

# **Late Music Concert Series 2018**

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May**

**Unitarian Chapel, St Saviourgate, York**

**Ian Pace at 50:**

**A three-part journey through  
twentieth century piano repertoire**

**Concert One: Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

11.30am – approx. 1pm

**Concert Two: Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century**

3pm – approx. 4pm

**Pre-Concert Talk: 'The Piano in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century'**

6.30 – 7.15pm

**Concert Three: Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

7.30pm-9.30pm

**Concert One:**                    **Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century**  
Schoenberg                    *Sechs Kleine Klavierstucke*  
Ives                                *Hawthorne from the Concord Sonata*  
Ravel                              *Valses nobles et sentimentales*  
Poulenc                         *Trois mouvements perpétuels*  
Lili Boulanger                *Trois morceaux pour piano*

– short interval of 10 minutes –

Bartók                            *Allegro barbaro*  
Debussy                         *Estampes*  
Busoni                            *Nuit de Noel*  
Satie                              *Enfantillages pittoresques*  
Scriabin                         *Deux morceaux Op. 59*  
Prokofiev                        *Toccata in D minor Op. 11*

**Concert Two:**                    **Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century**  
Janáček                         Four pieces from *On an Overgrown Path*  
Webern                         *Variations for piano*  
Crawford Seeger              *Piano Study in Mixed Accents*  
Cage                              *In a Landscape*  
Tippett                          *Piano Sonata No. 2*  
Messiaen                        Three pieces from *Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus*

**Pre-Concert Talk:**            **'The Piano in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century'**  
by Dr Edward Caine and David Power

**Concert Three:**                **Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century**  
Stockhausen                  *Klavierstucke IX*  
John Adams                    *China Gates*  
Judith Weir                    *The Art of Touching the Keyboard*  
Boulez                          *Trope from the Third Sonata*  
Thea Musgrave                *Monologue*  
Howard Skempton            *Well, Well, Cornelius*  
Tristan Murail                *Cloches d'amour et un sourire*  
Michael Finnissy             *Snow Drift*  
Takemitsu                      *Rain Tree Sketch*  
Ligeti                             Three pieces from *Études Book 1*

## **Welcome to the Late Music Concert Series 20<sup>th</sup> Century Piano Day.**

The idea of programming three concerts and a talk on a specific musical subject into a single day first occurred to me in 2011 when I was running the now defunct Grimsby St Hugh's Festival. I wanted to look at 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century British song and quickly realised I needed more than two concerts. Four concerts would be too much of an ask but three concerts with a couple of hours break between them seemed viable. So that's what we did: three concerts and a talk on British song. The day was well attended, feedback was excellent and the majority who attended bought a day pass for the whole day and came to the whole day.

In terms of times and lengths of concerts, today's Late Music Piano Day follows the Grimsby St Hugh's format pretty exactly. Where it differs is that it confines itself to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and consequently there are no new pieces/first performances to hear today.

As for how I programmed the day, well, where to start? Inevitably, there is subjectivity in the mix. I wanted pieces by some of the composers that, at the moment, seem to me to be among the most significant of the twentieth century, although I am fully aware that the shifting of time may change that perspective. Where possible I wanted the best piano music by these composers, as many such composers as possible to be included and to programme performances only of complete works. In the light of these stipulations, one will see immediately that many compromises were made! I prefer Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit* and *Miroirs* to his *Valses nobles et sentimentales* but the *Valses* are nevertheless very fine and choosing them over the other two made room for the Busoni and the Scriabin. The best music/only complete pieces stipulations came a cropper when I got to Messiaen – I just had to include pieces from *Vingt Regards*: subjectivity again. The Satie might seem a strange choice but I love the *Berceuse* from that set, is the Prokofiev Toccata really him at his best? And on it goes. Even human error played its role. I wanted the Scriabin *Deux morceaux* Opus 57 as its first piece – *Désir* – is one of my all time favourite Scriabin movements but I forgot to put the Opus Number in my email to Ian and he assumed I meant *Deux morceaux* Opus 59 and started rehearsing that. So we went with it.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the provisos about subjectivity and practical compromises etc, I love each and every piece you will hear today. I hope you all find music to love today too.

