

IAN PACE – Piano

Recital at City University, London

Friday 25 May 2018, 6:30 pm

ELLIOTT CARTER

Piano Sonata (1945-46, revised 1982)

1. *Maestoso – Legato scorrevole – A tempo, maestoso – Scorrevole – Meno mosso – Tempo I – Meno mosso – Tempo I – Meno mosso – Tempo I, scorrevole – Tempo primo (Maestoso) – Tempo II – Tempo I*
2. *Andante – Meno mosso – Più mosso – Misterioso – Allegro giusto – Poco più mosso – Andante – Andante con moto*

BETSY JOLAS

B for Sonata (1973) (UK Premiere)

SAMUEL ANDREYEV

Piano Pieces I-IV (2011-16) (World Premiere)

SADIE HARRISON

gentle (2017)

MIC SPENCER

A Maze I(a)n (S)pace (Space [G]race) (2017)

INTERVAL

DIETER SCHNEBEL

‘Trauermusik’ from *Bagatellen* (1986)

IAN PACE

auseinandergerissene Hälften Nos. 1-3 (2018)

KAIJA SAARIAHO

Prelude (2007)

CAMDEN REEVES

Notturmo dalle fiamme dell’inferno (2005)

I. PRÆLUDIUM

II. RICERCARE CHROMATICA

LUBOŠ MRKVIČKA

For Piano Part G (2014)

BETSY JOLAS

Calling E.C. (1982) (UK Premiere)

ELLIOTT CARTER

Two Diversions (1999)

Retrouvailles (2000)

Caténaires (2006)

ELLIOTT CARTER (1908-2012), *Piano Sonata* (1945-46, revised 1982)

Elliott Carter was born to a wealthy New York family and spent much of his childhood in Europe. In the 1920s he became acquainted with both European and American modernism, and after study of music at Harvard University, enrolled for three years (1932-35) at the *Ecole Normale de Musique* in Paris, where he studied with Nadia Boulanger, during which time he made an intensive study of strict counterpoint. After he re-settled in New York in 1935, Carter's early works, many of them choral, are in an essentially neo-classical style, as well as showing the influence of Copland and occasionally of jazz, a penchant for quartal harmony and a fair degree of rhythmic fluidity. During the war, Carter was not accepted into the army due to various allergies, but ended up working for the Office of War Information from 1943 to 1944. As the war approached its end, Carter provided suggestions for composers deemed most worthy to represent American culture to European nations, which would inform cultural policy during occupation.

Carter's Piano Sonata is variously perceived as the culmination of his early style, or as a breakthrough work which marks the beginning of his mature output. Whichever view one takes, the work is certainly pivotal, featuring a still essentially tonal language with a radical approach to rhythm and intricacy of contrapuntal writing. There are echoes of Copland's more austere Piano Sonata of 1943 (and also of the harmonic world of the earlier Piano Variations of 1930), but Carter equally draws upon the numerous techniques absorbed during his time studying in Paris, whilst as Wilfred Mellers has argued, the amorphous writing in many of the more rapid sections, in which a steady sense of pulse mostly disappears, shows the influence of Ives.

The two movements of the Carter Sonata are structurally different but unified by commonalities of harmonic design and the use of continuously changing moods incorporating flashbacks. According to Carter himself, the genesis of the first movement is in the form of five short motives all introduced close to the beginning: (i) a sonorous leap of several octaves; (ii) a theme in thirds with a downward leap of an octave; (iii) an ornamental arpeggiated figure; (iv) a theme consisting of two slowly repeated notes with a third a whole tone below; (v) a rising stepwise figure in octaves, at the outset of which appears an ascending interval of a fourth. Then the movement is essentially comprised of an slow introduction then five large sections (with a few interruptions) in a fast-slow-fast-slow-fast pattern. David Schiff has analysed how the material in the first two large sections creates two thematic groups which parallel distinct subjects within a sonata movement; then the next fast section constitutes a development, at the conclusion of which there is an overt return to the first thematic group in the manner of a recapitulation.

