City Research Online

City St George's, University of London

Citation: Pace, I. (2016). Michael Finnissy at 70: The piano music (8). .

This is the other version of the paper.

This version of the publication may differ from the final published version. To cite this item please consult the publisher's version.

Permanent repository link: https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/17519/

Copyright and Reuse: Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the author(s) and/or copyright holders. Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, unless otherwise indicated, provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way. For full details of reuse please refer to City Research Online policy.

City Research Online: http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/ publications@citystgeorges.ac.uk

MICHAEL FINNISSY AT 70
THE PIANO MUSIC (8)
IAN PACE – Piano
Recital at Holywell Music Room, Oxford

Monday November 21st, 2016, 7:30 pm

MICHAEL FINNISSY

A solis ortus cardine (1992)

Stanley Stokes, East Street 1836 (1989, rev. 1994*)*

Edward (2002)

Deux Airs de Geneviève de Brabant (Erik Satie) (2001)

Z/K (2012)

Brahms-Lieder (2015) (UK Premiere)

Enough (2001)

INTERVAL

MICHAEL FINNISSY

Juvenilia (1953-58)
Valse Burlesque
Tambourin
Air and Variation
Preambule
Vêpres

Two Pieces (July 1984)
Two Pieces (May 1986)

Wee Saw Footprints (1986-90)

Kleine Fjeldmelodien (2016) [World Premiere]

Lylyly li (1988-89)

Pimmel (1988-89)

Two of Us (1990)

Georghi Tutev (1996, rev. 2002)

INTERVAL

MICHAEL FINNISSY

Beat Generation Ballads (2014)

1. Lost But Not Lost
2. naked original skin beneath our dreams & robes of thought
3. Lonely Banna Strand
4. Evans, Harry, Scott, hearts foolish
5. Veränderung

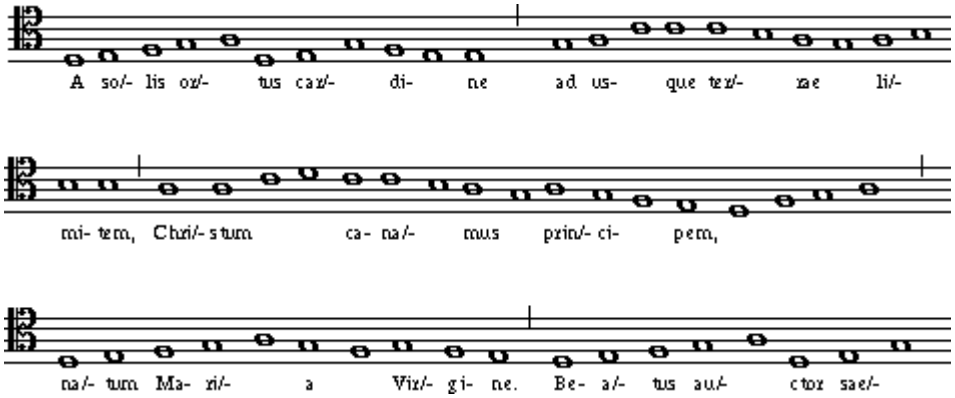
Meeting is pleasure, parting a grief (1996)

The first section of this concert should last around 50 minutes, the second section around 40 minutes, the third around 50 minutes.

Ian Pace would like to play the first set of four pieces in the concert as a group, before applause. In the second section of the concert, he would like to play the *Juvenilia*, both sets of *Two Pieces* and *Wee Saw Footprints* as a group, then the remaining pieces in that section of the concert also as a group.

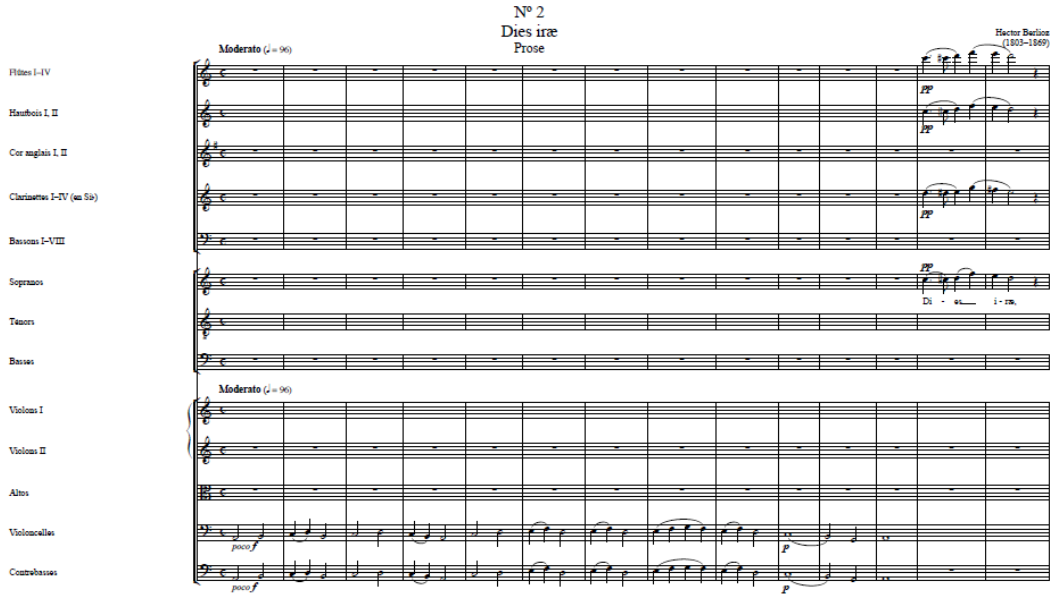
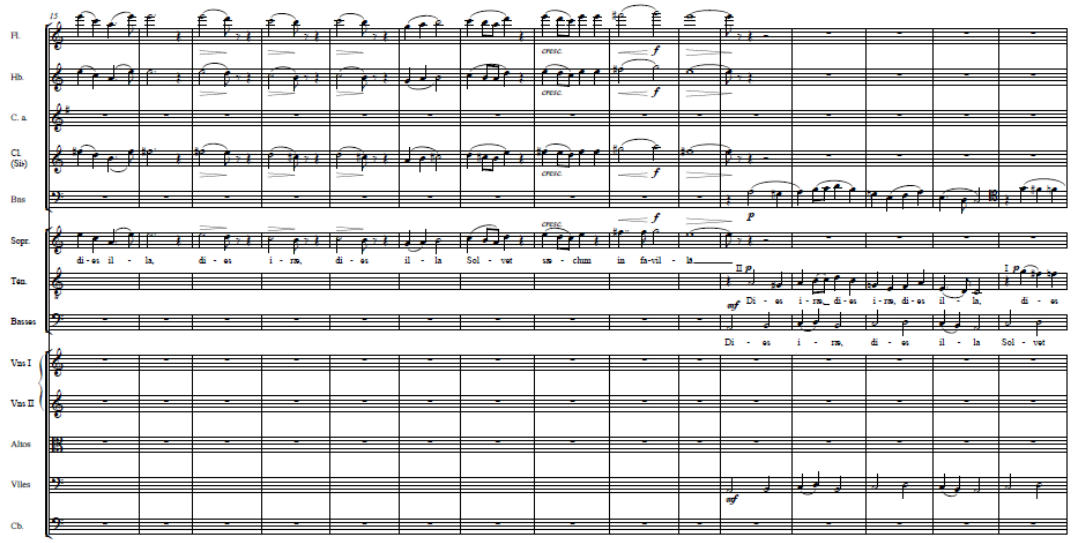
In 1996, the year of Michael Finnissy's 50th birthday, I gave a series of six large concerts in London featuring his then-complete piano works. Twenty years later, Finnissy's output for piano is well over twice that size (the five-and-a-half hour *The History of Photography in Sound* (1995-2000) alone takes the equivalent of three recitals). This concert is the eighth of a series which will take place over the course of 2016-17, 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.

