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MICHAEL FINNISSY AT 70
THE PIANO MUSIC (3)
IAN PACE – Piano
Recital at City University, London

Friday May 27th, 2016, 6:00 and 7:15 pm

Concert 1: 6:00 pm

MICHAEL FINNISSY

Svatovac (1973-74)

Three Dukes Went A-Riding (1977, rev. 1996)

To & Fro (1978, rev. 1995)

We'll get there someday (1978)

Terekkeme (1981, rev. 1990)

Taja (1986)

Hikkai (1982-83)

Cozy Fanny's Tootsies (1992)

John Cage (1992)

Five Yvaroperas (1993-95)

Tell-Dirais (1996)

Vanèn (1991)

all.fall.down (1977)

Concert 2: 7:15 pm

MICHAEL FINNISSY

Folklore I-IV (1993-94)

In 1996, the year of Michael Finnissy's 50th birthday, I gave a series of six large concerts in London featuring his then-complete piano works. Twenty years later, Finnissy's output for piano is well over twice that size (the five-and-a-half hour *The History of Photography in Sound* (1995-2000) alone takes the equivalent of three recitals). This concert is the third of a series which will take place over the course of 2016, in a variety of locations, featuring Finnissy's principal piano works, to celebrate his 70th birthday. This music remains as important to me (and as central a part of my own repertoire) as it did twenty years ago, though many ways in which I approach and interpret it – both as performer and scholar – have moved on considerably since then.

Tonight's programme fixtures a mixture of some of Finnissy's more 'abstract' piano works from the 1970s, several pieces written as tributes to or portraits of other musicians or artists, and a range of works all relating to various different types of folk music.

When young, Finnissy got to know Polish and Hungarian friends of the family working with his father at London County Council, from which he developed a lifelong fascination with Eastern European folk music of many types. In the 1970s, he regularly played piano for a variety of dancers and dance teachers (especially with the American Kris Donovan, for whom several of his piano pieces were written). One of these was the Macedonian dancer Maria Zybina (now deceased), who had a ballet-studio in Beckenham. For her, Finnissy wrote the short and quite strident *Svatovac*, whose title refers to an Eastern Croatian wedding song based on 10-syllable couplets.

The next three pieces were all originally part of Finnissy's now-withdrawn set of *Piano Studies* (1977-79); material from the other four found its way into *English Country-Tunes*, the *Verdi Transcriptions* and the *Piano Concerto No. 4*. Both *Three Dukes* and *To & Fro* were premiered in their revised versions in my 1996 series of Finnissy's music. When studying at the Royal College of Music in the mid-1960s, Finnissy began to read books about English Folk Poetry (not least through the collections of James Reeves, such as *The Idiom of the People* (1958) and *The Everlasting Circle* (1960)), then started going to the English Folk Dance and Song Society around 1970, and researching musical material and collecting published documentation. *Three dukes went a-riding* is obviously a reference to the traditional English song 'Three Dukes' ('There came three dukes a-riding, a-riding, ride, ride, riding/There came three dukes a-riding,/With a tinsy, tinsy, tee!'), about the custom of a group of young men travelling from one village to another to look for wives. But Finnissy has written that his three Dukes are Berg, Schoenberg and Webern, but combined with three love songs – Scottish, Irish and English – to supply each of the three sections. In the first version of the piece, Finnissy created a series of imaginary near-diatonic folk-like melodies (a-periodic and with wide contours, as in *English Country-Tunes*), in varying registers and tempos, in the central section accompanied by ominous quiet bass tremolos. The revised version is more diffuse and intricate, with the first section much more fragmented (and with some bass accompaniment at the outset and counterpoint in other places), interspersed with quieter fragments in a narrower tessitura, closer to a recognisable folk melody; whilst the middle section transforms the tremolos into slightly seething hushed multiple simultaneous bass lines, then the last has more concentrated counterpoint, lending the music a sense of development in place of the simpler ternary form of the original.

