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# MUSIC *in* Peebles

presents

## ‘THE LIVING MOUNTAIN’

(World Premiere Performance)



**Ailie Robertson (harp)**

with

**The Turadh String Quartet**

Michelle Dierx & Abigail Young (violins)

Theodore Chung Lei (viola), Balázs Renczés (cello)



2021/22 SEASON  
Eastgate Theatre, Peebles  
Tuesday 29 March 2022 at 7.30 pm





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## PROGRAMME

Approx.  
duration  
(minutes)

### **A selection of transcriptions of Baroque Repertoire alongside Traditional & Contemporary works for Scottish Harp** 20

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 1. Turloch O'Carolan | Eleanor Plunkett/Carolan's Concerto<br>Arr. A. Robertson  |
| 2. J.S. Bach         | Allemande from Suite for Lute BWV995<br>Arr. A. Robertson |
| 3. Traditional       | Three Traditional Jigs<br>Arr. A. Robertson               |
| 4. Mary Doumany      | Water from The Elements                                   |
| 5. Ailie Robertson   | 10,000 Days and Nights                                    |
| 6. Bernard Andres    | Amarantes No.1  |

## INTERVAL (20 MINUTES)

### **Ailie Robertson (b.1983)**

#### **'The Living Mountain'**

#### **for harp, string quartet & electronics (2022)**

60

(World Premiere Performance)

- i. The Plateau
- ii. The Recesses
- iii. Water
- iv. Frost and Snow
- v. Air and Light
- vi. Being

## Ailie Robertson (b.1983)

### ‘The Living Mountain’

for harp, string quartet & electronics (2022)

‘The Living Mountain’ was written by Aberdonian **Nan Shepherd**, in the last years of the Second World War and it sat in her desk drawer until it was published in 1977. In this masterpiece of nature writing, Nan Shepherd describes her journeys into the Cairngorm mountains. There she discovers a world that can be breathtakingly beautiful at times and shockingly harsh at others.



**Ailie Robertson’s** piece, ‘*The Living Mountain*’ is an audio work for harp, string quartet and electronics inspired by Nan Shepherd’s celebrated book. It explores Nan’s writing, the Cairngorm mountain range and our human connections with the wild through melodic interpretations that connect identity, memory and place.

The piece is a continuous work, but is subdivided into 6 movements which reflect chapters from the book:

- i. The Plateau
- ii. The Recesses
- iii. Water
- iv. Frost and Snow
- v. Air and Light
- vi. Being

Tonight’s performance in Peebles is the world premiere of ‘The Living Mountain’.

*Note kindly provided by Ailie Robertson*



## Nan Shepherd and 'The Living Mountain'

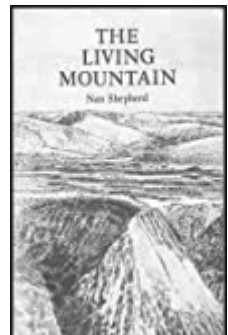
Since 2016, we have all become familiar with the face of Nan Shepherd, as she gazes enigmatically from the RBS £5 banknote. But who was she, and how did she earn her place on Scotland's currency?

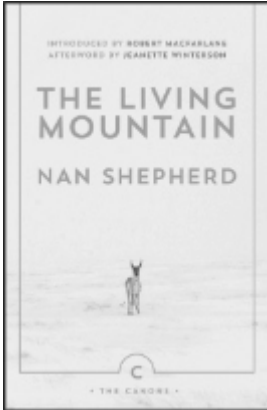


Anna 'Nan' Shepherd was born on 11 February 1893 to John and Jane Shepherd in Cults, near Aberdeen. A month after her birth, the family moved to the house where Shepherd would live for most of her life, 'Dunvegan', 503 North Deeside Road, in West Cults, three miles from Aberdeen. Educated at the local primary school, followed by Aberdeen High School for Girls, she went on to study at the University of Aberdeen, graduating with an MA in 1915.

For the next 41 years, she lectured in English at the Aberdeen Training Centre for Teachers (later Aberdeen College of Education). She retired in 1956 but continued to work, editing the Aberdeen University Review until 1963. An enthusiastic gardener and hill walker, she made many visits to the Cairngorms with students and friends and was a keen member of the Deeside Field Club. Her many further travels included visits to Norway, France, Italy, Greece and South Africa, but she always returned to West Cults. During her lifetime she published four prose works and a volume of poetry. In 1964 she was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Aberdeen. She died on 27 February 1981, aged 88.

