

EXHIBITION

These Faces – Timothy Neat in Highland Scotland

Strathearn Artspace, Crieff, until April 3

by **Caroline Lindsay**

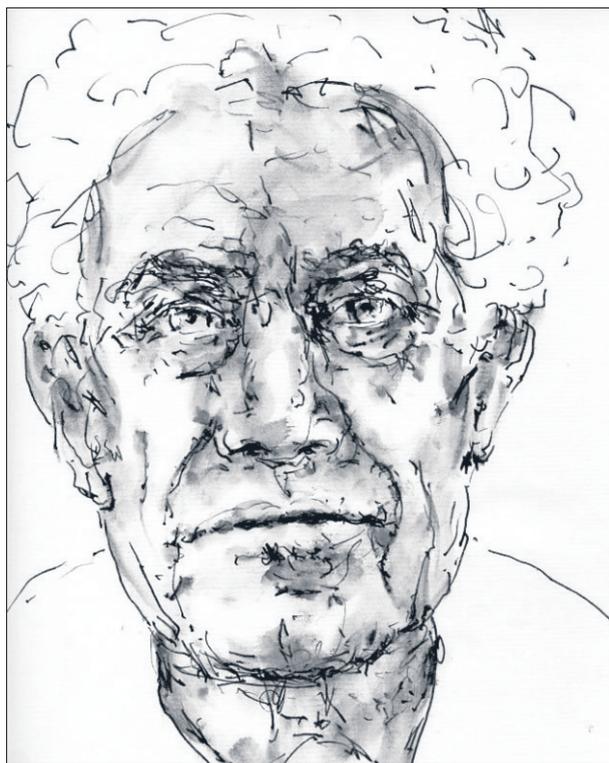
THESE FACES, based on Timothy Neat's recently published book of the same name, is a book of encounters.

The background to these encounters is Timothy's lifetime's work as a filmmaker, writer, artist, researcher, folklorist and storyteller in which he has followed the lives of individuals and communities normally qualified as marginal: tinkers, small time fishermen, shepherds, bards, costermongers, travelling people from the Highlands, the Scottish islands; workers in Yorkshire, villagers in Andalucia, poets.

"The exhibition reflects my book and is a collection of more than 150 monochrome photographs from across my life. The oldest picture is one I took of my sister Mary in 1950 so the book spans more than 60 years," explains Timothy, who was made a Fellow of the Association of Scottish Literary Studies last year.

"There are pictures taken in Spain after I left school, photos of industrial Leeds from my years at university in the city, aspects of traditional life in the Highlands that relates to many of my previous books, artists and poets including Sorley MacLean, Hugh MacDiarmid and my dear friend Hamish Henderson. There are also a couple of interesting photos of Ian Hamilton, who brought the Stone of Destiny from Westminster Abbey to Scotland in 1950. He is still alive and living in Connell Bridge.

"There are pictures from my time in France, of actresses that I have worked with including Tilda Swinton and Juliette Binoche, and drawings that I have recently done. I've been doing a lot of drawings in the last three years, which is strange as I haven't really done any since I was a boy. My medium is fountain pen with a little bit of wash with a finger or brush."



Tim Neat's drawing of friend and collaborator John Berger.



Tim Neat with German actress Angela Winkler in 1992.

Timothy, who lives in Wormit, grew up in Cornwall and after studying at the University of Leeds, where he met his wife Caroline, became a teacher. Initially teaching children with learning difficulties in Rumbling Bridge, he went on to teach art history in Plymouth and, in 1973, taught at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design.

"I stayed there for around 16 years and then gave it up to concentrate on my books and films," he says. Through these he has worked closely with a number of creative personalities and his work puts up a mirror to both traditional life and modern art in Scotland. His published books include: Part Seen Part Imagined, The Summer Walkers, and his two volume biography of Hamish Henderson. Films include Play Me Something (which won the 1989 Europa Prize) and Hallaig, The Poetry and Landscape of Sorley MacLean.

The exhibition is divided into four sections: Hamish Henderson, the Highland Travelling People, Crofters and Bards and Artists and Poets.

"My biography of Hamish Henderson reflects the friendship I had with him for more than 35 years until his death in 2002 at the age of 82 and he is a pivotal figure in this exhibition," Timothy explains. "He was very much a Scottish figure and a local figure. Born in Blairgowrie, his family came

from Dundee. We met in Padstow in Cornwall at the ancient May Day festival, soon became friends and went on to work together on many books and projects over the years. It felt like my responsibility to write a book after he died when he was lying in bed in the care home I was reminding him of some little adventure we'd had coming back from France and he said: 'You'll tell our story, won't you, Tim?' On his deathbed he gave me a little book of poems that remain unpublished.