The other two pieces are 'home-grown' adaptation of titles associated with jazz or blues. The earlier version of *To & Fro* alternated further expansive angular near-diatonic melodies combined with more concentrated low bass accompaniments, with rapid alternating staccato chords between the hands. It is difficult to perceive much relationship between this and the elegant revised version, in which the 'toing and froing' operates on several levels: between *Andante* passages and those marked *poco più sostenuto* (then later with a few short passages of *Allegro*), but also between diatonic/modal monophony and more chromatic accompanied or contrapuntal material. This piece was originally written for Kris Donovan, whose choreography was adapted from catwalk modelling, using high-heels and dark glasses. *We'll get there someday*, which was also written for Donovan, is a stomp for piano, which builds towards rapid passage work and then gradually winds down, set almost entirely in the lower registers (so that harmonic relationships become blurred, and pitch is perceived in a different manner), except for the final chord!

The following three pieces are very freely based upon folk music of Azerbaijan, Sardinia, and Aboriginal Australia respectively, and all form parts of wider cycles for various instruments and ensembles, often using the same material in radically different forms in different pieces. In none of these pieces is simple verisimilitude (let alone questions of original social context) a priority for Finnissy; as with his employment of found musical materials from Verdi, Gershwin and elsewhere, more often he looks to mediate his sources, whether they are specific materials or just styles and genres, so as to become entirely his own. As such, they are reimagined in musical languages bequeathed or informed by late twentieth century modernism) whilst retaining some recognisable characteristics of the source. On one obvious level, his sources are already drastically changed by being reinvented on the discretely-tuned chromatic instrument of the piano, rather than using the many other scales and modes employed in the original sources, though Finnissy does try and respond to these latter in other ways.

The title of *Terekkeme* refers both to an Azerbaijani tribal dance performed by both men and women - in which dancers extend their arms and move forward with their heads up - and also a particular group of semi-nomadic Azeri people, many of who migrated to what is now Turkey. The piece attempts to imitate the sounds of the *zurnā* (a type of shawm or oboe) and *saz* and *tār* (both types of lute encountered in Azerbaijan and elsewhere), as heard on some LP recordings produced by Unesco (probably the 1975 album released by Bahram Mansurov). The piece does not actually quote directly any Azerbaijani music, but adopts some characteristics – alternating melodic fluidity with repetition, avoiding any clear sense of metre, and using elaborate ornamentation (a key attribute of Azerbaijani *mugam* music). The structure is quite simple, consisting of nine short continuous sections which alternate plain monophonic lines with those doubled at various intervals (so as to create the sense of a different instrument without sacrificing the essential monophony).

Sardinian music provided the source for the work generally considered to have inaugurated Finnissy's 'folk music period', *Duru-Duru* (1981) for mezzo-soprano, flute, percussion and piano, written for the ensemble Suoraan. All these works also took their inspiration from recorded sources, specifically the collection of LPs *Musica Sarda: Documenti originali del Folklore Musicale Europeo*, curated by Diego

Carpitella, Pietro Sassu and Leonardo Sole for the Albatros label in 1973. The term *taja* refers to the tenor part in Sardinian religious music, which is noted for its chromaticism, counterpoint and use of unprepared modulations. Finnissy's response is to set a quiet and melancholy two-part counterpoint in middle-high registers, building to a range of *poco sostenuto* mini-climaxes, contrasted with more writing in the lower registers, this time counterpoint between two parts both in dense chromatic chords (a technique used elsewhere in his output for piano to mimic the effect of microtones). A little exchange of material occurs mid-way, as the higher parts take on chords, and the lower ones thin out a little.

Hikkai is one of Finnissy's nine works based on Australian Aboriginal music, all except one (the later *Quabara*) written during a period spent in teaching in Australia at the beginning of the 1980s, and several of which, including this, *Banumbirr*, *Aijal* and *Teangi* for ensemble, share musical materials. Other techniques developed earlier by Finnissy play an equally important role, including the use of random numbers in order to shake up pitches, and groups of durations employed in a quite systematic manner. The piece juxtaposes starkly contrasted material – loud and strident, within a mostly narrow tessitura for each hand, but the two hands widely spaced apart, and in rhythmic unison; the same type of material but at a hushed dynamic, then rhythmically desynchronised between the hands and parts; then torrents of large interval grace-note leaps and wrenched or hammered *ffff* chords and lines, more reminiscent of many of Finnissy's more abstract works from the 1970s. Finnissy intended these contrasts as an analogy for bark-painting (using primarily red-ochre, white, brown and black), in particular its use of geometric designs and dividing lines.

