



### Exeter Contemporary Sounds – a brief overview

Andrew Gillett, Julie Hill and Rosalind Cox formed Exeter Contemporary Sounds in May 2001. Its aim was to provide Exeter with an ensemble performing contemporary music by local composers as well as those more established.

The first concert took place on July 1<sup>st</sup> at the Boston Tea Party, Exeter as part of the Exeter Festival Fringe. The ensemble performed works for String Trio by Judith Weir, Moeran, Purcell and Howard Skempton. Howard Skempton was present at the event and personally introduced his piece, Winter Sunrise.

The choice of the Boston Tea Party as a venue was a deliberate attempt to take contemporary music to audiences and venues where it may not normally be heard. This event was free and attracted a substantial audience. Although the ensemble's core group was a string trio, the ensemble was flexible and able to adapt to suit the works chosen for performance.

Encouraged by the reception of this event the ensemble undertook a series of three concerts over 2001/2002, in November, January & February. These also took place at the Boston Tea Party. The first concert included works for string quartet and string trio including a premiere by local composer, Simon Belshaw. The second concert featured local flautist, Michael Cox (principal flautist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra) and, for the final programme, the leading South West percussionist Michelle Hiley joined the trio. Other composers featured included Cornish composer Graham Fitkin, Andrew Poppy, Michael Nyman, Nicholas Maw and Judith Bingham.

The ensemble received funding from the Holst Foundation, Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust and Exeter Arts Council to assist with the concert series.