The second movement is more overtly lyrical in character at the outset, featuring heavily repeated pitches in a way which looks back to motive (iv) from the first. This forms an ostinato above which Carter creates a free elaboration before returning to a more urgent statement of the opening material, which leads into an extended fugue organised in a series of episodes, each based upon a progressive contraction of the opening subject, with the tonality moving upwards gradually in half-steps. These episodes employ various techniques of canonic writing and isorhythm, even

transforming the theme into a pentatonic rendition for one episode, culminating in a dramatic climax in double octaves before returning to the opening material.

BETSY JOLAS, *B for Sonata* (1973)

Betsy Jolas's little known *B for Sonata* is a seventeen-minute rhapsodic work written for the French pianist Marie-Françoise Bucquet. Much of the piece is taken up by an interplay between extended, expanded and enhanced sonorities, multiple lines which are stretched and contracted, some filigree gestures, and more distinct progressions that can assume the roles of cantus firmus.

SAMUEL ANDREYEV, *Piano Pieces I-IV* (2011-16) (World Premiere)

This is the first of a projected series of collections of piano pieces. While not precisely études, each piece occupies a self-contained world governed by its own rules. N° 1 alternates a slow-moving, 3-voice counterpoint with sudden flashes of unrelated material. N° 2, written on the occasion of composer Allain Gaussin's 70th birthday, explores the resonance of slowly-evolving chords. N° 3, a miniature, presents a range of contrasting sonorities within a condensed time frame. N° 4 is a virtuoso movement that shifts suddenly from texture to texture, making use of the entire span of the keyboard. The whole is unified by a sort of hidden cantus firmus, exposed through a sequence of variations which are sometimes presented in linear fashion, sometimes discontinuously.

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SADIE HARRISON, *gentle* (2017)

**Where so many words are needed,
a few notes (gathered with deep admiration) must suffice.**

Erik Satie 'I took to my room and let small things evolve slowly.' ES

Luigi Nono '..the song unsung..' Carola Neilinger

Thelonious Monk 'It's always night..' TM

Charles Ives '..a history of art's beautiful mistakes..' CI

Clara Schumann '...hours of self-forgetfulness, when one lives in a world of sound.'
CS

Perotin 'The old order passes away, the rites of the ancients are gone.' (Trans. from *Vetus ab it littera*)

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MICHAEL SPENCER, *A Maze I(a)n (S)pace (Space [G]race)* (2017)

The piece written to celebrate Ian Pace's 50th birthday, has two primary material types: one monodic and slightly wistful, the other a contrasting continuous grace note feature with stabbing 'interjections'. While the elusive grace notes are a constantly changing stream, there is a little repetition in terms of the chords and single note attacks of the interjections.

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DIETER SCHNEBEL, 'Trauermusik' from *Bagatellen* (1986)

It was sad to hear of the death of Dieter Schnebel (1930-2018) last weekend, one of the last of the important generation of German composers born between 1925 and 1935, and whose highly diverse and varied work rethought many aspects of musical and theatrical language. This short piece is included as a tribute; because of its nature I believe he would have appreciated its being played specifically on this occasion.

IAN PACE, *auseinandergerissene Hälften* Nos. 1-3 (2018)

auseinandergerissene Hälften is a short work which nonetheless could be considered 'mixed media', to use the fashionable term, as it will consist playing as well as spoken and written text, and a small amount of theatre. The title comes from the notorious letter written by Theodor Adorno to Walter Benjamin on 18 March 1936, in the context of discussion of the latter's 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit', first written the previous year. Adorno wrote to Benjamin on the subject of the dialectics of 'high' and 'low' culture:

'Beide tragen die Wundmale des Kapitalismus, beide enthalten Elemente der Veränderung (freilich nie und nimmer das Mittlere zwischen Schönberg und dem amerikanischen Film); beide sind die auseinandergerissenen Hälften der ganzen Freiheit, die doch aus ihnen nicht sich zusammenaddieren läßt' ('Both bear the stigmata of capitalism, both contain elements of change (but never, of course, simply as a middle-term between Schönberg and the American film). Both are torn halves of an integral freedom, to which, however, they do not add up').

My starting point for this piece is both this conception of the 'torn halves' of cultural freedom, but also my own 'torn halves', as both a pianist and a musicologist intensely engaged with the conflicting demands of both activities. In the latter context, I return to the high/low culture question as it has informed my teaching of a former core module in music history. This attempted to navigate fairly between this 'torn halves' and their continuous co-presence, sometimes interacting, sometimes antagonistic, in Western musical history since 1848.

