

Iconnotations

Koechlin

Excerpts from Les Heures Persanes

Maxwell Davies

Vesalii Icones



A new production and choreography of the iconic Peter Maxwell Davies work *Vesalii Icones*. Written in 1969 this is one of Peter Maxwell Davies's classic works of concert-hall music theatre. An extraordinarily dramatic, multi-layered fusion of dance and music, its shape superimposes the 14 stations of the Cross on a series of 16th-century anatomical drawings by Vesalius, with a dancer and a solo cellist as the protagonists.

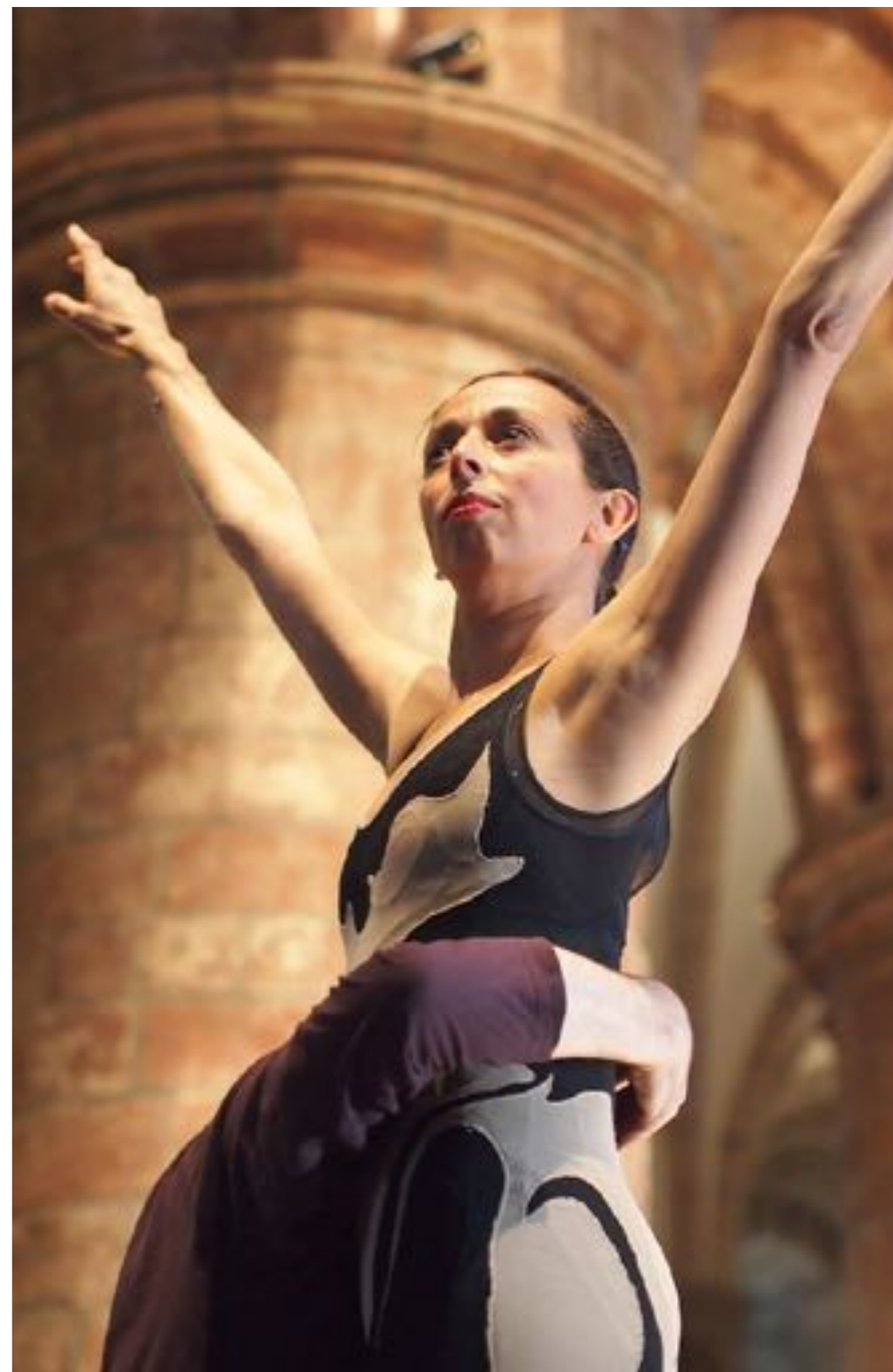
Scored for the classic Fires of London Sextet line-up the work is filled with unconventional percussion instruments, a honky tonk piano and much allusion to foxtrots as well as medieval and renaissance music.