Nan Shepherd completed the final draft of *The Living Mountain* in 1945, and shared it with her friend and Scottish author Neil Gunn. He was complimentary but suggested that it might be 'difficult' to get it published. Thus, Shepherd deposited the manuscript in a drawer where it lay for over forty years until published by Aberdeen University in 1977. Canongate Books republished it in 2011 and since then it has been highly acclaimed with Shepherd finally being heralded as one of Scotland's greatest nature writers.





In his introduction to the latest edition of *The Living Mountain*, naturalist Robert Macfarlane comments: “Most works of mountain literature are written by men, and most of them focus on the goal of the summit. Nan Shepherd's aimless, sensual exploration of the Cairngorms is bracingly different.” The text does not read as a guide book; Shepherd’s contemplation of the mountain goes far beyond that of the casual visitor, as is clear from the chapter headings covering different elements of the mountain and its environment (‘The Plateau’, ‘Water’, ‘Air and Light’...)

and its flora and fauna. The culmination of this distilled experience comes in three final meditative chapters on Sleep, The Senses and, finally, Being.

In summary, *The Living Mountain* is a lyrical testament in praise of the Cairngorms. It is a work deeply rooted in Nan Shepherd’s knowledge of the natural world, and a poetic and philosophical meditation on our longing for high and holy places. The essence of the book, and of Nan Shepherd’s relationship with the natural world of the Cairngorms, is contained in her final paragraph:

“I believe that I now understand in some small measure why the Buddhist goes on pilgrimage to a mountain. The journey is itself part of the technique by which the god is sought. It is a journey into Being; for as I penetrate more deeply into a mountain’s life, I penetrate also into my own. For an hour I am beyond desire. It is not ecstasy, that leap out of the self that makes man like a god. I am not out of myself, but in myself. I am. To know Being, this is the final grace accorded from the mountain.”



## AILIE ROBERTSON

Ailie is a multi-award winning composer, conductor, performer and educator from Edinburgh. whose work crosses the boundaries of traditional and contemporary music. Winner



of the the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Composition Prize, The Sofia International Composition Competition, the 'Achievement in New Music' prize at the inaugural New Music Scotland Awards and second in the 14th International Oslo Grieg Competition, Ailie has received commissions, awards and residences from Creative Scotland, Chamber Music Scotland, Centre for Contemporary Arts, Arts Council England, Culture Ireland, the PRS Foundation and Celtic Connections, along with residencies at PRIM/CALQ Montreal, the Edinburgh International Film Festival and Berwick Sound.

Ailie was nominated 'Composer of the Year' in the Scottish Trad Music Awards, and held a BBC Performing Arts Fellowship to work as Composer in Residence. She was also awarded an Emerging Excellence Award from the Musicians Benevolent Fund. She was selected for Sound and Music's 'Adopt a Composer', and Composer/Curator scheme, and in 2015 was awarded a BBC Alumni Award. She was chosen for the 2016/17 RSNO Composer's hub, and was a 2017/18 London Philharmonic Orchestra Leverhulme Young Composer.

She has scored original music for film and TV, as well as three touring theatre productions, and her Traditional Spirits Suite was described as "an exquisitely moving little masterpiece" (FRoots). Recent commissions include pieces for the 2019 BBC Proms, The London Philharmonic Orchestra, Scottish Ensemble, Red Note, Cappella Nova, Sound Festival, the Riot Ensemble, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Bang on a Can, the Dunedin Consort, and the Glasgow School of Art Choir. She was composer-in-residence with Sound Festival and is currently composer-in residence with Glyndebourne Opera.

Ailie's works have been performed by such groups as the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Ensemble, Mr McFall's Chamber, Quatuor Bozzini, The Elias Quartet, Lontano, The Jubilate Ladies Choir and Distil, and soloists such as Eleanor Turner, Birgitte Volan Håvik, Fraser Fifield, and Su-A Lee.

Her work has been featured on BBC Radio 3, Radio 2 and Radio Scotland, and her latest release with The Outside Track was awarded the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik 2013.

Ailie is also widely regarded as one of Scotland's leading traditional musicians and Celtic harpists, with some of the most impressive credentials in the Scottish harp world. A five-time National Mod Gold Medallist and a BBC



Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year finalist, Ailie also won first prize at the inaugural London Harp Competition, was judged best overall musician at the Edinburgh Competition Festival. She has represented Commun na Clarsach for Scotland at the Pan Celtic Festival in Ireland, and in 2005 she was awarded a scholarship from the ESU in recognition of her 'virtuosic clarsach playing', and was a winner of the St Albans New Roots award. She was the winner of the Live Ireland award for 'Instrumental Cut of the Year' for her debut album 'First Things First' (pictured, left).

She has performed and taught all around the globe and is recognised for her unique fusion of Scottish, Irish and contemporary styles. She has released three solo Celtic Harp CDs and published seven volumes of harp music which are used by students around the world. She has taught at harp festivals in Europe, Canada, the USA and Australia and also has an online harp school.

