

John Kenny/Chris Wheeler

Biography

JOHN KENNY was born in 1957 in Birmingham. Internationally recognised for his interpretation of contemporary music, he also performs jazz and early music. As a composer, he is particularly active in collaborations with dance and theatre, and this love of theatre is often an important feature of his recital output. His past commissions have included the London Contemporary Dance Theatre, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, the International Trombone Association, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Edinburgh Contemporary Arts Trust, Chamber Group of Scotland, Dance Umbrella, American Drama Group Europe, The New Haven International Festival of Arts and Ideas (USA) and the Festival d' Angers, France.

After studying with Harold Nash at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and then on an Arts Council bursary with James Fulkerson, Kenny worked as an actor/musician with the Bubble Theatre in London, then made his debut as a soloist in the Purcell Room in 1982. In 1983 he was a prize-winner at the Gaudeamus International Competition in Holland, and has since given recitals and broadcast world-wide, both as a soloist and with ensembles including Ensemble Modern of Frankfurt and Ensemble Alternance of Paris, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Paragon Ensemble, and the National Radio Orchestras of Romania and Moldova, and the Sofia Philharmonic, Bulgaria. In 1984 he was a founder member of the TNT Music Theatre Company, collaborating with playwright Paul Stebbings in productions which continue to tour hundreds of venues throughout Europe, Russia and Japan., and Korea. TNT's most recent production Moon Palace, a dance theatre interpretation of the novel by Paul Auster, was booked for three years in advance before its premier.

In 1993 John Kenny was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, and is currently a professor at both the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, where he specialises in the interpretation of contemporary music, and The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, where he concentrates on sackbut and the interpretation of early music.

In 1992 John Kenny was invited to join a team of specialists at the National Museum of Scotland committed to reconstruct the Deskford Carnyx. Discovered in Northeast Scotland, this is the finest example so far discovered of an Iron Age Celtic war horn which was the most splendid and powerful wind instrument of the ancient world. In 1993 he became the first person to play the carnyx for 2000 years, and has since lectured and performed on the instrument internationally, in the concert hall, and on radio, television, and film. There are now numerous compositions for the carnyx, and it features on seven CD's, and on March 15 2003 he performed solo to an audience of 65000 in the Stade De France, Paris. John Kenny lives in Edinburgh with his wife and two sons.

CHRIS WHEELER studied trombone with John Kenny at the City of Edinburgh Music School. He gained a scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music And Drama, London, in 1999, where he studied trombone with Eric Creese and Simon Wills, before moving on to City University to complete a degree specialising in electronic music, studio techniques, and contemporary performance. As a trombonist, he performed as a member of the Edinburgh Trombone Ensemble, directed by John Kenny, giving the world premier at the National Museum of Scotland of "Beastly Brothers" by Etienne Rolin for carnyx & trombone quartet. Most recently, he became a member of the Tartan Chameleon multi-media performance company, directed by Quebecois choreographer Eric Tessier Lavigne, in their highly acclaimed production of "Hypothetically Murdered" during the 2003 Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Whilst still a student, Wheeler began to develop a career as one of London's hottest young DJs, working in a wide variety of clubs - his work in this field is unusually diverse, notably his founding and direction of the award winning Heritage Orchestra. This project, based at one of London's best known clubs, Cargo, is about showcasing the latest mix of live music and club representations, bringing together cutting edge artists from different factions (Producers, DJs, Composers, String Quintets, VJs, Big Bands) and making the club environment the link between opposing music scenes. He has also developed a working relationship with some of Europe's most dynamic "underground" record labels which allows him to play and promote music which is often making its first appearance on the UK scene in his hands.

Chris Wheeler has worked as assistant to the legendary sound designer John Whiting, and was also session producer for John Kenny's most recent release on the British Music Label: A Field Of Scarecrows. He now runs his own digital production studio above the infamous 333 club in London, where he composes, records and mixes a wide variety of music, from beat-based sounds of the club to highly intricate electro-acoustic works. He also runs a listings publication for the venue, which publishes new art and allows the artist to reach 30,000 people every issue.