A solis ortus cardine was written upon the news of Olivier Messiaen. Using the plainchant of the same name (which was also set by Palestrina) as basic material, Finnissy configures this somewhat in the manner of Messiaen's *Quatre études de rhythme* (1949-50), arguably the most radical (and in some ways uncharacteristic) part of his output. The strident opening recalls the world of the two *Ile de feu* pieces and the close-packed chords in the extreme register of *Neumes rhythmiques*, whilst a contrasting material assigns distinct durations and dynamics to each pitch as in *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités*, which was of course hugely influential on Pierre Boulez, Karel Goeyvaerts, Karlheinz Stockhausen and others.



Plainchant, 'A solis ortus cardine'

Stanley Stokes, East Street 1836 was inspired by reading a report from May 25th, 1836, in the *Brighton Guardian*. Stanley Stokes was a proctor in Doctors' Commons, aged around 60 years, who was hounded by an angry mob after he was found accosting a lad. Stokes eventually took his own life (cutting his throat) rather than surrender to the mob. Finnissy's tribute takes the form of a series of fragments derived from the *Dies irae* from Berlioz's *Grande messe des morts.*

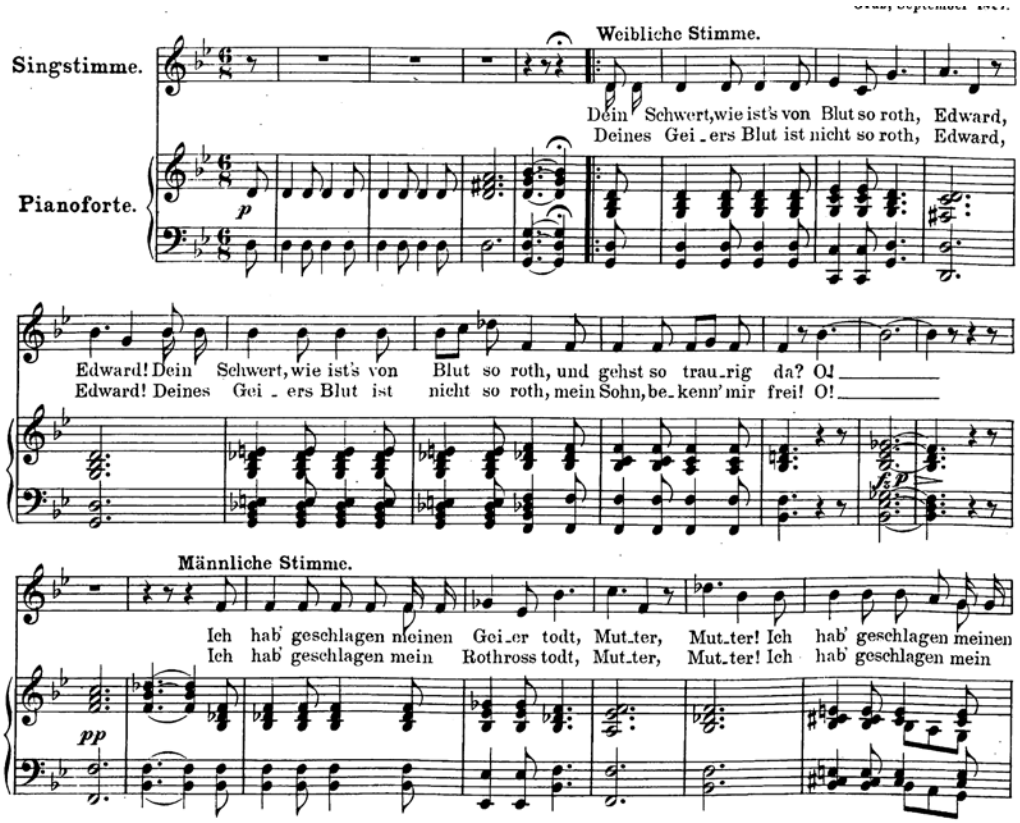


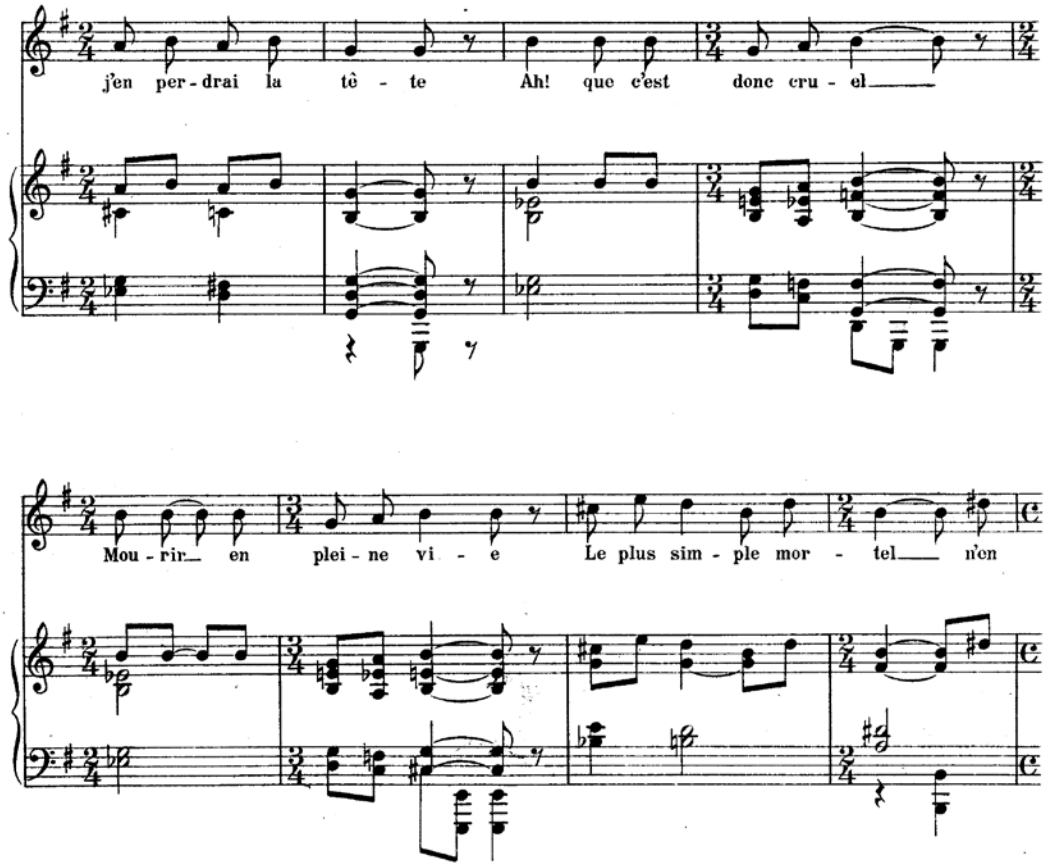
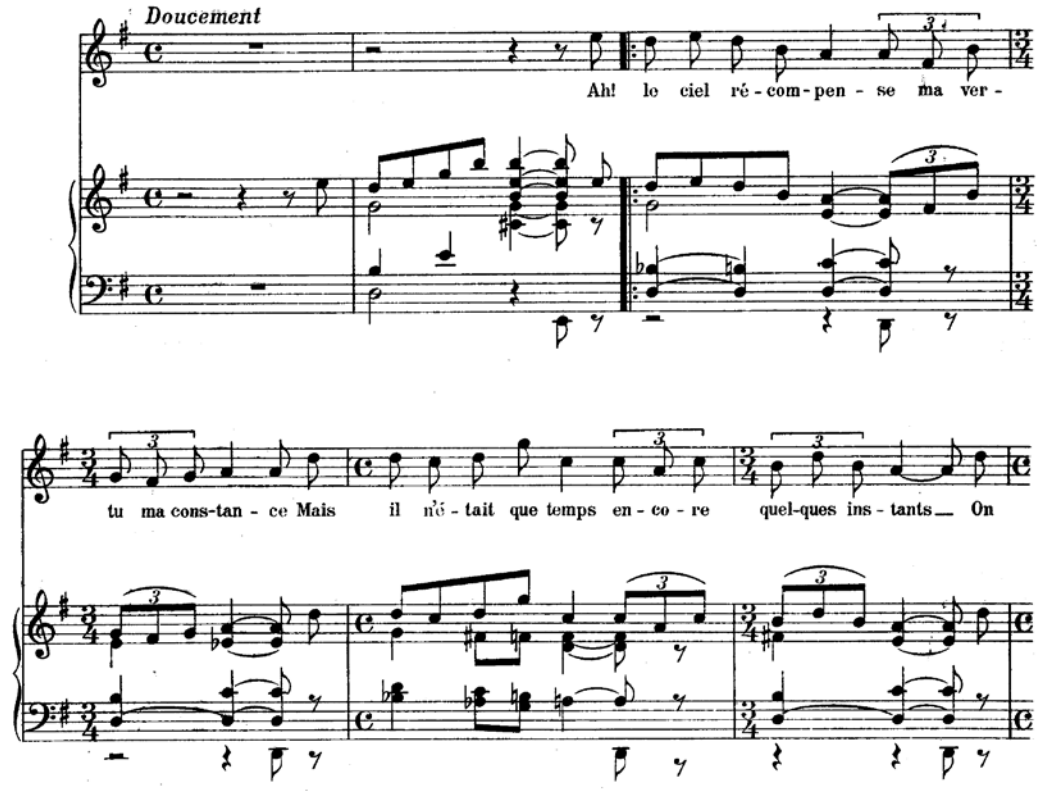
Hector Berlioz, ‘Dies irae’ from *Grande messes des morts*.

The Scottish murder ballad ‘Edward’ inspired numerous composers, including Brahms (in the Ballade op. 10 no. 1, and song ‘Edward’ op. 75, no. 1), Carl Loewe, Chaikovsky, and Schubert, the latter of whom is the inspiration for Finnissy’s piece, written for the collection *Spectrum*, edited by Thalia Myers, in this case for pianists for abilities between Grade 1 and Grade 3. It is dedicated to Finnissy’s three goddaughters Nicola, Ruth and Alice; Ruth’s brother is called Edward.

Finnissy writes:

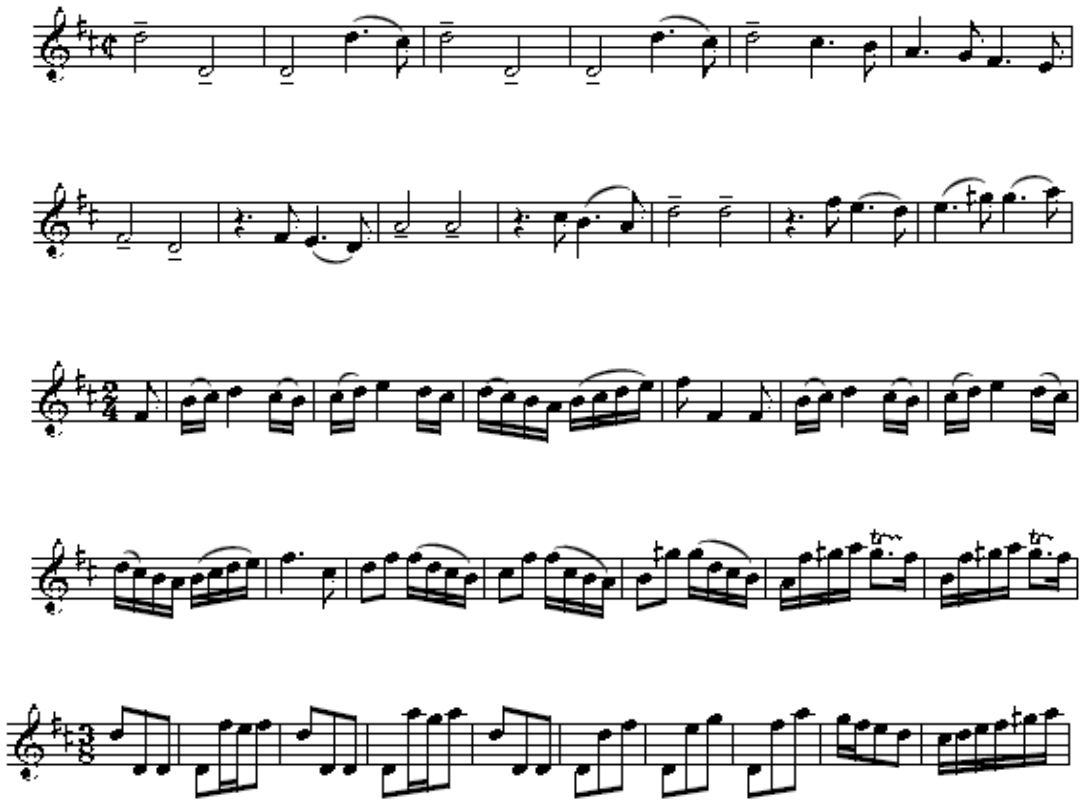
The ballad “Edward” relates the bloodthirsty tale of a Scottish youth who goes about hacking to bits everything in sight. When he’s killed his horse, and his own father, and then decided he’d best seek his fortune elsewhere, his mother asks “What about your wife and children?” “The world’s a big place,” he replies, “let them hunt for the bread in it.” “What about me?” the mother asks. Edward replies “You are damned for bringing me up so badly!”

