

Alastair Stout

Alastair, one half a Fair Isle man, was born in 1975 and has been living on Shetland since 1981. He studied at the Royal College of Music, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and at Royal Holloway, University of London. His music, ranging from solo instrumental to multi-media dramatic work, has been performed throughout Britain by leading ensembles and soloists and is available on CD. He is also an organist and has given recitals in St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey as well as churches throughout the UK. He was assistant organist at Wesley's Chapel from 1993 until 2001, when he took up the position of Organist and Director of Music at Cornopolis United Methodist Church in Pittsburgh PA, USA.

For more information and a list of recent works, visit his webpage at:
www.britishacademy.com/members/stout.htm



"Given Days"

After the usual periods of high winds, driving rain, heavy salt and gales, we often get a day of calm bright sunshine - a 'given day'. Then we appreciate being alive, being here on Fair Isle, and so we do different things - a walk up Malcolm's Head or off in a yoa perhaps. These God 'given days' are special.

A Jewel in the Ocean

Famous for birds, knitwear and historic shipwrecks, Fair Isle is a tiny jewel of an island lying half-way between Orkney and Shetland. Well known as one of the sea-areas on the BBC Shipping Forecast "...Fair Isle, southerly gale eight increasing severe gale nine soon..." the island offers a warm and friendly welcome to visitors. Owned by the National Trust for Scotland, it's one of Britain's most successful small communities, pioneering projects in wildlife tourism, windpower and sustainable management of the environment.

Fair Isle lies about 40 km south-west of Shetland's Sumburgh Head. Just 5km long and 3 km wide, it's mostly surrounded by impressive cliffs, rising to over 100 metres at the spectacular Sheep Rock and almost 200 metres along the heavily indented west coast. The 70 or so islanders live predominantly in traditional crofts on the more fertile and low-lying southern third of the island. The northern part is largely rough grazing and rocky moorland, rising to the 217-metre Ward Hill.

Fair Isle's oceanic climate brings stormy but fairly mild winters, while summer visitors can expect rapid changes in the weather: a day of sparkling sunshine and incredible visibility can easily be followed by one of thick mist and low cloud...

Classic Fair Isle

Patron

Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Kt., C.B.E

"Given Days"

Sounds of Fair Isle



A work for professional
ensemble and amateur musicians
by

Alastair Stout

Commissioned by the
Fair Isle Community
to celebrate the island's heritage
and present-day culture.

19th - 25th August, 2002

Introduction

Written for amateur and professional musicians and amalgamating the traditional music of Scotland with contemporary classical music, the work celebrates the history of the island, as well as the traditions and talents of the islanders (from boat-building, violin-making, knitting and weaving to silver craft, glass-staining and information technology). The music sets texts by both islanders and visitors, who write about the "essence of Fair Isle" - history and historical events, daily life, people, folklore, animals, birds, buildings, musical heritage and the future.

The work will be premiered on Fri 23rd August 2002, in Fair Isle, followed by a performance in Lerwick, Shetland, on Sun. 25th - 7.30pm at the Town Hall. The professional players will be members of the London-based ensemble Chroma and the amateur musicians will be from both Fair Isle and Shetland. Future performances will hopefully take place in Orkney and the Scottish mainland depending on funding.

The Classic Fair Isle project is based around the new work, but will also incorporate workshops and other performances.

Front picture:
Sunrise by
Stewart Wilson

Instrumentation

Professional ensemble

Violin
Violoncello
Clarinet
(doubling Bass Clarinet)
Horn

Baritone solo voice

Amateur ensemble:

Choir (SATB)
Folk group
A selection of hand percussion played by both the professional and amateur musicians.
The work will last approximately 30 minutes.

Visit Fair Isle at: www.fairisle.org.uk

Classic Fair Isle: www.fairisle.org.uk/classicfi

Alastair Stout: stout@icubed.com
1439½ Ridge Av. Cornopolis, PA 15108 USA
Tel. 412 269 3431

Betty M. Best (CFI Co-ordinator)
j.c.best@fair-isle.org.uk
Fair Isle, Shetland. ZE2 9JU Tel. 01595 760209

Shetland Arts Trust:
admin@shetland-arts-trust.co.uk
Pitt Lane, Lerwick. ZE1 0DW Tel 01595 694001

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Further information

Transport:

Loganair Tel 01595 840246;
Good Shepherd Tel 01595 760222

Accommodation:

Fair Isle Bird Observatory
fairisle.birdobs@zetnet.co.uk
Tel 01595 760258
Kathleen Coull
kathleen.coull@lineone.net
Tel 01595 760248

Sponsors:



Kenneth Leighton Trust
Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd.
Dunrossness Community Council
Breiview Guest House

Further sponsorship and donations would be most welcome. Cheques should be to Classic Fair Isle and sent to:
J. W. Stout, Treasurer, Classic Fair Isle,
Fair Isle, Shetland ZE2 9JU