Ailie studied at Cambridge University, graduating with First Class Honours, and gained a Masters in Music Performance at Limerick University, again with First Class Honours. She was awarded a PhD in composition at Trinity Laban Conservatoire, where she studied with Dominic Murcott and Michael Finnissy. She is a Lecturer in Composition and Traditional Music at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

# TURADH STRING QUARTET

The Turadh String Quartet was formed in 2019 by four close friends who met whilst studying at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS). A truly international group, consisting of musicians from Scotland, The Netherlands, Singapore and Hungary, its members have worked throughout Scotland with leading orchestras and ensembles and are all committed to exploring the chamber music repertoire. Not long after its formation, the Musicians' Company awarded the quartet a Maisie Lewis Young Artist concert, which was given in the Purcell Room on London's South Bank in 2019.

**Michelle Dierx** is a Dutch violinist from Zoersel, Belgium. Michelle studied for her BMus degree at the RCS with Gina McCormack and Joseph Swensen, graduating with First Class Honours. Currently Michelle is studying for a Masters degree at the Royal Academy of Music with Maureen Smith.



During her undergraduate degree, Michelle received the Robert Highgate Scholarship for Violin, the Hilda Anderson Deane Prize and the Mary D Adams Prize for Chamber Music.

Michelle is principal second violin of the Broen Ensemble and is a member of two piano trios, Trio Doyenne and the Mac-Talla Trio. As an orchestral musician Michelle has freelanced with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Scottish Ballet.



Born in Edinburgh, **Abigail Young** is a Glasgow based violinist. Abigail recently graduated with a masters degree from the RCS where she studied with Andrea Gajic and Joseph Swensen. Throughout her time at the RCS, Abigail participated in masterclasses with artists including Henning Kraggerud, Alina Ibragimova, Nicola Benedetti, and the Brodsky Quartet. As a keen chamber musician, Abigail was

awarded the Mabel Glover String Quartet Prize and competed at the Cavatina Intercollegiate Chamber Music Competition at the Royal Academy of Music.

In addition to being a member of the Broen Ensemble and the Turadh String Quartet, Abigail freelances on a regular basis with the BBC Scottish Symphony



Orchestra, the Scottish Ballet Orchestra and the Scottish Opera Orchestra. She has also worked with Scottish Ensemble and the Scottish Session Orchestra and was the guest leader at the Amicus Orchestra for two projects in 2019.

Abigail plays on an Aegidius Klotz violin which dates from c.1785 and is extremely grateful to the Harrison-Frank Family Foundation for the loan of this instrument.



Born in Singapore, **Theodore Chung Lei** first began learning the violin at the age of 4 and was introduced to the viola upon entering the Singapore National Youth Orchestra at age 13. He studied at the School of the Arts, Singapore, then after completing his national service, attained full scholarship to study at the RCS under the tutelage of Rachel Roberts and Jane Atkins. During his time

there, Theodore continued to pursue his passion for chamber music, performing with visiting artists such as the Maxwell Quartet, Brodsky Quartet and the Scottish Ensemble. Theodore is currently studying his masters at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama under the tutelage of David Takeno. He recently performed with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and was part of the LSO String Experience Scheme 2019/2020.

**Balazs Renczes** was born in 1994 in Hungary and started to play the cello when he was 5 years old at the local Music School. From 1999 until 2008 he participated in many competitions, gaining many awards, including twice winning the Budapest Cello Competition and, in 2011, taking first prize at the International Cello Competition Agimus for Premio Citta di Padov.



Until 2012, he continued his studies at the Preparatory Course for Exceptionally Talented Students of the Liszt Academy of Music with Hungarian cellist, Gyorgy Deri, then from 2013 until 2019 he was a student at the RCS, studying with Robert Irvine and David Watkin. In 2015, at the age of 20, he was awarded a trial for Principal Cello of Scottish Opera and in 2016 he won the RCS Classical Concerto Competition and was appointed to the Scottish Ensemble Young Artists Scheme. He also performed for HRH Prince Charles, broadcast live by Classic FM. In 2017, he won the Suggia Award by Help Musicians UK.

# MUSIC *in* Peebles

## NEXT CONCERT

Tuesday 12 April at 7.30pm in Peebles Old Parish Church

## Strathclyde University Chamber Choir

Directed by Alan Tavener

with Thomas Athorne (tenor) & Thomas Stevenson (bass)

David Hamilton (organ)



### Stainer: 'The Crucifixion' for tenor, bass, choir & organ

In addition to his roles as Professor of Music at Oxford University and organist of St Paul's Cathedral, John Stainer is known for his output of church service music, anthems, cantatas and hymn tunes. Of his larger-scale works, 'The Crucifixion' is by far the best known and although now frequently performed as a concert piece, it was originally written for liturgical use, with five hymns for congregational participation. This performance will be given by one of Scotland's leading amateur choirs, under the direction of their distinguished founder, Alan Tavener.