Schubert’s *Eine altschottische Ballade as Herders „Stimmen der Völker“* D 923b, uses both female and male voices to dramatize the conversation between Edward and his mother. Finnissy alternates more regularly between treble and bass registers, and is explicit in the score about certain phrases being conceived as ‘questions’, others as ‘answers’, and develops Schubert’s melodic material in his own manner, ending in a menacing and ominous manner rather Schubert’s hushed tonal resolution.

Franz Schubert, *Ein altschottische Ballade as Herders „Stimmen der Völker“* D 923b.

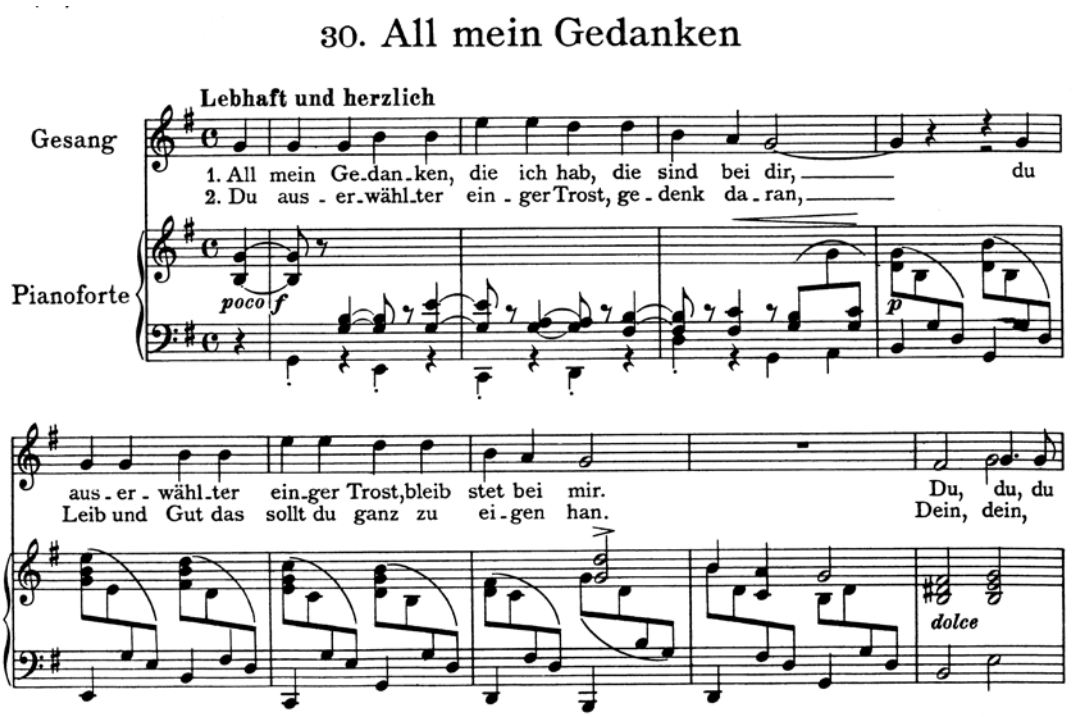
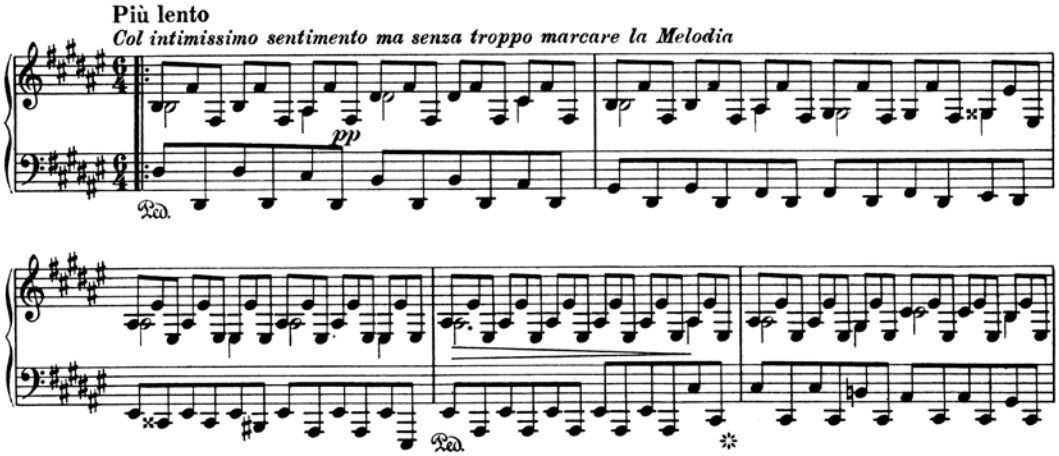
Erik Satie's *Geneviève de Brabant* (1899-1900) was a collaboration with the writer Contamine de Latour (1867-1926). The resulting play with music tells the medieval legend (as also set by Schumann and Offenbach) of a chaste wife who is mistreated and left to die in a forest, though then her husband rescues her and she then surrenders to God. The story had been obsessively rendered in the late nineteenth-century, including in a shadow-puppet version in the *Chat Noir* (where Satie worked as a pianist) in 1893. Satie wrote a prelude, three arias and three choruses, as well as a pair of entr'actes, a hunting call, and a soldiers' march which is repeated four times. The first of Finnissy's *Deux Airs de Geneviève de Brabant (Erik Satie)* is based upon 'Air de Geneviève' at the beginning of Act 2, where she sings of her innocent and the vileness of the enemies who are accusing her. Finnissy accompanies (a fragmented version of) Geneviève's serene and classical melody with more extravagant chromatic gestures in the bass, suggesting Satie's debt to Wagner (as filtered through Chabrier). The second piece is based upon the 'Petite Air de Geneviève' from Act 3 (before the 'Choeur final'), in which Geneviève sings of how the sky has brought back her virtue, this time with less tension between treble and bass, though still indulging some contrapuntal elaboration.

Erik Satie, 'Air de Geneviève' from *Geneviève de Brabant*, Act 2.

Erik Satie, 'Petite Air de Geneviève' from *Geneviève de Brabant*, Act 3.