The next two short pieces are somewhat less intense. *Cozy Fanny's Tootsies* was written as a Christmas gift for friends in 1992, and like many other works, uses an elaborate cut up of mediated short fragments from Mozart's opera, in this case deliberately over-decorated and over-loaded in the higher registers within the general mood of *grazioso*, to produce an unforgettable short essay in high camp. *John Cage* was written very quickly whilst Finnissy was teaching at the Dartington Summer School, and the news of Cage's death came in. It is based most importantly in the musical notes C A G E, which appear in the upper left hand part in two chords at the outset – the interval of a minor (and sometimes major) third, after G-E, recurs throughout. The ending also alludes to the last six bars of the 'Suite au 'Prélude du Rideau rouge' which concludes Satie's ballet *Parade*, as Finnissy discovered that the first violin part here began with C and A and ended with G and E.

The pianist Yvar Mikhashoff died of an AIDS-related illness in 1993 at the age of just 52; Finnissy had performed with him in the premiere of Cage's *Europera 3*, so wrote the series of five *Yvaroperas* in memoriam. These pieces mediate between different modes of operatic referentiality, including Cage's own, and also attempt to capture aspects of Mikhashoff's particularly style of playing, with fantastic subtlety and variety of touch and colour. The first and third pieces juxtapose medium-size disfigured fragments derived from nineteenth-century operatic repertoire and their transcriptions by pianist-composers (with greater consistency of texture in the third). An example is in the first piece, where pairs of ascending scales on alternate beats, combined with an arpeggiated melody, recall Liszt's transcription of the overture to Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. The second and fourth pieces, however, use a single line as a continuous thread, in the second Yum-Yum's aria 'The sun, whose rays...' from

Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, in the fourth Nadir's soliloquy 'Je crois entendre encore' from Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles*. In both cases the melodies, which are generally recognisable in terms of their sources, are overlaid at various points by more chromatic material which varies in the extent to which it blends or clashes with the main line. Both thus present different perspectives on a type of communion with voices from the past; in the second, the more chromatic material (essentially in the form of a melody with accompaniment) is *ppp* whereas the main line is *pppp*, so the melody seems to appear in gaps within the texture. In the fourth piece, however, the melody is more rhythmically regular, and in the bass, with much less overlap of tessitura with the other material, so that it assumes a much more foregrounded position; this also recalls Finnissy's transcription of the sextet from *Ernani* in his *Verdi Transcriptions*. By the fifth piece, written over a year later than the other four, memories have become hazy, the music conveys a sense of a struggle to recall something ever more difficult to discern with the passing of time.

Tell-Dirais is a hushed and blurred free elaboration around Cécile Chaminade's song 'Tu me dirais' (1891), which appears in the bass, a little in the manner of the fourth *Yvaropera*, but combined throughout with dense writing in two parts each made up from single notes and dyads. It was inspired by Peter Maxwell Davies' one-time description of Finnissy's music as being like 'Chaminade on speed', and is dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Abercrombie, wife of Alexander Abercrombie, Finnissy's first major piano interpreter. It was written just before the final concert in my 1996 series and premiered there. *Vanèn* was a tribute to the Dutch painter and sculptor Frits Vanèn and his wife Nanny, and in particular his angular, metallic civic monuments, with smooth and untextured flat planes, with minimal colour.