For this piece I have drawn upon the materials I used there to create a series of interconnected musical vignettes, each of which draw upon different species of music from a series of dates (including 1936, the date of Adorno's letter to Benjamin). All of these are heavily modified, viewed from a contemporary perspective, but I attempt, inevitably unsuccessfully, to make them 'add up'. The music is accompanied by slides with disembodied fragments from the lecture slides from the aforementioned module,

together with passages extracted from modernist texts from the periods in question, and material from social media (a low culture of today in contrast to the supposedly elevated world of the lecture).

The version to be heard tonight consists of the first three vignettes.

KAIJA SAARIAHO, *Prelude* (2007)

Kaija Saariaho's *Prelude* was written for the Finnish pianist Tuijja Hakkila. It is derived from the song cycle *Quatre Instants*, which Hakkila premiered with soprano Karita Mattila.

CAMDEN REEVES, *Notturmo dalle fiamme dell'inferno* (2005)

A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round

As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames

No light, but rather darkness visible

Serv'd only to discover sights of woe...

(John Milton, *Paradise Lost* Book 1)

Notturmo dalle fiamme dell'inferno began as a request from Clive Williamson to write a one-minute piece to feature in his 'One-Minute Wonders' concert given at the University of Surrey on the 15th of March 2005. For this occasion I composed the Praeludium. The Ricercare was added shortly afterwards, and Clive Williamson gave the première of the complete work at the University of Manchester on the 10th of May 2005.

LUBOŠ MRKVIČKA, *For Piano Part G* (2014)

Some composers tend to constantly revise their list of works while others, metaphorically speaking, basically compose a single work their whole life. Up to this point all suggests that I clearly belong to the second group. About ten years ago I have decided to label all my compositions simply by letters, since they have been part of a larger whole, while the title of the "cycle" would simply be a description of the instrumental set. I would have rather used only the letters, however, this decision would probably not be entirely practical: firstly, I would soon come to the end of the alphabet; not to mention that with the passing of pieces I myself often do not remember which piece corresponds to which letter so the confusion would become unbearable. I have picked the letters because they connote a sense of hierarchy to a lesser extent, at least for me, than for example the numbers. This equality of individual parts is associated with the fact that any part can be performed individually

or together with any number of any other parts. In case a performance consists of more than one part the order is entirely a matter of choice of the performer. I have been working on the set of piano pieces called *For Piano* with only minor interruptions almost continuously since the beginning of 2013. Parts *G* and *L* were chosen and first performed by Ian Pace at the Contempuls contemporary music festival in Prague in November 2016.

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BETSY JOLAS, *Calling E.C.* (1982) (UK Premiere)

Jolas's *Calling E.C.* was written as a one-minute tribute to Elliott Carter, and reflects her own take on Carter's work through the use of lines, ornamental figures and then more continuous figurations.

ELLIOTT CARTER, *Two Diversions* (1999); *Retrouvailles* (2000); *Caténaires* (2006)

After composing two major extended piano works, the Sonata and *Night Fantasies* (1980) at different points in his career, in his late years Carter composed a range of short piano works, of which these are a varied selection. *Two Diversions* were written for the *Carnegie Hall Millennium Piano Book*. In the composers words the first 'presents a line of paired notes, musical intervals, that maintain a single speed throughout, while the other very changeable material uses many different speeds and characters' while the second 'contrasts two musical lines, one of which, on the whole, grows slower and slower, while the other grows faster and faster'. *Retrouvailles* was written as a short tribute for Pierre Boulez's 75th birthday. *Caténaires* was written for Pierre-Laurent Aimard; Carter wrote how he 'became obsessed with the idea of a fast one line piece with no chords', using spacings, accents and colorings for expressive diversity.

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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 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, Serge Verstockett, Hermann Vogt, Alistair Zaldúa 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 2017), the Piano Sonatas of Pierre Boulez, and John Cage's *The Music of Changes*. Recent concerts have included appearances in Lisbon, Zürich, Oslo, Prague, Kiev, and around the UK, and new commissions including a major new work from Finnissy.

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 to 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 projects include a history of specialist musical education in Britain, a book on Brahms Performance Practice, and publications on the new music infrastructure in post-war Germany, as well as further writings on the music of Finnissy.