Finnissy's *Z/K* was written for the Australian pianist Zubin Kanga, and takes its title from a combination of Kanga's initials and an allusion to Roland Barthes' *S/Z* (1970), as the composer describes:

The material (in this case partially by Sammartini, his Symphony J-C 16) is a means, a stimulus, to get to the composing. I need to be 'inside' the piece (living), rather than experiencing it from the outside (as if it were a picture). The composing generates a body of resonances, memories, of past tonalities and atonalities, some quite specific. It generates as many obstacles as it does open doors, and gradually, there evolves some sort of structure. All this is stuff anyone can identify. Eventually this 'stuff' becomes fixed, achieves a state where it becomes available for listening. The title refers to Barthes, to S/Z, his analytical work on Balzac's 'Sarrasine'. For S and Z I have substituted the dedicatee's initials.

The work is shaped in five main sections, the first, third and fifth very clearly derived from the second, first, and third movements of Giovanni Battista Sammartini's Symphony in D major J-C 16 respectively. Sammartini was one of the earliest symphonists, so this work is chosen in terms of the foundations of the genre. The second movement is a melancholy *Andante sempre piano* with a melancholy violin solo and embellishment; the first a noble and energetic *Alla breve* with dotted rhythms, the third a vivacious *Presto*.

Giovanni Battista Sammartini, opening themes from first, second and third movements of Symphony in D major, J-C 16.

The second and fourth sections, by contrast, consist of highly chromatic and quite dense material which Finnissy characterises as alluding the style of Mahler and Berg. Between sections, Finnissy uses streams of unmeasured pitches (a technique he has used frequently in works since *Unsere Afrikareise* (1997-98)) for the transitions, in the manner of a cinematic 'dissolve', as they relate to the pitch material which precedes them, but lose rhythmical and contrapuntal focus, and so can more easily morph into something else.

Finnissy's four *Brahms-Lieder*, written for the American pianist August Arnone, return to a composer with whom Finnissy has had a recurrent fascination but something of a love-hate relationship. Here, characteristically, Finnissy makes use of Brahms's folk song arrangements, specifically Nos. 29- 35 from the *Deutsche Volkslieder* WoO 33. The first piece based upon No. 30 from this collection, 'Alle meine Gedanken'.

Finnissy's setting is configured in a manner somewhat resembling the veiled middle section of Brahms's Ballade op. 10 no. 4 (at the suggestion of Arnone). The folk melody, whilst rhythmically modified, is clearly audible in the alto part at the outset, and returns in amongst rhapsodic elaborations upon the basic material, drawing upon the flowing quaver accompaniments of parts of the original song.

Johannes Brahms, from *Ballade*, op. 10. No. 4.

The other three songs are more oblique in their relationship to the Brahms originals. The second features a discursive structure, between light *scherzoso* material in a moderately transparent setting, and some more close-packed *sostenuto* writing, culminating in a series of inverted fragments from Brahms's No. 35, 'Soll sich der Mond nicht heller scheinen'. The racuous third piece uses Brahms's characteristic setting of a melody in sixths, fifths and thirds, as found in the piano parts of No. 31, 'Dort in den Weiden steht ein Haus', and No. 33, 'Och Moder, ich well en Ding han'. The fourth setting relates to Brahms's No. 29, 'Es war ein Markgraf überm Rhein', with the melody appearing in the tenor line. As in all of the songs, however, the material (in all parts) is in a continual state of flux, as Brahms's type of 'developing variation' is reconfigured in a much late post-tonal context.

Enough was written for the pianist John Tilbury, who also performed and recorded some of Samuel Beckett's work in the early 2000s. Finnissy takes a cue from Samuel Beckett's short text *Assez* (1965), published in English as *Enough*. This text has interested a variety of commentators, appearing somewhat uncharacteristic of Beckett's development compared to its immediate radical predecessors, *All Strange Away* (1963-64), *How It Is* (1964) and *Imagination Dead Imagine* (1965), or its successors *Ping* (1966) and *Lessness* (1969). In contrast to these dense works, told as if by hyper-solipsistic narrators, *Enough*, a story of a parting of the ways from an older man, returns to a more immediate and measured form of prose, like a throwback to his earlier prose work ('Quoi qu'il en soit je filai sans me retourner. Hors de portée de sa voix, j'etais hors de sa vie. C'est peut-être ce qu'il désirait. On voit des questions sans se les poser. Il ne devait plus en avoir pour longtemps. Moi en revhance j'en avais encore pour longtemps. J'étais d'une tout autre generation. Ça n'a pas duré'/'Whatever it was he meant I made off without looking back. Gone from reach of his voice I was gone from his life. Perhaps it was that he desired. There are questions you see and don't ask yourself. He must have been on his last legs. I on the contrary was far from on my last legs. I belonged to an entirely different generation. It didn't last.'). But there are dark themes of child molestation and abuse ('Quand il me disait de lui lecher le pénis je me jetais dessus. J'en tirais de la satisfaction. Nous devions avoie les mêmes satisfactions' …. 'Je devais avoir dans les six ans quand il me prit par la main. Je sortais de l'enfance à peince.'/'When he told me to lick his penis I hastened to do so. I drew satisfaction from it. We must have had the same satisfactions.' ….. 'I cannot have been more than six when he took me by the hand.

Barely emerging from childhood.'); the gender of the narrator is not clear, though some have suggested they may be female.

Finnissy's *Enough* is not a direct representation of Beckett's text, but draws upon elements of its discursive style, with rhetorical figures, separated by silences but grouped together by common dynamics of tempo to form musical 'paragraphs'. Melodic and other pitch material also recurs, but with small modifications, resembling Beckett's textual near-repetitions. Four different seven-second silences occur to separate out further groups of material. Finnissy drew upon speech rhythms from Beckett's text (in English) – the opening gesture may derive from the opening line 'All that goes before forget'. From near the beginning near-tonal passages, in more steady periodic, 'processional'-like rhythms (in sharp contrast to the speech-derived rhetorical figures), also appear, though often combined with other material with which they have a dissonant relation. These progressions become more frequent and extended as the piece progresses, culminating in a long *Adagio* featuring a free retrograde from Mozart's *Ave verum corpus* KV 618; a liberation of the body, enabling the narrator of *Enough* finally to walk away, having always walked in the shadow of the suffocating older man.

Wee Saw Footprints (1986-90) is a collection of nine pieces for children to play, using imaginary English, Scottish and Irish melodies, in solo linear or two-part contrapuntal settings, which Finnissy suggests are reminiscent of the first three books of Béla Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*, looking back to his own early childhood enthusiasms. The resemblance is more one of general type rather than involving specific allusions. With the publication of these pieces, Finnissy also included two sets of teaching pieces and a series of juvenilia (written between the ages of seven and twelve), which he suggests may themselves be the 'footprints', and I include tonight.