all.fall.down is one of Finnissy's most transcendently virtuosic works, comparable to the Third or Fourth Piano Concertos or *English Country-Tunes* in its demands. Its title naturally alludes to the traditional English nursery rhyme ('Ring a ring o' roses/a pocketful of posies/A-tishoo A-tishoo/we all fall down') and is divided into three sections (dedicated to composers Klaus Huber, Howard Skempton and Alvin Singleton respectively) all of which are characterised by the words 'all', 'fall' and 'down' in a straightforward manner (continuing a series of works of Finnissy, beginning with the ensemble work *As when upon a tranced summer night* (1966-68) which use over-arching linear transformations of register as a primary structural determinant). So 'all' traverses the entire compass of the instrument, at a *pp* dynamic and in rhythmic unison between the hands, with extreme rapidity (requiring immense bravura). The patterns are not undifferentiated, however; Finnissy continuously mixes chords and single notes, pushes the speed of the notes back and forward, interrupts with gnarled grace note figurations, introduces passages with slightly narrower tessitura, contrary motion non-diatonic scales, and passages using just the white, or just the black, notes of the keyboard. As the section progresses he switches to dyads (and a few chords) in both hands, the latter working its way up the keyboard, for the 'fall' section. Somewhat like the second of Finnissy's transcriptions after Verdi's *Macbeth* (after the witches' chorus), this combines one line of mostly periodic dense chords (though with changing metre) with another more gestural line above, all gradually falling down the keyboard and slowing down, culminating in the 'down' section, all at the bottom of the piano, with writhing overlapping lines, fragmented reduced to brutal single chords, then thinned out to calmer dyads and ultimately single lines. Here a straightforward idea for a piece is executed in a compelling manner.

Folklore was Finnissey's most ambitious piano cycle prior to *The History of Photography in Sound*, and represents a culmination of much of his previous work using folk materials. The score is prefaced with the following note:

Folklore. Gramsci's imperative to compile an inventory of the 'infinity of traces' that historical processes leave on 'the self'. *Folklore* - a distant memory, an assemblage, a critical elaboration, an opposition of conjunctions, an open-ended investigation, a palimpsest, a self-portrait

Folklore. Inherent attitudes. Pretension - the piano (a 'respectable' Victorian mantleshelf, spineless and domesticated) - Grieg (from childhood), another vision of Arcadia (cowherds, and peasants dancing); Grieg's influence on Percy Grainger (dismissed by some as a wayward amateur dishing up folk tunes for the parlour); Grieg's harmonic innovations (impact on Debussy); John Cage (...Grieg was more interesting than the others ...). What else do I remember?

Folklore. England: insular and conservative, institutionalized, despiritualized, tawdry and corrupt. Transforming 'angry young men' into embittered, cynical 'couch-potatoes'. Rendering artists impotent through mockery and stereotyping (what is there to be afraid of?). Politics: Capitalism. A *free* country in which censorship is universally rife. Hypocrisy. Bigotry. The cheap laugh. Cardew, Orton, Jarman. 'Deep (Tippett) River'. Heads fall and are swept under the carpet. Nothing behind the eyes. Imperialism is served.

Folklore. Travel broadens the mind. (Food broadens the stomach). White men belittle Aboriginals (a member of the music-faculty at Melbourne Uni. asked why I was interested in 'primitive trash'. Do I declare an interest in 'symbols of oppression?') Power. The Archaeology of Knowledge. Lévi-Strauss, Foucault. Diversity - or the world-culture (e.g. modernism)? *Folklore*. Untidy - insufficiently selective. Art/Editing/Experience (skill, in itself, potentially obscures icon/essence). A simulacrum. Evocation becomes Provocation.

In my extended article on Finnissey's piano music for the volume *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissey* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), I traced in detail, on the basis of the sketches, the use of folk and other sources in this work, the nature of their mediation, and especially how Finnissey organises the montage of the materials. Rather than give a comparable elaboration for this 70-minute work here, I will concentrate on the primary categories of material and the main events in the work, but will also add some more detail on the publications containing the sources, not all of which is in the early article.

On one level, one might categorise the materials by their original context. Thus one would have the following:

Nordic (Folklore I was written for the North sea Music Festival of Salford, Glasgow and Bergen): folk melodies as collected and transcribed for piano by L.M. Lindeman in his collection *Aeldre og nyere norske fjeldmelodier* (1853-67); Grieg's collection of quite faithful piano transcriptions of Norwegian peasant dances and Hardanger fiddle melodies, *Slåtter*, op. 72 (1902-3); Scottish *pìobaireachd* bagpipe playing and especially its types of ornamentation (as detailed in *Logan's Complete Tutor for the Highland Bagpipe* (1901)); Swedish fiddle playing as collected in the volume *Svenska låtar: Jämtland och Härjedalen* (1926-27)

Balkan: Rumanian folk songs from the collection *Cîntecul de leagăn* assembled by Ghizela Suliteanu (1986); Serbian melodies as collected and arranged in Stevan Mokranjac in his *Rukoveti* (1883-1913)

English: Sussex folk song, 'Let Him Answer Yes or No'; Cornelius Cardew his settings of Chinese folk songs, and his use of random grace note overlays; Brian Ferneyhough.