David Power

## Concert One: Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

### Arnold Schoenberg     *Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke* (1911)

1. Leicht, zart (Light, delicate)
2. Langsam (Slow)
3. Sehr langsame (Very Slow)
4. Rasch, aber leicht (Brisk, but light)
5. Etwas rasch (Somewhat brisk)
6. Sehr langsam (Very slow)

Schoenberg's *Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke* (Six Little Piano Pieces) were written in 1911, the first five of them in a single day – 19<sup>th</sup> February. At that point, Schoenberg regarded the set as finished, but he added the sixth in June of that year shortly after hearing of the death of Mahler. Indeed, many believe the sixth piece to be a Tombeau to Mahler. They were given their world premiere in Berlin the following year by Louis Closson.

The pieces are aphoristically short – the entire set lasts just six minutes – and each is unique in character. It may surprise some to learn that he wrote them whilst orchestrating his massive, late romantic piece, *Gurrelieder*, but Schoenberg retained a lifelong love of romantic music while simultaneously being driven to seek out new musical forms of expression, as can be heard in these six pieces. The set had a strong influence on Webern who, of course, went on to make very short pieces in a style uniquely his own.

### Charles Ives                     "Hawthorne" from the *Concord Sonata* (1911 – 1915)

The *Concord Sonata* is one of Charles Ives's best-known and most highly regarded pieces. Some material in the *Concord Sonata* dates back as far as 1904, but Ives did not begin substantial work on it until around 1911 and largely completed the sonata by 1915. The *Concord Sonata* was first published in 1919 and was publicly premiered by John Kirkpatrick on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1938 at Cos Co, Connecticut although isolated movements had been given earlier performances. A revised edition of the *Concord Sonata* appeared in 1947 and it is this version which is usually performed today.

The sonata's four movements represent figures associated with transcendentalism as follows:

- "Emerson" (after Ralph Waldo Emerson)
- "Hawthorne" (after Nathaniel Hawthorne)
- "The Alcotts" (after Bronson Alcott and Louisa May Alcott)
- "Thoreau" (after Henry David Thoreau)

The piece demonstrates Ives' experimental tendencies: much of it is written without barlines, the harmonies are advanced, and in the second movement, there is a cluster chord created by depressing the piano's keys with a 14 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-inch (37 cm) piece of wood. The piece also amply demonstrates Ives's fondness for musical quotation – the opening bars of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 are quoted in each movement. A typical performance of the whole sonata lasts around 45 minutes.

### **Maurice Ravel**                      ***Valses nobles et sentimentales* (1911)**

1. Modéré – très franc
2. Assez lent – avec une expression intense
3. Modéré
4. Assez animé
5. Presque lent – dans un sentiment intime
6. Vif
7. Moins vif
8. Épilogue: lent

The piano version of Ravel's *Valses nobles et sentimentales* was published in 1911, and an orchestral version the following year. The title was chosen in homage to Franz Schubert's 1823 collection, *Valses nobles* and *Valses sentimentales*, although the two works have little else in common. The piano edition is published with a quotation of Henri de Régnier "...le plaisir délicieux et toujours nouveau d'une occupation inutile" ('the delicious and forever-new pleasure of a useless occupation').

*Valses nobles et sentimentales* was first performed on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1911 by Louis Aubert – to whom it is dedicated – at a performance of new works where the composers were not identified. The idea was that this would encourage people to listen to the music itself without any preconceptions generated from knowing who the composer was. They would then give their reactions to the piece and predict who they thought had written it. This rather backfired on Ravel as the piece was booed and only a tiny majority of the audience realised it was by him. Nevertheless, the piece has gone on to be one of Ravel's most popular works. It lasts about 15 minutes.

### **Francis Poulenc**                      ***Trois mouvements perpétuels* (1918)**

*Trois mouvements perpétuels* was written while the 19-year-old Francis Poulenc was a conscript in the French Army – his duties left him time for composition and this piece was composed on the piano in a local school. Poulenc was heavily into the music of Erik Satie at the time and this certainly shows in this piece. It was premiered in Paris the same year by Poulenc's piano teacher Ricardo Viñes and was an immediate success. It remains one of Poulenc's most popular works, although

Poulenc himself had more mixed feelings about it, judging it inferior to his more serious works. The endings of the three pieces are notable. The commentators Marina and Victor Ledin write, “Each of the three pieces ends inconclusively, leaving the music unresolved, to linger in our minds.” The piece as a whole lasts about five minutes.