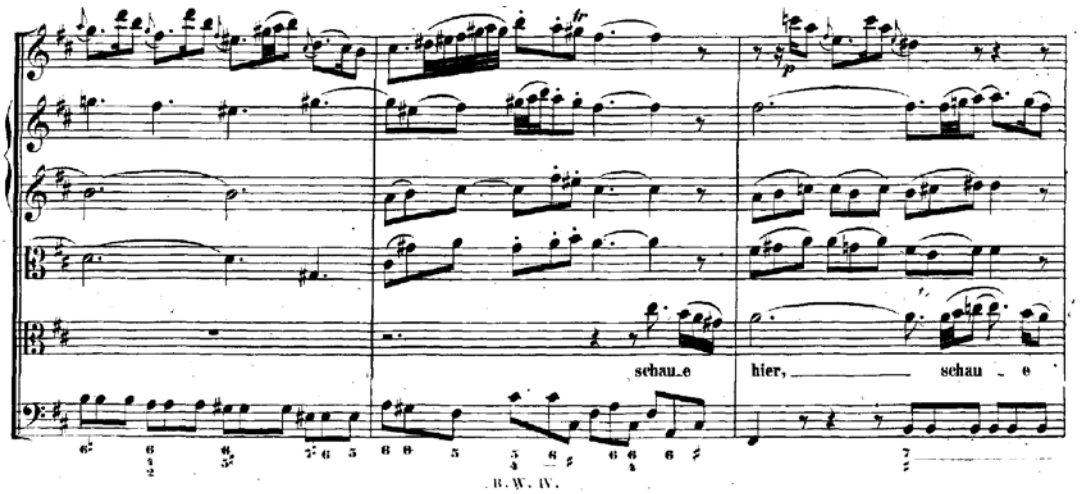
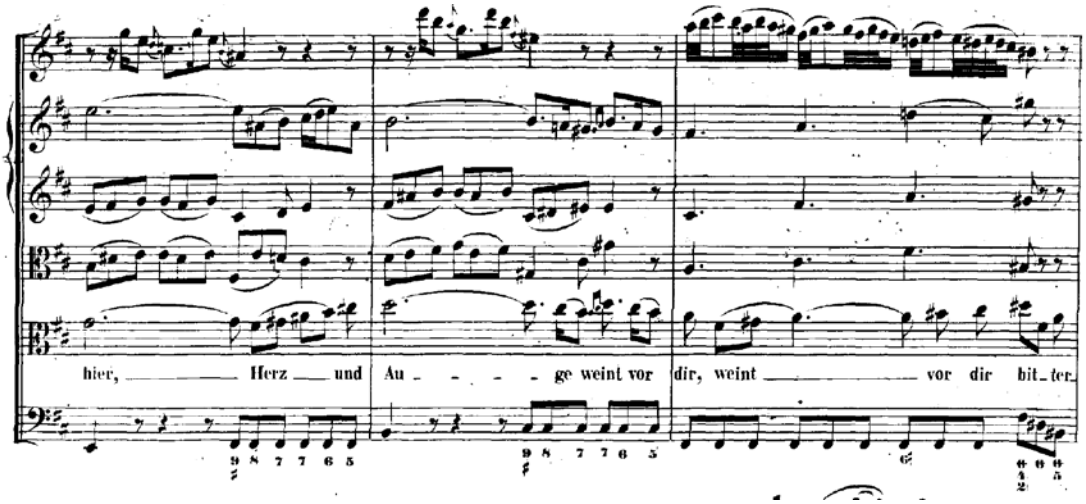
Following a frantic, but unsuccessful search on the part of at least four people for a score of the tiny, aphoristic *Kleine Feldmelodie* (1999), written for the 50th birthday of the German composer Gerhard Stäbler (who owns a copy, but has been in Asia during the time it was needed), Finnissy decided to start a new series of related work (in which the earlier piece will probably be incorporated), the first two of which were completed on November 20th, the day before this concert. Finnissy's *Kleine Fjeldmelodine* (2016) are based on melodies from the collection *Ældre og nyere Norske fjeldmelodier* (1840-63) by Ludvig Mathias Lindeman, a collection upon which Finnissy also drew for *Folklore* (1993-94) and *Eadweard Muybridge-Edvard Munch* (1997). The two pieces are dedicated to Ian Pace and Nigel McBride respectively.

Lylyly li (1988-89) was written after Finnissy visited the permanent exhibition of work of Joseph Beuys (the 'Block Beuys') at the Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt, in which there are a large range of objects presented in seven rooms, many using Beuys's characteristic felt and fat, but also felt, machinery, newspaper, tables, planks, etc., and at the centre, a display case entitled 'Auschwitz Demonstration' with different cases full of various objects: plates, discs, stoves, wax blocks, tubs, mummified rodents, pencil drawings of traumatised children, wasted blood sausage, and so on, suggesting on one hand the possessions left behind by victims, but also the act of burning and crematoria. For Finnissy, the exhibition was a 'series of mementos of lost worlds'. This informs his attitude to the Rumanian folk melody he employs in

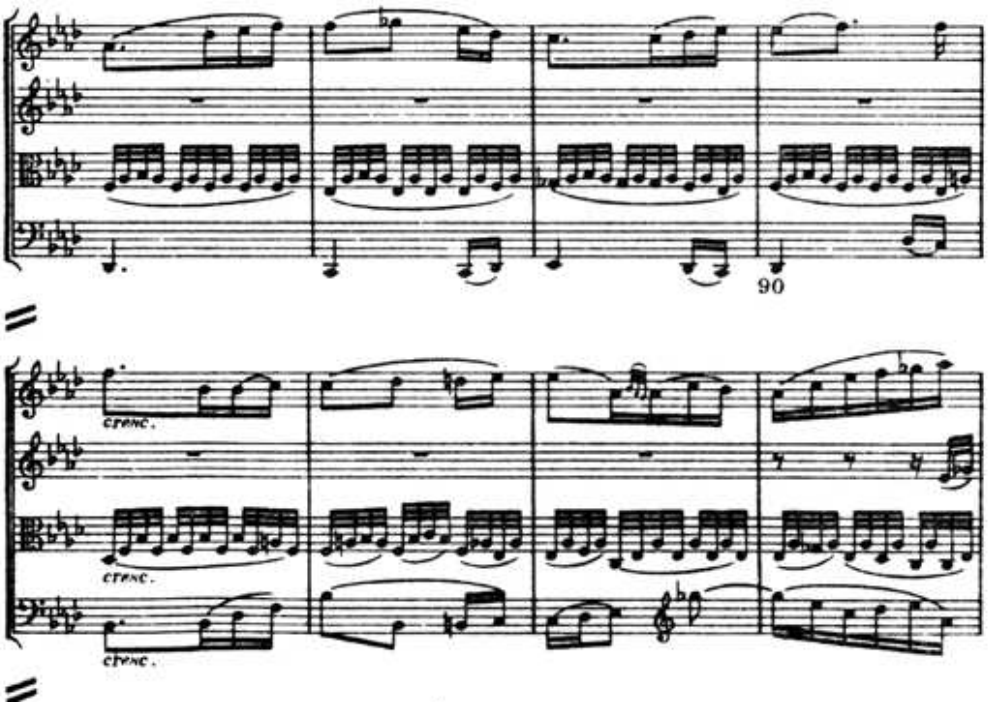
the piece. Presented in a somewhat aloof manner (the whole piece is *pianissimo*) over silently depressed drones, it transforms into series of trills and then quasi-microtonal lines of dense chords, with an overall trajectory towards reduction of clarity of line.