Chris Wheeler's keen interest in all sound in all spaces, from club to concert hall, has brought him ever closer to the principles of surround sound projection within a performance space. He has helped with ambisonic performances by Whiting, and learnt much about sound diffusion at the City University with Denis Smalley and Simon Emerson. He is an advocate of the Dolby 5.1 surround sound system as a creative tool rather than a commercial one, and through many years of toying with surround setups, Wheeler now uses a 5.1 rig which is flexible, portable, practical, and with his musical approach, highly effective. He uses this setup to work with recording artists but also for live sound manipulation in the performance domain. A very powerful computer runs Digital Performer alongside a surface controller, USB joystick, various virtual plugins, high-end audio/midi interfaces, level controllers, and bass management. Within this setup he also uses his DJ turntablism skills to mix and scratch digital audio files with 'Final Scratch' software and standard Technic turntables. It is important to realise that behind all of the technology is a true artistic intent to disperse sound in an interesting and compelling way. Chris Wheeler currently lives and works in London.

MORRIS PERT was born in Arbroath, Scotland in 1947. He graduated B.Mus. from Edinburgh University in 1969, and on an Andrew Fraser scholarship, went on to study composition and percussion at the Royal Academy in London, where he was a pupil of Alan Bush. He is also an Associate of Trinity College London in Piano Teaching. While at the Academy he won several composition prizes including the 1970 Royal Philharmonic Award for his first orchestral work 'Xumbu-Ata'.. A two-year period working with the world-famous Japanese percussionist Stomu Yamash'ta followed, with performances, recordings and musical collaborations in several European music festivals and in Yamash'ta's own Red Buddha Theatre. This led him to form his own experimental music group, Suntreader, which performed and recorded much of his own and his colleagues' music.

In the 1970s, Pert was one of the most prominent composers of his generation, receiving regular BBC commissions for large-scale orchestral works, including the first and second symphonies. At the same time, he was one of the foremost percussionists in the world of popular rock music. His serious works draw their inspiration from an eclectic range of sources, but especially from ancient mythology, astronomy and oriental culture.

He has written three symphonies: the first, 'The Rising of the Moon', was premiered in Tokyo under Hiroyuko Iwaki in 1981; the second, 'The Beltane Rites', was commissioned and performed by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and the third, 'The Ancient Kindred', was premiered by the Munich Opera Orchestra under Eberhard Schoener on German television in 1980. 'Ancient Rites' for choir and strings was commissioned and performed in Glasgow by the John Currie Singers. His

music has been broadcast on several occasions on BBC Radio 3 and abroad. Works recorded on the Chantry Record Label include 'Chromosphere' for five players and tape, 'Luminos' for bass horn and piano, 'Eoastrion' for E flat clarinet and tape, 'The Ultimate Decay' for tape and a BBC commission, 'The Book of Love' for percussion and tape. He has written incidental music for Frank Dunlop's Young Vic production of 'Macbeth' and the Oxford Playhouse production of 'The Tempest'

He worked for 18 years as a session musician in the major London recording studios, having recorded with (among many others) Paul McCartney, Andrew Lloyd-Webber, John Williams, Kate Bush, Mike Oldfield, Peter Gabriel, Phil Collins and the jazz-rock band Brand X. He has also done arrangements for the Classic Rock series of records by the London Symphony Orchestra, In 1977 Pert was voted no.4 jazz and rock percussionist in the world by America's Billboard Magazine. He has received five gold albums, an American ASCAP award for a hit song and a nomination by the National Academy of Recording Arts in Washington for his performances on record.

Among his works are an electronic ballet score 'Continuum' for the London Contemporary Dance Theatre at Sadlers Wells; 'Voyage in Space', twenty short piano pieces; 'The Ancient Pattern' for chamber ensemble, a McEwen commission from Glasgow University and, more recently, incidental music for Eden Court Theatre's production of 'Peter Pan' in Inverness and 'Aurora' - a work for taped electronics.

He now lives and works in his own small studio in the far North-West of Scotland, concentrating on composition and electronic recording techniques, and is currently working on his fourth symphony 'De Situ Albanie' and a work for Carnyx and tape.

Much of Mr. Pert's music is inspired by the symbolism and the mystery surrounding the culture of the ancient inhabitants of Scotland known as the Picts and by his interest in the philosophical implications of the sciences of astronomy, cosmology and astrophysics.

His music is published by Josef Weinberger, London.