American: African-American spiritual 'Deep River', as also used by Michael Tippett in *A Child of our Time*; John Philip Sousa; Charles Ives; Christian Wolff; Rodney Lister.

Asian: Indian songs from Madhubai Patel, *Folksongs of South Gujarat* (1974); Korean music from *Anthology of Korean Traditional Music* (1981); Chinese traditional melodies (including one collected in Egon Wellesz (ed), *The Oxford History of Ancient and Oriental Music* (1957)).

Abstract/autobiographical: vehement, dissonant post-serial music; allusions to composers perceived to belong to Finnissy's personal 'folklore' – Brahms, Roslavets, Scriabin, Bussotti.

Other: Picardie folk song 'Hier j'ai rencontré'; fragments from a tribute to Kaikhosru Shapurij Sorabji; music of the 'elements' (water, earth, air, fire, after Debussy, Mahler, Verdi, Scriabin, respectively); Reynaldo Hahn's 'Série II: Orient' from *Le rossignol éperdu* (1899-1910).

Yet, ultimately Finnissy is closer to the spirit of *Vergleichende Musikwissenschaft* than that of much contemporary ethnomusicology, and the driving factors behind the piece are sounds rather than context (many of the sources would remain obscure, even to those familiar with those sources, without knowledge of the sketches). And the extent of his mediation can transform them very significantly indeed (as with Joe Orton and Kenneth Halliwell's defacing of library books, to name one of Finnissy's explicit allusions). So it would make more sense to categorise the music differently, in terms of the properties of the final result:

Monophonic: *Piobaireachd*, some Rumanian melodies, Indian, Korean, Chinese folk music.

Violinistic (much use of dyads in treble register): Hardanger fiddle playing as rendered by Grieg (and then by Finnissy); violin-like rendition of 'Hier j'ai rencontré'; Serbian melodies.

Bourgeois domestic pianistic: setting of Lindeman Norwegian melodies mostly in form of melody and accompaniment (but with fractured tonality); setting of Swedish fiddle music.

Romantic pianistic: allusions to Brahms, Roslavets, Scriabin, Mahler, Debussy, Hahn, Sorabji, Wolff. Generally quite wild, intense, passionate.

Ivesian pianistic: sometimes dense, highly dissonant, vehement, a-periodic, rampaging; overlaying of dissimilar materials: Rumanian/Lindeman, Sussex folk song/Rumanian, Chinese-Cardew/grace notes; chromatic, murky renditions of 'Deep

River’; use of Sousa marches. Also through juxtaposition of monophonic and highly dense and dissonant writing.

Improvisational pianistic: free fantasies around ‘Deep River’ and Verdi.

For the monophonic material, which appears first properly in *Folklore 2*, the most important strand comes from an earlier withdrawn piano piece called *Haen*, a free fantasia around *piobaireachd*-style ornamented melody, which appears complete at the end of this chapter of the work. Finnissy also cut this up into sections, and re-arranged them using a random process, to create four streams of material, each preceded by a particular ornamental figuration, entitled ‘Hinbare’, ‘Hodrocin’ and ‘Hintodre’ (as well as ‘Haen’), after standard ornamental figures. Each is also given its own modality: Dorian on D for Haen, Aeolian on F for Hinbare, same for Hodrocin, and Dorian on G for Hintodre. This process might seem essentially arbitrary, but it produces a type of circularity in keeping with the repetitive nature of bagpipe playing, and creates a sense of suspended time. The Rumanian melodies (heavily modified in terms of tempo and modality) emerge in a monophonic manner from within more Ivesian writing, and form a natural continuity, though with a greater amount of stepwise motion. When the Korean and Chinese melodies appear in *Folklore 4*, there is a clear change of character, with less frequent, but more elaborate, grace-note patterns, whilst the wider register and more swooping figurations suggest a flute rather than bagpipes. Nonetheless, there are intervallic and ornamental similarities, or at least Finnissy has configured the musics towards this end. The Korean music is presented first in an Aeolian mode on C, then on A. The Chinese music is then in Aeolian mode on C#, and mostly distinguished by the use of falling intervals of fourths and fifths at the ends of phrases, and the use of only single note ornamentation. Then, in a second mostly pentatonic rendition, Finnissy can insert his rendition of *piobaireachd*-laden Grieg inside and create a plausible continuity. The Indian melodies are set in a very different manner, slower and in the bass register, and are mostly restricted to five pitches (the first five of a Dorian scale).

