947)

Sonata for two pianos and percussion (1937)

Charles Camilleri (1931-2009)

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Innovations

Charles Camilleri (1931-2009)

Concerto for two pianos and percussion (2005) 20:59

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|------|
| 1 | I. <i>Allegro moderato</i> | 7:16 |
| 2 | II. <i>Libero</i> | 8:59 |
| 3 | III. <i>Allegro moderato (vivace)</i> | 4:44 |

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

The Rite of Spring (1912-3, rev. 1947)

transcription for piano duet by the composer 34:18

◆ First Part: The adoration of the earth

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 4 | Introduction | 3:06 |
| 5 | The Augurs of Spring: Dances of young girls | 3:18 |
| 6 | Ritual of Abduction | 1:21 |
| 7 | Spring rounds | 4:29 |
| 8 | Ritual of the rival tribes | 1:40 |
| 9 | Procession of the Sage | 0:41 |
| 10 | The Sage | 0:24 |
| 11 | Dance of the Earth | 1:12 |

◆ Second Part: The sacrifice

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 12 | Introduction | 5:04 |
| 13 | Mystic circles of the young girls | 3:07 |
| 14 | Glorification of the chosen one | 1:20 |
| 15 | Evocation of the ancestors | 0:44 |
| 16 | Ritual action (dance) of the ancestors | 3:46 |
| 17 | Sacrificial dance (the chosen one) | 4:01 |

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Sonata for two pianos and percussion, Sz 110 (1937) 26:51

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|-------|
| 18 | I. <i>Assai lento</i> | 13:38 |
| 19 | II. <i>Lento, ma non troppo</i> | 6:43 |
| 20 | III. <i>Allegro non troppo</i> | 6:30 |

Total playing time: 82:14

Innovations: an introduction

Igor Stravinsky was an innovator, but an unusual one. He was a stylistic innovator, mining and reshaping other genres of music to forge his particular stylistic idioms, rather than inventing or developing new harmonic structures or sonorities. He was inclined to explore one new idiom and then move on to another. Béla Bartók's achievement was to show how completely the influence of folk music, with rhythmic and harmonic traditions quite different from those of the classical tradition, could be absorbed into a distinctive and emotive modern idiom¹. Charles Camilleri's innovative creative streak first evidenced itself when, in his early childhood, he was told off by his piano teacher for daring to "re-arrange" Mozart or Beethoven. Today, he thrives on musical chaos and the opportunity for creativity in music that it offers. For example, he has written twenty-one pieces which invoke the celestial in either its astronomical or mystical aspects².

The golden thread linking all three composers is their interest in folk music and, for two of them, Thomas Alva Edison's invention – or innovation – of the recording phonograph was to play a major part³. In 1905, in company with Zoltan Kodály, and a recording gramophone (sic), Bartók started the systematic investigation of folk music that was to form the basis of his idiom. What Bartok discovered was that he could use the unmodified structural characteristics of folk music as the foundations of a personal language that would be free from the controls of a late Romantic idiom.

It was while Charles Camilleri was a student at The Lyceum that his taste in music had taken a definite orientation. When the Camilleri business took the family to Tunis, young Charles accompanied them. It was there that he first became acquainted with folk music and the Eastern version of 'ghana'. Back home, he would use his father's Philco radio to tune into Eastern folk music stations. This brought him to the realisation that the folk people enjoyed different tunes and music from that which he was being taught. He knew something was different and was determined to do something about it.

The final link between Charles Camilleri, Igor Stravinsky and Béla Bartók is, of course, the piano – itself a means of achieving innovation above all other. Bartók, as pianist, made valuable recordings throughout his life not only as a soloist but also in piano duets with his wife, and with Joseph Szigeti (violin) and Benny Goodman (clarinet). He shared a common understanding of what might be called the rhythmic environment of the time with contemporaries including Rachmaninoff (Russian), Schnabel (Austrian), Cortot and Poulenc (French) and Kathleen Long (English)⁴.

Igor Stravinsky was the most prolific of all recording composers and a commemorative issue of 31 LPs was made by CBS in America to mark his centenary⁵.