"Writing the book was not just an act of friendship. Hamish was very important to 20th and 21st century Scotland. he was a poet, humanitarian and thinker who changed the thinking consciousness of Scotland since the Second World war – an extremely important political thinker and peace activist who had an impact on a large swathe of Scottish culture and was the prime mover behind the Edinburgh People's Festival in the 1950s, the precursor of the Festival Fringe.

"Writing a book about him was a big project – it took me seven years and one day I woke up and found myself an old man!"

The exhibition also showcases drawings of John Berger. Now 87, John is a winner of the Booker Prize for fiction and is recognised, worldwide, as one of the great art critics of the 20th century. John and Timothy have collaborated on various projects over many years and will be presenting their film Play Me Something at the Pompidou Centre in Paris on March 29.

Tim is delighted that his exhibition will be display in Strathearn Artspace. "This is an exciting new art space that has been created in the old library in Crieff," he says. These Faces will also include the showing of seven films and a series of 13 screen prints called Stand Scotland Where She Did. Author Jess Smith, who grew up as one of Scotland's Travellers, will host a storytelling session and Traveller Sheila Stewart, from Blairgowrie, will open the show.

"Sheila has come out of retirement for this exhibition," explains Timothy. "It will give her some practice because she has been asked to sing at the Commonwealth Games!"

In addition to the exhibition, Strathearn Artspace will also host the following film events:

- March 21, 7pm, £2: Timothy Neat films 'Hallaig' and 'Rathad nan Cearn' (Gaelic evening).
- March 28, 7pm, £2: Timothy Neat films 'Journey to a Kingdom' and 'Time is a Country'.
- April 5, 7pm, £2: Timothy Neat films 'Play Me Something' and 'Tree of Liberty'.

MUSIC PREVIEW

Dundee Symphony Caird Hall, Dundee March 29

by **Garry Fraser**

WHAT HAS six hands, four keyboards, strings, woodwind and brass? It's not a conundrum, as the answer is, quite simply, Saint-Saens' Organ Symphony. Two pianists and one organist join the ranks of the Dundee Symphony Orchestra in this, just one of the works to be performed in the Caird Hall on March 29.

It could be argued that the symphony – the composer's third – would not nearly be as popular as it is without its resonant organ part in the last movement but the preceding movements have much to write home about and will be a fair test for the players in the DSO. It will also be an auspicious way for conductor Robert Dick to celebrate 10 years on the rostrum.

The concert continues a long-standing musical association between Robert and Geoffrey Duce, soloist in the performance of Tchaikovsky's Second Piano concerto which is included in the programme. "I've known Robert since we were at Flora Stevenson's Primary School in Edinburgh and through many years at Broughton High School," says Geoffrey, who teaches at Indiana University. This will be his first experience of the Caird Hall with its magnificent acoustics.

Why choose the second Tchaikovsky concerto, and not the First?

"The First is definitely more famous and more often performed but I think it is a bit unfair as it is not superior in terms of quality," he says. "The second has lots of excitement and beauty so it's a pity it is often overlooked. "It has really enormous cadenza passages, bigger than the First, and is more challenging technically.

The second half of the programme consists of the Saint-Saens, with city organist Stuart Muir presiding over the magnificent Harrison and Harrison organ. "Needless to say, I'm rather excited

at the chance of getting to play the Saint-Saens Organ Symphony as well as a little nervous, having never played it before!" says Stuart. "It's one of my favourite pieces of music. When I was at music college in Glasgow, the janitors used to throw us out the practice rooms around 8.30 pm, but the library did not close until 9pm. Countless evenings I would sneak up to the library, borrow a pair of headphones and listen to the final movement of the Symphony on one of the CD players. I never tired of listening to it . . . and still don't!"

The orchestration also calls for piano duet so Geoffrey will play alongside David Fuller, whose son Will plays in the first violins. But wouldn't he have preferred to sit back and relax after his exertions in the Tchaikovsky? "I'm fine with either option," Geoffrey says. "Whenever I travel to perform, and if I can work with local musicians, it makes the experience much richer. So I'm looking forward to being an orchestral player and getting to know some of them. I guess I'll be pretty warmed up after the concerto!"

The programme is completed by Dukas' Sorcerer's Apprentice, and those who have seen Disney's Fantasia will remember Mickey Mouse in the title role. It's a piece that is fast, if not furious, and is bound to test the mettle of the DSO players. However, Robert Dick's charges are used to pretty hefty challenges and this work is as testing as the Saint-Saens.

But for sheer excitement and volume of sound, the symphony takes a lot of beating. The Caird Hall organ with all the stops pulled out and a large symphony orchestra at full volume? That's bound to set the rafters ringing!

● The concert begins at 7.30pm

● Tickets £12, £10 and £6

● www.dundeesymphonyorchestra.org.uk



Geoffrey Duce:Tchaikovsky's Second Piano concerto.