So then the balance of the work is as follows:

Folklore 1: violinistic and bourgeois domestic pianistic.

Folklore 2: monophonic, Ivesian pianistic, improvisational pianistic.

Folklore 3: Ivesian pianistic, romantic pianistic, monophonic, bourgeois domestic pianistic/violinistic.

Folklore 4: monophonic, Ivesian pianistic.

The following is then a basic account of the principal events in the cycle.

Folklore 1, ‘Lovingly and reverently dedicated to the memory of Edvard Grieg’, is in four main sections, the first (after an opening flourish) a free Lindeman-derived domestic pianism, but intercut with ghostly *pppp* echoes in the manner of Ives’ *Concord Sonata*. The second is more animated, with a series of Grieg-derived violin solos, then alternations of violinistic Grieg with bourgeois pianistic Lindeman. The short third section contains a free evocation of ‘pipes and drone’, then the fourth begins with hushed chromatic material derived from Sorabji, out of which emerges a new form of Grieg/Lindeman, heavily ornamented in the style of *piobaireachd* and with a clear tonality in G-flat, though with short inserts of more unadorned violinistic

writing, and Sorabjian chromaticism, back into which the music ultimately disappears.

Folklore 2, dedicated to Sir Michael Tippett, begins with a passage of 'Hinbare' which can then be morphed quite seamlessly into the first Rumanian melodies (the beginning of what Finnissy in the sketches calls a 'Rumanian Region', in the manner of the 'regions' in Stockhausen's *Hymnen*), combined at first with distorted *pìobaireachd* made to sound more like a cimbalom. After the first interruption of a 'Homage to Christian Wolff' (in the manner of some of his piano works), then music drives ahead with a combination of foregrounded Rumanian melodies (sometimes in the treble, sometimes in the bass) and overlays from Lindeman and random layers of grace notes. There are further short inserts referring to Christian Wolff and hinting at 'Deep River'. The next section begins with *fff* plundering of the low registers, anticipating the beginning of *Folklore 3* – this type of dissonant material (which I categorise above as Ivesian) was originally written for a lecture-recital in Taiwan entitled 'Brave New Serial World'. There is a dialogue between this, 'Hodrocin' and 'Hintodre', further allusions to 'Deep River', and some of the moments of romantic pianism (which create a continuity with the more Ivesian writing, the difference being one of detail rather than fundamental type). A long passage of 'Hodrocin' creates a bridge into the English Region, featuring 'Let Him Answer Yes and No', combined with drones, Rumanian melodies, and ornamentation, then the setting of a Chinese melody in the style of Cardew, combined with ever-denser grace note overlays, and then the improvisational presentation of 'Deep River' clearly, followed by a more Ivesian rumination. The piece ends with 'Haen'.

Folklore 3 is dedicated to Brian Ferneyhough, who in the 1960s was a close contemporary of Finnissy. Finnissy has also written about how his memories of student revolt when in Italy in the 1960s inspired this and perhaps the cycle as a whole:

This piece probably started when I heard someone glibly dismiss the 1960s as 'part of political folklore'. The 1960s were years of political activism and idealism. In May 1968 I was a student in Rome (sometimes under house arrest, trying to avoid the police in the frequent street riots - they'd spray blue dye and pick you up later if they couldn't get you at the time - as a student one was always at risk). We talked endlessly and rather naïvely about 'radical social reforms'. Liberation was the byword - friends of mine fought at the barricades in Paris, literally risking their lives for 'values' to believe in. Identifying with 'the oppressed • siding with the proletariat against capitalist exploitation, I began to investigate folk-music: the music of the people and the music of the oppressed. One dubious benefit of the Industrial Revolution was the growth of towns and cities. In the resultant urban sprawl people can lose their identity and contact with fundamental human values. Not surprising then that, during the Nineteenth Century, as this became first apparent, people began to define themselves with 'Nationalism'.