In the early '50s, Charles Camilleri was in London. He met Harold Fielding, the impresario, and spent about five years touring theatres there. He says, "I wrote music, I conducted, and I managed to integrate myself in the musical circle and got to know the people who mattered." Although not specifically mentioned, undoubtedly his skills as a pianist stood him in good stead not only in London, but when he moved to New York in the '60s and did "everything related to music".

¹ Morris, M., *The Pimlico Dictionary of 20th-Century Composers*, Pimlico, London, 1999, pp.232, 236,345, 346.

² ir-Rihan, V., & Gwann. S., *Malta Today Archives*. Newsworks, Malta, 2001.

³ Pearling, R. & C., *The Guinness Book of Recorded Sound*, Guinness, Enfield, 1984, pp.162-163.

⁴ Philip, R., *Performing Music in the Age of Recording*, Yale, New Haven and London, 2004, pp.132,173.

⁵ Philip, R., *ibid*.

The music

Charles Camilleri's *Concerto for two pianos and percussion* (2005) evolved after a late night discussion in the dining room at Chetham's School of Music, Manchester, during the 2004 Summer School when Murray McLachlan mentioned how wonderful it would be for Charles Camilleri to write a new piece for performance at the 2005 Summer School. Charles responded to this suggestion with alacrity and said that he had had the wonderfully-inspired idea to write for the combination of two pianos and percussion, just as Bartok had done.

About the piece, and its composition, Charles Camilleri wrote: "I have harboured the idea of composing a work for this combination for quite a number of years. Since the sixties I felt that it would be possible to write music whereby tonality, atonality and modality would be treated as equal partners. The *Concerto for two pianos and percussion* is in line with this concept."

The percussion instruments utilized in the work are: timpani (3), side drum, bongos (2) congas (2) glockenspiel, vibraphone (with the motor off), xylophone, and cymbals (suspended – one large, one small). The layout and juxtaposition of the pianos and percussion instruments shown in the picture on the rear cover is as used for the Camilleri work, but basically follows the guidelines given by Bartók in the score of his *Sonata for two pianos and percussion* (see next page).

Igor Stravinsky was for many years the most influential and highly-acclaimed of 20th-century composers, the yardstick by which others were judged. The influence of *Le Sacre du Printemps* (The Rite of Spring) resonated throughout the last century and continues into this one. Stravinsky's account of how he conceived *The Rite of Spring* has almost the character of religious witness: 'I saw in imagination a solemn pagan rite: wise elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring.' The meaning is clear, cruel but true: something (someone) must die for life to go on.

For Stravinsky, the symbolic idea of *The Rite of Spring* coincided with a turning point in his music. Just as, he recalled, 'the violent Russian spring was like the whole earth cracking', so he was to give music new life by breaking up its past. Stravinsky composed at the piano, and said that he could play the 'Sacrificial Dance' movement before he worked out how to write it down – 'I had only my ear to guide me.' After the tangled elaboration of the *Introduction*, which is rather like an improvisatory free-for-all, *The Rite of Spring* is presented as a succession of blocks, of contrasts between ideas that are perpetuated rather than developed or taken anywhere, and in that sense it fulfills its title – a 'rite' that admits no argument or discussion, but asserts an irresistible power⁶.

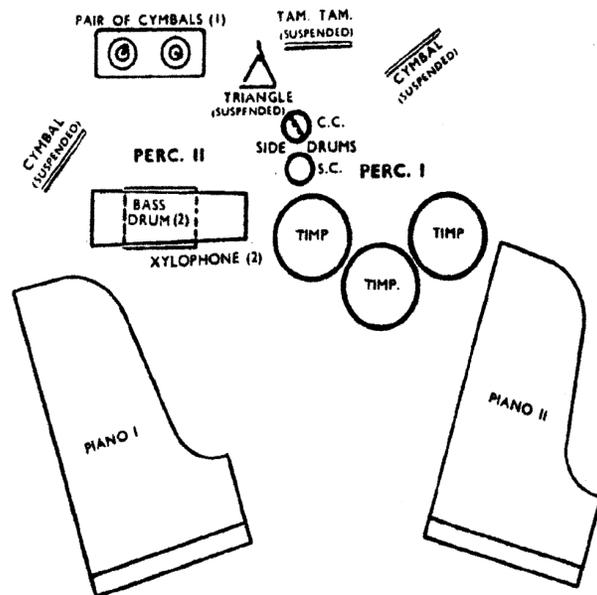
⁶ Ed. Kenyon, N., Jack, A., *The BBC Proms Guide to Great Orchestral Works*, Faber, London, 2004, pp.230, 232 & 233.