Pimmel (1988-89), whose title is German children's slang for 'penis' was inspired by some drawings by the artist, poet and composer Chris Newman. In these he drew an outline of his own penis; Finnissy uses left-hand tremolos to evoke shaking (after peeing) and then slightly incessant low pitches, dyads and chords to evoke masturbation.

Two of Us (1990) was commissioned by the Japanese pianist Aki Takahashi for her series of pieces based on Beatles songs. Finnissy sets the song 'Two of Us', the first track on the final album, *Let it Be* (1970), which was also the title of a film imagining a fictional reunion between Lennon and McCartney. From the time of its release, the song has been variously interpreted in terms of McCartney's feelings towards his partner, but also towards Lennon (the two sing simultaneously, often in parallel sixths). Finnissy fixes on the arch-like ascending and descending stepwise contour in the original, which is a persistent presence in his arrangement. The melody shifts continuously between the bass and treble, and from the outset a series of staccato pitches and chords, implying different metres, are superimposed, spikily standing out in contradistinction with the lyricism. Also, while Finnissy tends towards a somewhat out-of-focus rendition of the original tonality of G, he continues to insert B-flats, alluding to the central interlude in that key, 'You and I have memories / longer than the road that stretches out ahead'. Towards the end, the staccato layers fade away, and more extended melodic fragments appear. An optimistic comment, perhaps, on the enduring quality of these songs, despite tensions between the former members of the band?

Georghi Tutev (1996, rev. 2002) is an impassioned and boisterous tribute to the Bulgarian composer of that name (1924-1994), who Finnissy knew through his time as President of the International Society for Contemporary Music, in which Tutev was extensively involved. Tutev's *J.S.B. Meditations* (1992) for chamber ensemble, quotes from Bach's *Matthäus-Passion*, and Finnissy does likewise, drawing upon the passage 'Schaue hier, Herz und Auge weint vor dir Bitterlich', from the famed aria 'Erbarme dich'.

Johann Sebastian Bach, from ‘Erbarme dich’, in *Matthäus-Passion*.

This appears clearly around half-way through the piece, combined with music derived from that for a Bulgarian Folk Dance, *Païdushka* (a type of ‘limping dance’). Otherwise, the piece employs Finnissy’s characteristic close-packed, highly-chromatic writing, mostly in the lower treble area, and strident lines in single pitches and chords, over a narrow tessitura, all inflected by the employment of Tutev-related material.

Beat Generation Ballads (2014) was written to celebrate the 80th birthday of composer Christian Wolff, to be played by the pianist Philip Thomas. It consists of four short pieces, then a much longer ‘Veränderung’. The first piece, ‘Lost But Not Lost’ is an essay in quasi-serial writing written as early as 1962, when Finnissy was just 16, to be part of a proposed film which Finnissy co-scripted with his then school friend, now poet, artist, comic-book writer and political activist M.J. Weller. The second ‘naked original skin beneath our dreams & robes of thought’ takes its title from Allen Ginsberg’s *Fragment 1956* (the complete text is ‘Now to the come of the poem, let me be worth & sing holily the natural pathos of the human soul, naked original skin beneath our dreams & robes of thought, the perfect self-identity radiant with lusts and intellectual faces Who carries the lines, the painful browed contortions of the upper eyes, the whole bode breathing and sentient among flowers and buildings open-eyed, self knowing, trembling with love’). Finnissy sets a rendition of material from the slow movement of Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 10 in E flat, op. 74, the so-called ‘Harp’ quartet, but which is made to dissolve into mostly unstemmed pitches.

‘Lonely Banna Strand’ draws upon more obviously politically charged material, an Irish protest song, written in 1965 by Derek Warfield of the Wolfe Tones, about thwarted attempts to transport arms to rebels in Ireland at the time of the Easter Rising in 1916, by activist Sir Roger Casement:

'Twas on Good Friday morning,
All in the month of May,
A German Ship was signalling,
Beyond out in the Bay,
We had twenty thousand rifles
All ready for to land,
But no answering signal did come
From the lonely Banna Strand.

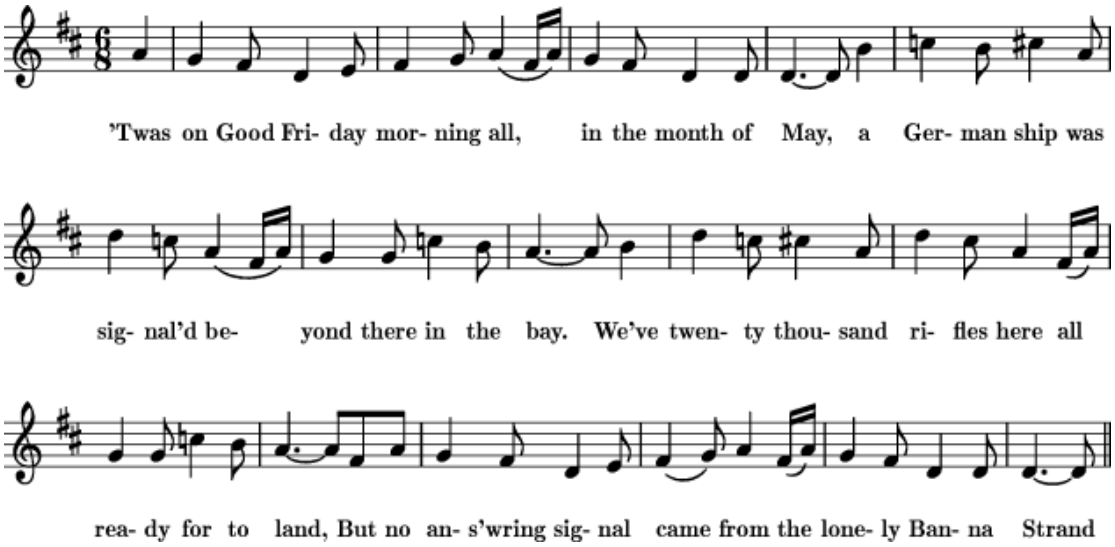
"No signal answers from the shore",
Sir Roger sadly said,
"No comrades here to meet me,
Alas, they must be dead,
But I must do my duty
And at once I mean to land",
So in a small boat rowed ashore
On the lovely Banna Strand.