The first extended section begins with some violent gestures in the bass, as prefigured in *Folklore 2*, which lead to a more continuous exposition of the 'Brave New Serial World' material, into which is inserted first the snippets referring to the 'elements', then other forms of romantic pianism. This thins to connect to the second section, beginning with 'Hintodre', then a full presentation of the violinistic writing of 'Hier j'ai rencontré', which alternates with free monophonic embellishments in response, again with random grace note overlays. More of the romantic pianism takes over (especially relating to Roslavets and Scriabin), then a literal repeat of a passage of 'Hintodre' (an allusion on Finnissy's part to the strategy required to exit from the

room in Luis Buñuel's film *El ángel exterminador* (1962)). A somewhat opaque section continues in a slightly confused manner, before settling down to a different domestic pianistic writing in the form of the Swedish melodies (generally in two parts, melody and accompaniment, as in *Folklore 1*). With a few references looking to *Folklore 3* (in particular brief moments of march-like music), Finnissy also inserts into the middle the Serbian material, unlike anything before in its presentation. This takes the form of staggered phrases or groups of phrases each of which are clearly stratified through rhythmic, key or modality. This comes out of some other Rumanian monophonic allusions, to which Finnissy then returns to ease back to the Swedish music, which leads the movement to a close.

Most of the primary European elements have run their course by this point, and at the beginning of *Folklore 4* Finnissy introduces various brand new material, though in configurations which refer back in earlier moments in the cycle. The first section is a dialogue between three types of material: monophonic in the bass, limited range of pitches, after Indian folk songs; flute-like elaborate monophonic writing in the treble, after Korean folk music; freer quite chromatic material. The second section then headlines two long passages derived from Chinese traditional melodies (in Dorian modes on F#, then on F, respectively) with oblique allusions to choral works of the American composer Rodney Lister, to whom this chapter is dedicated. Then the third section is a full-on William Burroughs-style random cut-up of 70 different fragments, the first 20 of which are taken from a volume of Sousa marches, the others from an assortment of material earlier in the piece and elsewhere in Finnissy's output. Their regular appearance then creates the strongest allusion to Ives yet in the piece. Finnissy accommodates all this material within a series of pre-selected tempos, whose changes are not configured to relate to any particular predominance of material, and so have a defamiliarising effect. Finally, another extended free setting of a Chinese melody (first in a Mixolydian mode on G, then Dorian on B), and then a return to the smudged, Ivesian rendition of 'Deep River', ending the piece with the voice of the oppressed.

Finnissy wrote the following in response to some questions I put to him recently:

As Grainger wrote, it is not necessary to do field-work in order to 'understand' or 'empathise with' folk music. As you already know, my stance is 'humanistic socialistic' - siding with oppressed or marginalised artistic minorities within dominant (and usually bullying) monetarist mass-cultures. My sources are (thus far exclusively) second-hand, and they are therefore being examined and researched by an outsider: fascinated but melancholic, lamenting but celebrating. On the larger canvas most of my attention is focussed, however, on composing with what I find - incorporating it into a larger framework in which other co-existing elements are not folkloristic or necessarily 'supportive'. The relationship with folklore is implied in the musical discourse, in its texture and web of allusions.

Programme notes © Ian Pace 2016. With thanks to Michael Finnissy for supplying various additional information about some of the pieces and their sources.

The next concert in Ian Pace's series of the piano music of Michael Finnissy will take place on Thursday July 7th at City University, at 18:30. It will include the world premiere of Finnissy's *23 Tangos* (1968-98) and also various works

inspired by jazz or improvisational idioms, in particular the cycle *Boogie-Woogie* – *Jazz – Fast Dances, Slow Dances*.

Some of the issues discussed in these notes are likely to arise in a panel debate at City University on Wednesday June 1st, 18:00-20:00, on ‘Are we all ethnomusicologists now?’, in which Ian Pace will be participating, together with Laudan Nooshin (City), Amanda Bayley (Bath Spa), Michael Spitzer (Durham) and Tore Lind (Copenhagen), chaired by Alexander Lingas (City). We hope some who are here tonight will be able to come to this, which will also take place at the Performance Space. Further details can be found at <http://www.city.ac.uk/events/2016/june/debate-are-we-all-ethnomusicologists-now> .