There will also be a singing workshop in the Old Parish Church at **2.30pm on Saturday 2 April**, led by Alan and Rebecca Tavener. This is a great opportunity to learn from the best! **Please buy your concert ticket before 2 April**, and it will admit you to the workshop (entry without a concert ticket will cost £15, payable in cash at the door).

Tickets cost £15 from the Eastgate Box Office (01721 725777).

Admission is free for all under 26.

For full details of our concerts, please pick up a leaflet at the Eastgate Theatre or visit <https://musicinpeebles.org.uk>



**MUSIC *in* Peebles**  
**NEXT CONCERT**  
**SAANJH**



**Friday 29 April 2022 at 7:30 pm | Eastgate Theatre, Peebles**

**Note that entry to this concert is not included in the 2021/22 season ticket, but season ticket holders are entitled to a discounted price of only £10.**



**Ankna Arockiam**  
**(mezzo-soprano)**



**Hardeep Deerhe**  
**(tabla)**



**Edward Cohen**  
**(piano)**

Winners of Chamber Music Scotland's 2022 Under-represented Composers Tour Opportunity, Ankna Arockiam, Edward Cohen, and Hardeep Deerhe created Saanjh (which translates as 'dusk' in Hindi) in October 2020, for St Andrews Voices Festival.

These three highly accomplished musicians call on their eclectic influences to portray a collection of musical scenes, exploring a woman's journey through dusk and the experiences and challenges she faces along the way. Through collaboration, cultures will merge to create an innovative soundscape blending voice, piano and tabla, with elements of improvisation and conversation.

We are very fortunate to have been offered the opportunity to hear this unique performance here in Peebles - don't miss it!

**TICKETS:** £15 (£10 for Music in Peebles season ticket holders;  
£7 if accompanying children under 12; under 25s FREE)  
from Eastgate Theatre Box Office (01721 725777)

**DETAILS:** <https://musicinpeebles.org.uk>

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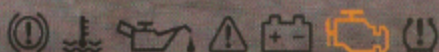


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After a traumatic 2020, the cultural sector faces serious challenges in 2021/22. Here are a couple of ways in which we all, as lovers of Music and the Arts, can show our support and help to ensure that they thrive in the wake of Covid.



## Donate to Music in Peebles

In its 75th season, Music in Peebles faces unprecedented uncertainty.



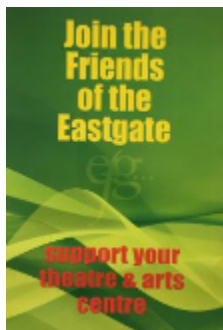
We remain committed to presenting high-quality live concerts. However, until audiences return to pre-pandemic levels, there is no doubt that our ability to maintain the number and quality of concerts will be under pressure.

Your donation, large or small, will help us to go on bringing outstanding musicians and the finest music to Peebles through the uncertain times ahead.

You can donate easily by visiting the Music in Peebles Givey page using the URL below, or by scanning the QR code.

<https://www.givey.com/musicinpeebles>

If you prefer, you can download a donation form from our website, which details other ways you can donate, or email [contact@musicinpeebles.org.uk](mailto:contact@musicinpeebles.org.uk).



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You can pick up a form at the theatre, download one from the Eastgate website or email the Friends' Membership Secretary: [eastgate.friends@gmail.com](mailto:eastgate.friends@gmail.com).

For details, visit <https://eastgatearts.com> or scan the QR code on the left.





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# MUSIC *in* Peebles

Patron: Gina McCormack

## 2021-2022 Season

Sunday 5 September 2021 at 7.30pm

**CLARE HAMMOND**

Tuesday 5 October 2021 at 7.30pm

**CARMENCO**

Tuesday 2 November 2021 at 7.30pm

**JAMES WILLSHIRE**

Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 7.30pm

**GAIA**

Monday 13 December 2021 at 7.30pm

**KWON-LIM DUO**

Sunday 9 January 2022 at 2.30pm

**PATRON'S CONCERT**

Sunday 6 February 2022 at 2.30pm

**BRODSKY QUARTET**

Tuesday 1 March 2022 at 7.30pm

**LEON McCRAWLEY**

Tuesday 29 March 2022 at 7.30pm

**AILIE ROBERTSON**

Tuesday 12 April 2022 at 7.30pm

**STRATHCLYDE UNIVERSITY CHOIR**