## **Lili Boulanger**

### ***Trois morceaux pour piano (1914)***

1. D'un Vieux Jardin
2. D'un Jardin Clair
3. Cortège

Marie-Juliette Olga (“Lili”) Boulanger was a French composer. Her older sister was the noted composer and composition teacher Nadia Boulanger. In 1913 Lili won the prestigious Prix de Rome composition prize with her cantata *Faust et Hélène* with support from her sister Nadia, who had herself made four unsuccessful attempts to win the prize. Lili was the first female to win the prize and a remarkable career seemed to be ahead of her. However – and tragically – she also had significant and chronic health issues which would cause her premature death at the age of just 24, leaving us with a small output of music and a strong sense of what might have been. The *Trois morceaux* last about 7 minutes in total and each of the three *morceaux* has a different dedicatee – thus 1 - à Lily Jumel, 2 - à Ninette Salles, and 3 - à Yvonne Astruc.

– interval of 10 minutes –

## **Béla Bartók**

### ***Allegro barbaro (1911)***

Bartók’s *Allegro barbaro* is one of his best known and most widely performed solo piano pieces. It was written in 1911 but did not receive its official premiere until 1921. However, Bartók himself had played it from memory on a number of occasions. It is a short, dance-like composition, which at first sounds like it is free-composed. However, one can begin to find traditional structure to the piece by looking at the harmony. *Allegro barbaro* is in ternary form, which means that there are two distinct themes, but one is presented twice. In many ways it is typical of Bartók’s style and utilises folk elements. The work combines Hungarian and Romanian scales. The Hungarian peasant music is based on the pentatonic scale, while the Romanian music is largely chromatic. To keep the edge of freedom and wild force, Bartók frequently breaks the flow of *Allegro barbaro* in a peremptory way and the irregular-seeming cadences ending the major phrases and sections can catch the listener by surprise. The piece lasts about three minutes.

## **Claude Debussy *Estampes* (1903)**

1. Pagodes
2. La soirée dans Grenade
3. Jardins sous la pluie

Debussy's *Estampes* (prints) is a three-movement work that was completed in 1903.

*Pagodes* evokes images of East Asia, which Debussy first heard in the Paris World Conference Exhibition of 1889, and later again in 1900. It makes extensive use of pentatonic scales and mimics Indonesian traditional melodies by incorporating hints of Javanese Gamelan percussion.

*La soirée dans Grenade* uses the Arabic scale and mimics guitar strumming to evoke images of Granada in Spain although, at the time of its writing, Debussy had only spent a few hours in the country.

*Jardins sous la pluie* describes a garden in the Normandy town of Orbec during an extremely violent rainstorm. Throughout the piece, there are sections that evoke the sounds of the wind blowing, a thunderstorm raging, and raindrops dropping. It makes use of the French folk melodies “*Nous n'irons plus aux bois*” and “*Dodo, l'enfant d'*”. Chromatic, whole tone, major, and minor scales are used in this movement.

## **Ferruccio Busoni *Nuit de Noël* (1908)**

Ferruccio Busoni was born in Italy in 1866. His early compositions were in a late romantic style but he gradually acquired a more individual voice – often with elements of atonality – after 1907, the year he published his *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music*. Another important influence was his interest in North American indigenous tribal melodies which he encountered on his various visits to the continent. He died in Berlin in 1924 aged 58. His *Nuit de Noël* is an attractive little piece lasting just four minutes.

## **Erik Satie *Enfantillages pittoresques* (1913)**

1. Petit prélude à la journée
2. Berceuse
3. Marche du grand escalier

Satie's *Enfantillages pittoresques* is one of three sets of piano pieces that he composed in 1913 with the collective aim of ‘preparing children for the sound patterns of modern music.’ Two further sets of *Enfantines* were published posthumously; the three sets are known collectively as the *Enfantines*. They really are children's piano music in the sense that full allowance is made for the size of children's hands and other such considerations. Many of Satie's contemporaries

spoke of his child-like nature and this is sometimes related to his own quest for purity and directness. Perhaps for this reason, the Berceuse in this set is among the most tender and touching music Satie ever wrote.