IAN PACE is a pianist of long-established reputation, specialising in the farthest reaches of musical modernism and transcendental virtuosity, as well as a writer and musicologist focusing on issues of performance, music and society and the avant-garde. He was born in Hartlepool, England in 1968, and studied at Chetham's School of Music, The Queen's College, Oxford and, as a Fulbright Scholar, at the Juilliard School in New York. His main teacher, and a major influence upon his work, was the Hungarian pianist György Sándor, a student of Bartók.

Based in London since 1993, he has pursued an active international career, performing in 24 countries and at most major European venues and festivals. His absolutely vast repertoire of all periods focuses particularly upon music of the 20th and 21st Century. He has given world premieres of over 200 piano works, including works by Patrícia de Almeida, Julian Anderson, Richard Barrett, Konrad Boehmer, Luc Brewaeys, Aaron Cassidy, James Clarke, James Dillon, Pascal Dusapin, Richard Emsley, James Erber, Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Finnissy (whose complete piano works he performed in a landmark 6-concert series in 1996), Christopher Fox, Wieland Hoban, Volker Heyn, Evan Johnson, Maxim Kolomiets, André Laporte, Hilda Paredes, Alwynne Pritchard, Horatiu Radulescu, Lauren Redhead, Frederic Rzewski, Thoma Simaku, Howard Skempton, Gerhard Stäbler, Andrew Toovey, Serge Verstockett, Hermann Vogt, Alistair Zaldua and Walter Zimmermann. He has presented cycles of works including Stockhausen's *Klavierstücke I-X*, and the piano works of Ferneyhough, Fox, Kagel, Ligeti, Lachenmann, Messiaen, Radulescu, Rihm, Rzewski and Skempton. He has played with orchestras including the Orchestre de Paris under Christoph Eschenbach (with whom he premiered and recorded Dusapin's piano concerto *À Quia*), the SWF Orchestra in Stuttgart under Rupert Huber, and the Dortmund Philharmonic under Bernhard Kontarsky (with whom he gave a series of very well-received performances of Ravel's Concerto for the Left Hand). He has recorded 34 CDs; his most recent recording of Michael Finnissy's five-and-a-half hour *The History of Photography in Sound* (of which he gave the world premiere in London in 2001) was released by Divine Art in October 2013 to rave reviews. Forthcoming recordings will include the piano works of Brian Ferneyhough (to be released in 2015), the Piano Sonatas of Pierre Boulez, and John Cage's *The Music of Changes*. The 2015-16 season sees appearances in Oslo, Kiev, Louth and around the UK.

He is Lecturer in Music and Head of Performance at City University, London, having previously held positions at the University of Southampton and Dartington College of Arts. His areas of academic expertise include 19th century performance practice (especially the work of Liszt and Brahms), issues of music and society (with particular reference to the work of Theodor Adorno, the Frankfurt School, and their followers), contemporary performance practice and issues, music and culture under fascism, and the post-1945 avant-garde, in particular in West Germany, upon which he is currently completing a large-scale research project. He co-edited and was a major contributor the volume *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissy*, which was published by Ashgate in 1998, and authored the monograph *Michael Finnissy's The History of Photography in Sound: A Study of Sources, Techniques and Interpretation*, published by Divine Art in 2013. He has also published many articles in *Music and Letters*, *Contemporary Music Review*, *TEMPO*, *The Musical Times*, *The Liszt Society Journal*, *International Piano*, *Musiktexte*, *Musik & Ästhetik*, *The Open Space Magazine*, as well as contributing chapters to *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*, edited Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), *Collected Writings of the Orpheus Institute: Unfolding Time: Studies in Temporality in Twentieth-Century Music*, edited Darla Crispin (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), *The Modernist Legacy*, edited Björn Heile (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), and *Beckett's Proust/Deleuze's Proust*, edited Mary Bryden and Margaret Topping (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). Forthcoming articles will appear in *Search: Journal for New Music*, and the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*.