In the *Sonata for two pianos and percussion* (1937), Béla Bartók allied his sense of rhythmic drive to more directly tonal ideas than in his earlier chamber works. The slow movement is a night scene, rustling with the sounds of insects. The Impressionistic touches, and the ebullient, sometimes perky finale (percussion predominating) make this one of Bartok's most immediate works with colours and effects that are remarkable in this chamber original⁷.

The percussion instruments used in the *Sonata* are: timpani (3), xylophone, side drums (2) one with snares and one without, cymbal (suspended), cymbals (one pair), bass drum, triangle, and tam-tam.

Notes compiled by Jim Pattison

Béla Bartók gave very clear instructions in the piano score of his *Sonata* about the juxtaposition of the instruments. He wrote: “If [the work is] performed without orchestra, one of the pianists should lead the whole ensemble. In addition, he should supervise the percussion players during rehearsal and see that the requirements of the score are strictly observed.” The following diagram indicates the composer’s required layout. It can be seen from the session photograph on the back cover that his plan was followed carefully. The piano lids were removed to create a clear line of sight.



⁷ Morris, M., *The Pimlico Dictionary of 20th-Century Composers*, Pimlico, London, 1999, pp.232, 236,345, 346.

The performers

Murray McLachlan, Chair of EPTA (European Piano Teachers' Association) is Head of Keyboard at Chetham's School of Music and a Senior Tutor at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. McLachlan has made over 40 commercial recordings which have consistently received outstanding reviews, including 'key recording' and 'rosette' status in the Penguin Guide to CDs. He has performed on all five continents and also serves regularly on juries of international piano competitions.

McLachlan is founder/artistic Director of the Chetham's International Summer school and festival for Pianists, Europe's largest summer school devoted exclusively to the piano. In 2007 McLachlan launched the first Manchester International Concerto Competition for Young Pianists, an event which was presented for the fourth time in August 2013. The winner of the first competition in the '22 and under' category was Slovenian pianist Anja German, who was awarded a contract to record for Dunelm Records (a recital of Haydn, Schubert and Chopin, available on Diversions DDV 24136).

McLachlan is also a well-known writer, and has contributed many articles on piano technique and music to magazines including 'International Piano' and 'BBC Music Magazine'. In 2013 Faber published his book 'foundations of technique' and later this year will publish its successor 'Piano technique in Practice'. After editing 'Piano Professional' Magazine from 2006-14, he was appointed editor of 'piano Journal' in 2014. In June 2012 the University of Dundee awarded him an honorary Doctorate for outstanding services to music and education. This follows on from an honorary knighthood awarded for services to Maltese Music in 1997. Murray McLachlan continues to perform all over the world. Is currently artistic director of the 'Camel House' concerts series in Lanzarote, for whom he recently performed the cycle of 32 Beethoven piano sonatas from memory over seven recitals.

Kathryn Page has given over 20 recitals at the South Bank and Wigmore Hall, both as soloist and chamber music pianist. She has toured Norway, Italy, Ireland and Australia where she gave seven recitals at the Sydney Festival and broadcast for ABC. At home Kathryn has performed at many of the leading music festivals and has given numerous live broadcasts for BBC Radio 3 from Broadcasting House in London, St Georges, Bristol and St Davids Hall, Cardiff.