Now the R.I.C. were hunting
For Sir Roger high and low,
They found him in McKenna's fort;
Said they: "You are our foe",
Said he: "I'm Roger Casement,
I came to my native land,
I mean to free my countrymen
On the lonely Banna Strand.

They took Sir Roger prisoner,
And sailed for London town,
And in the Tower they laid him,

A traitor to the Crown;
Said he "I am no traitor",
But his trial he had to stand,
For bringing German rifles
To the lonely Banna Strand.

'Twas in an English prison
That they led him to his death,
"I'm dying for my country"
He said with his last breath,
They buried him in British soil
Far from his native land,
And the wild waves sing his requiem
On the lonely Banna Strand.

They took Sir Roger home again
In the year of '65,
And with his comrades of '16
In peace and tranquil lies,
His last fond wish, it is fulfilled
For to lie in his native land,
And the waves will roll in peace again
On the lonely Banna Strand.

Finnissy's initial alternation of passages of brutality and tenderness shifts towards an eerie section using most of the compass of the keyboard, an evocation of the fact that Casement was hanged whilst also facing accusations of homosexuality.

'Evans, Harry, Scott, hearts foolish' is a reference to jazz pianist Bill Evans, and his bassist Scott LeFaro, and draws upon 'My Foolish Heart' from the album *Waltz for Debby*. 'Harry' is the poet and publisher Harry Gilonis, a long-time supporter of Finnissy's work and author of several poems alluding to his work.

The title of 'Veränderung' refers to Bach's own title, *Aria mit verschiedenen Veraenderungen,* for his *Goldberg Variationen* and also for the *Einige canonische Veränderungen über das Weynacht-Lied, Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her* for organ. The latter work also inspired the sub-section *Bachsche-Nachdichtungen* from the *History of Photography in Sound*. According to the programme note for the

recording of this work by Philip Thomas, the difference between 'Veränderung' ('alterations') and 'Variationen' ('variations') has significance for Finnissy. Whilst holding off directly calling a work 'Variations', nonetheless he draws upon major sources of inspiration in the variation genre: as well as these Bach works, also Beethoven's Thirty-Two Variations on an Original Theme in C minor, WoO 80 and Anton von Webern's *Variationen* for piano op. 27.

The material from the first four pieces informs the 'Veränderung' in many derivations – one can hear clearly the Beethovenian material from the second section at the outset reconfigured as a delicate *secco* quasi-canon in both hands, then monophonic material referring back to the Irish protest song – but on the whole this lends the work some underlying unity as much as provides clearly identifiable thematic material. As the section lasts around 35 minutes, some pointers to the main sections may facilitate listening.

In the first *Mäßig* section, Finnissy develops the aforementioned staccato lines into angular, atonal pairs of slurred pitches and chords (a few groups with three attacks), in the manner of Webern's variations, which become quite frenetic. The following *Sostenuto e piano* sections opens with sparse long notes doubled two octaves below (later in the form of basic harmonies), like a chant melody (though with flattened sixth and seventh, which may refer back to the Bill Evans material), leading into an anticipation of some of the later canonic writing, intercut with further residues of the Webernian figurations. A brief *Appassionato* outburst leads to a return of the sustained chords as a means of leading towards a dance-like *Allegro* section in dotted rhythms, then shifting suddenly to the brutal writing heard earlier in 'Lonely Banna Strand'. Finnissy then presents an extended development of what appears derived from the Bill Evans material into a clamorous melody with driving quaver accompaniment. An easing of the texture, and a return to quasi-canonic writing, leads to a series of interludes: first *Andante malinconico*, then a sudden brilliant passage alternating new pairs of pitches, looking backwards to the Webernian material, but using (mostly) regular rhythms more reminiscent of the Beethoven variations. Two further interludes feature an ethereal melody surrounded by mostly unmeasured pitches, then reduced to a series of forlorn fragments, and an *Animato* to pick the music back up. The next somewhat Beethovenian *Allegretto marziale* appears to head up a new section; however, just as in the earlier *Unsere Afrikareise*, Finnissy answers a quite definitive 'statement' with a sudden dissolution, into a long passage entirely in unmeasured pitches, with tempestuous moments, and incorporating long silences.

The subsequent *Largo sostenuto e piano* begins with chorale-like writing, which after a brief diversion back into the 'brutal' material leads to the first of the canons proper. Bach, in the *Vom Himmel Hoch* variations, presented canons at the octave, fifth and seventh, an augmentation canon, then a series of other canons (at the sixth, third, second, ninth) in the final variation (though one version of the piece has this last variation in the third and thus central position). Finnissy has five canons, all in this latter section of the piece, at the ninth, octave, fifth, fourth and in unison respectively, all except the last employing inverted versions of the thematic material. But other devices are employed as well: the *Canone alla Nona (inversus)* presents the inverted material in unmeasured pitches, overlaid with another freer layer of the same; the *Canone all'Ottava (inversus)* is entirely in unmeasured pitches and gestures, in a quite strident fashion; the *Canone alla Qunita (inversus)* repeats the strategy of the *Canone*

alla Nona, but with quite different material, derived from the fifteenth variation (itself a *Canone alla Quinta*) in G minor from the Goldberg Variations; while in the *Canone alla Quarta (inversus)* the relationship between the parts has become so askew that it only resembles a canon in terms of aspects of the configuration, a situation exacerbated in the final *Canone all'Unisuono*. Between these canons Finnissy includes brief sections looking back to earlier material, and briefly evokes a pizzicato double bass before the final canon, then at the end of the work dissolves the whole material into unmeasured pitches and gestures, thinning out until just a few modal fragments remain.

Meeting is pleasure, parting a grief is a very short piece written as an encore for the final concert in my 1996 series of Finnissy's piano works. It alludes to a Sussex folksong, 'The cuckoo', which was set by George Butterworth:

The cuckoo is a merry bird,
she sings as she flies
She brings us good tidings and
tells us no lies …
O meeting is a pleasure,
but parting a grief, .

The melody appears in the middle part, but is swamped by two wild surrounding parts, setting the cuckoo into dramatic motion.

With many thanks to Nigel McBride for his help in making this and the following concert possible.

The next concert in Ian Pace's series of the piano music of Michael Finnissy will take place on Thursday December 1st, 2016 at Deptford Town Hall, Goldsmith's College, London, at 18:30. It will feature Finnissy's complete *Verdi Transcriptions* in four books.

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 Kolomiiets, André Laporte, Hilda Paredes, Alwynne Pritchard, Horatiu Radulescu, Lauren Redhead, Frederic Rzewski, Thoma Simaku, Howard Skempton, Gerhard Stäbler, Andrew Toovey, Serge Verstockt, 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 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 2017), the Piano Sonatas of Pierre Boulez, John Cage's *The Music of Changes*, and the piano works of Marc Yeats. The 2016-17 season includes appearances in London, Leuven, Basel, Prague, Lisbon, 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 *Music and Letters*.