In contrast to the vibrant sonorities of *Vesalii Icones*, the first half features the atmospheric piano works inspired by Persia and written during the First World War by the prolific French composer Charles Koechlin.

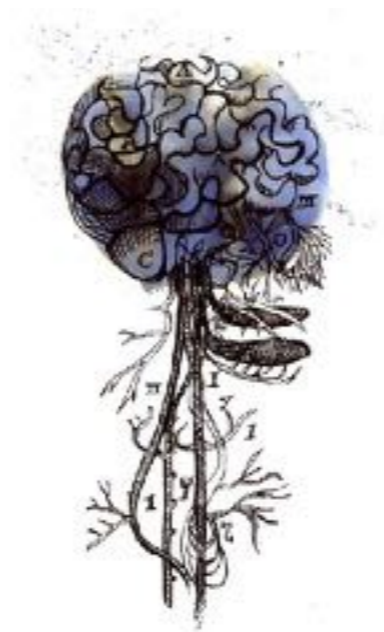
“It was touching, eccentric, wry, surprising, profound. I adored the nods to surrealist art. Goodness, there was so much there.”

“Superb performance of Maxwell Davies' Vesalii Icones. Virtuoso playing of cellist Lionel Handy was exceptional, pacing and balancing by conductor Pierre-Andre Valade very thoughtful. Humanity of Hawkins choreography was heart rending.”

Audience feedback







Matthew Hawkins

Matthew Hawkins is Royal Ballet School trained. Hawkins' shift from ballet to contemporary practice involved his being a founder member of Second Stride and Michael Clark dance companies, studying Cunningham technique at source and presenting his own work, including as Artistic Director of Imminent Dancers Group, and Matthew Hawkins Dance Company, and commissions for Dansproduktie Amsterdam, CNDC Angers Szegedi Balett.

Recognition for Matthew includes a Jerwood Choreography prize, a Dance Artists Fellowship from Arts Council England, a Herald Angel award and Professional Development/Choreographic Futures support from Creative Scotland.

"...a display of rare interest, of real choreographic merit, of original and valuable thought about dance: typical Hawkins in fact." Financial Times

"...In any other culture Hawkins would be recognised as a kind of genius." The Observer.

Matthew's long term teaching assignments include open classes in contemporary technique at London's Pineapple studios (1986-99), technique and choreography workshops at CNDC (Angers, France, 1991-2004) and guest teaching with Rambert and Random Dance Companies and at Dancebase (Edinburgh, current).

More information:

<http://www.matthewhawkinsdance.co.uk>

Red Note Ensemble

Red Note performs the established classics of contemporary music, commissions new music, develops the work of new and emerging composers and performers from Scotland and around the world, and finds new spaces and new ways of performing contemporary music to attract new audiences. Within Scotland the ensemble has performed from the Outer Hebrides to the Borders in concert halls, bothies, pubs, clubs and aircraft hangars, amongst other unusual settings. Outwith the UK it has a growing international reputation, performing to great acclaim at festivals in France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and Australia in recent years.

The ensemble also undertakes an extensive programme of Access, Engagement and Participation (AEP) work, focusing particularly upon working with younger and older people, people with multiple disabilities, people living in areas of multiple deprivation, and also working to address inequalities of access and representation due to race/ethnicity and gender imbalances. We also undertake an extensive performer and composer development programme within schools, universities and conservatoires nationally and internationally.

Red Note is Associate Contemporary Ensemble at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow and Associate Ensemble of the sound festival Aberdeen. Red Note is a Delphian Records recording artist, recently releasing CDs of music by Eddie McGuire, John McLeod and David Wilde to great acclaim.

More information:

<http://www.rednoteensemble.com>

TRAILER



FULL VIDEO AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

CREDITS

Matthew Hawkins, Choreographer / Dancer
Soraya Ham, Dancer

Red Note Ensemble:

Lionel Handy, cello

Tom Hankey, viola

Ruth Morley, flute

Emma Burgess, clarinet

Tom Hunter, percussion

Simon Smith, piano

Pierre-André Valade, conductor

Music Director: John Harris

Designer: Calum Duncan

Lighting Design: Simon Gane

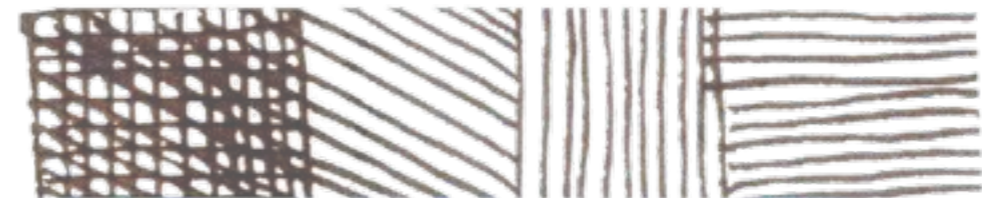
Costume for Ms Ham: Mr Pearl

Visual Artist: Brian Hartley

Production Manager: Kostas Christakos

Producer: Jennifer Phillips

Film: Francisco Mallo at dotbot



Choreographer's Programme Note

Matthew Hawkins' response to an invitation from Red Note Ensemble is innovative. They have long been asking him to stage the music-theatre piece Vesalii Icones (Maxwell-Davies) and now he has found his fresh approach. Vesalii Icones is scored for instrumental sextet and dancer 'ad libitum'. Matthew Hawkins' 'free thinking' is about how the novelty of a dancer's presence integrates with or amends a musical experience. He considers himself an additional silent instrument; active in perverse homage to the range of functional movement necessarily adopted by the other players. Like them, he brandishes implements and utensils...

Sir Peter Maxwell-Davies embarked on composing Vesalii Icones (1969) impelled by visceral feelings aroused by witness of Vesalius' De humani corporis fabrica. These anatomical drawings are one of the earliest representations of human dissection. Vesalius' compendium is also the first with a coded system of diagrammatic keys and cross-references. Vesalii Icones' fourteen musical sections are also entitled with the headings of the stations of the cross: from 'the agony in the garden' via 'christ receives the cross' and 'entombment' right through to 'resurrection/antichrist'. Clearly Maxwell-Davies associates the miraculous journey with the science-based anatomical sequence and amid the composer's layering, his stroke of genius is to imagine the embodiment and action of a dancer as essential and connective.

Vesalii Icones is a sextet, scored for the classic lineup of its original ensemble The Fires of London. Its metallic/lyrical polyphony is peppered with numerous unconventional instruments and percussive objects. And yes there's a concert grand but there's also a 'hellfire' vestry upright and all the while, an inquisitive cello concertante presides: a co-protagonist with the dancer.

Pre-dating the Maxwell-Davies by several decades (and preceding its performance in Iconnotations) Connotations 1 unfolds to selected pieces from Charles Koechlin's piano cycle Les Heures Persanes which immerse the listener in Persian times and travels. This score's journey is played out while Matthew Hawkins and co-dancer Soraya Ham move through a choreography of subtlety that frames a portfolio of contemporary images by visual artist Brian Hartley. These hand-held graphic items are inspired by a visit to see and pore over Vesalius' original edition of icons. The adroitly simple stage action of Connotations 1 also includes the bearing and setting of hand hewn scenic pieces designed by by architect Calum Duncan: these remain on the performance dais, as does the portfolio of images - which then assume currency, amid the scenes of Vesalii Icones. Paneled surround pieces are also installed. Part throne and part scaffold these raw structures separately enfold the cellist and the trio of flute clarinet and viola. The stage is now set for the Maxwell-Davies intensity, volatile formality and edge.

PREVIOUS PERFORMANCE DATES

Premiere -

22nd June 2018, St Magnus Cathedral
St Magnus International Festival

SUPPORTED BY:



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL



BOOKING DETAILS

PROGRAMME

Connotations #1

Koechlin, Excerpts from *Les Heures Persanes*

Vesalii Icones

and Maxwell Davies, *Vesalii Icones*.

Overall running time 80 minutes (no interval).

Connotations #1 is designed introduce the themes in *Vesalii Icones*, however a bespoke package can be created, for example featuring alternative repertoire, or with choreography created with local dancers.

PERFORMANCE SPACE

This is a flexible performance that can suit a variety of performance spaces. The set is designed around a raised platform in the centre of the space. Contact us for a full stage and lighting specification.

GET-IN

Minimum 4 hours get-in time; minimum of 1 resident technician for get in/get out and performance.

LIGHTING

Pre-rigging where possible; essential for same day get in.

FEE

Contact us for fee information.

TOURING COMPANY

Twelve on the road (2 Dancers, 7 Musicians, 1 Lighting Operator, 1 Production Manager, 1 Producer/Manager).

Set is transported in an extra long wheel base van.

Please contact us to discuss International freight.

ACCOMMODATION

Single rooms (en-suite) on a bed and breakfast basis.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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