Her interest in contemporary music has led to many world premieres including works by Gary Carpenter, Alisdair Nicholson and Django Bates. She has worked with many established artists including David Campbell, Joanna MacGregor and Sting! TV work has ranged from a live recital from Paris on CNN, an appearance on the Korean broadcasting network, several performances on Irish TV and a much treasured *Blue Peter* badge. In 1991 she recorded the complete set of six Mozart-Grieg duo sonatas for BBC Radio Three. In recent years Kathryn has worked prolifically as a popular and busy adjudicator for the British Federation of Festivals, ABRSM examiner, and administrator for EPTA UK, the Chetham's International Summer School For Pianists and the Manchester International Concerto Competition. She recorded this

album with Murray McLachlan and also appeared with McLachlan on his Divine Art album of piano music by Camilleri “Celestial Harmonies”, and gave an acclaimed performance in 2013 of Messiaen’s Quartet for the End of Time at Chetham’s School of Music in Manchester.

Heather Corbett is one of Britain’s leading percussionists. Her solo performances throughout the country have attracted outstanding critical acclaim. Her versatility enables her to play all styles of music from light to very difficult contemporary music and world premieres of concertos.

Heather was born into a musical family, later studying at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London where she was awarded numerous prizes and scholarships during her joint study of percussion and piano. She also helped develop the Percussion Department of the Junior School at the Guildhall.

Heather freelanced with the BBC Symphony Orchestra where she played Percussion and Cymbalom under the direction of Pierre Boulez, as well as with other notable orchestras and ensembles in London before moving to Scotland as Section Principal Percussion with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. She has played numerous concertos, appearing regularly as a soloist on BBC Radio 2.

Heather gave the world premiere of a new percussion concerto by composer Martin Butler as part of Paragon’s 20th Birthday Concert in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall.

She has played numerous Percussion Concertos with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, including those by Milhaud, Creston, Hovhaness, Ortiz and Howard Blake. These were all broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and/or BBC Radio Scotland. Heather has a personal letter from Darius Milhaud, thanking her for playing his *Concerto for Marimba and Vibraphone*.

Heather’s talents are in great demand in the world of education for master-classes, seminars and workshops as well as individual tuition and examining. She has taught at many notable musical establishments including the Royal Northern College of Music, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the University of St Andrews and Napier University.

As an experienced recording artist, Heather regularly makes CDs, BBC broadcasts and television appearances. She receives sponsorship from instrument-makers Yamaha, Sabian and Adams.

Stephen Burke was born in North Yorkshire and studied at Chetham’s School of Music and the RNCM. Whilst a student he was a semi-finalist in 1999 and a percussion finalist in the 2002 BBC Young Musician of the Year competition. An interest in contemporary music and music from other cultures led him to spend a year studying in Holland, where he performed with the Dutch National Opera and Steve Reich. He also studied Swiss Basle drumming and Senegalese percussion.

Since moving to London in 2004 to study at the Guildhall, Stephen has worked as a freelance musician in a variety of fields. He has been guest principal with period music ensembles including the Hanover Band, New London Consort and London Handel Orchestra. He also works with modern orchestras such as the Philharmonia, BBC Symphony Orchestra and English Chamber Orchestra and further afield with the CBSO, Hallé, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, RLPO and RTÉ in Dublin. Chamber music venues have included the Barbican, Wigmore Hall, Kings Place and the Aldeburgh Festival. In recent years he has worked with many composers including John Adams, George Benjamin, Charles Camilleri, Peter Maxwell Davis, I Wayan Dibia, James McMillan, Steve Reich, Peter Wiegold, and I Nengah Susila. He collaborated with artist Cerith Wyn Evans on a sound art installation “Eaux d’artifice.”

Always aiming to keep his work diverse Stephen performs with Balinese Gamelan Lila Cita and enjoys improvising and composing using acoustic and electronic sound worlds. He is currently (2017) working on Mikrophonie I by Stockhausen.

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Recorded in the Whiteley Hall, Chetham’s School of Music, Manchester, England,
on September 1, 2005 and January 28, 2006.

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Recording assistant: Joyce Pattison

Pianos prepared by Peter Lyons

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After the world premiere performance of Charles Camilleri's Concerto for Two Pianos and Percussion August 21, 2005. (L-R): Heather Corbett, Kathryn Page, Murray McLachlan and Stephen Burke (photo by David Johnson)



At the recording session on September 1, 2005
Front: Kathryn Page, Charles Camilleri,
Murray McLachlan
Back: Heather Corbett, Stephen Burke