### **Alexander Scriabin      *Deux morceaux Op. 59 (1910)***

Alexander Scriabin was born in Moscow in 1871. His earliest compositions showed the influence of Liszt and, in particular, Chopin. Like Chopin, a substantial majority of Scriabin's works are for solo piano and they even employ many of the same genres that Chopin used. Thus, in Scriabin's early works we find etudes, preludes, nocturnes and mazurkas. As the years went by, Scriabin's work became markedly more experimental and passages in his later works are atonal and also employ some unusual and experimental textures. His last five piano sonatas do not have key signatures. The *Deux morceaux* that we will hear today are excellent examples of Scriabin's mature voice. Scriabin died in 1915 aged just 43.

### **Sergei Prokofiev      *Toccata in D minor, Op. 11 (1912)***

Prokofiev's *Toccata* is an extremely exciting and virtuosic piece, much loved by virtuoso pianists as well as the public. The piece starts dramatically with a fast and persistent repetition of the note D natural alternated between the hands. This is the start of a relentlessly exciting ride that, apart from the briefest of respites about half way through, carries us through the piece. Particularly to be noted are some of the chromatic runs that contribute to the distinctiveness of the piece. Prokofiev himself – one of music's greatest composer-pianists – gave the premiere of the piece in Petrograd in 1916. It has remained a favourite with the public ever since. The piece lasts about four minutes.



## Concert Two: Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century

Leoš Janáček

Four pieces from *On an Overgrown Path, Book I*  
(1900-1911)

1. Naše večery (Our Evenings) – Moderato
5. Štebetaly jak laštovičky (They Chattered Like Swallows) – Con moto
9. V pláči (In Tears) – Larghetto
10. Sýček neodletěl! (The Barn Owl Has Not Flown Away!) – Andante

*On an Overgrown Path*, typically of Janáček's mature works, bears the strong influence of Moravian folk songs and dances, although Janáček employs folk elements in so personal a manner that the pieces cannot be said to be in “folk style”. Melodies occur in short, sometimes gasping breaths, often with simple, repetitive left-hand accompaniment, as in songs. However, the music's erratic, improvisational nature sometimes allows the accompaniment material to break away and take control of a few measures. The rhythms and phrase lengths are irregular, as in Moravian folk music, and the frequent use of tremolo derives from the sound of the cimbalom. The pieces are brief (two to four minutes long), intimate, often brooding or melancholy, and occasionally disturbing. Book I begins with the nostalgic *Our Evenings*, whereas *They Chattered Like Swallow* depicts talkative girls with a quick, repeated figure that constantly veers into the minor mode. Janáček described *In Tears* as ‘crying with a smile’ and the childlike tune takes some unexpectedly fretful harmonic turns. *The Barn Owl Has Not Flown Away* alludes to the superstition that when someone is about to die, a barn owl lurks at the house; fluttering arpeggios alternate and eventually overlap with a resigned chordal melody.

### Anton Webern *Variations for Piano, Op. 27* (1935-36)

As “modern” as it is in other respects, Webern's *Variations for Piano* – the composer's only important work for piano solo – is written in the tradition of the recital piece, and even provides the performer ample opportunity for virtuoso display. In just under five minutes, Webern presents a flurry of information, presented with new types of articulation and writing for the piano. There are no *crescendo* or *diminuendo* markings – the dynamic contrasts are all stark juxtapositions of piano and forte passages. It seems Webern is exploring the Baroque-era characteristic of terraced dynamics.

The *Variations for Piano* are constructed according to strict 12-tone procedures. The theme is really a collection of short groups of motives. These are altered in accordance with the combinatorial procedures of the 12-tone method, using various permutations of the primary row. It is organised into three movements, the

first of which is organised around symmetrical pitch schemes. Most intriguing is the second movement, in which a strict canon is obscured by Webern's registral and rhythmic changes.

### **Ruth Crawford Seeger    *Piano Study in Mixed Accents* (1930)**

Ruth Crawford Seeger's biographer, Judith Tick, has described *Piano Study in Mixed Accents* as a "modernistic Minute Waltz." A single line of music is played in both hands, consisting of rapidly played 16th notes accented in a rugged, uneven fashion. *Piano Study in Mixed Accents* is conceived and executed in a tightly rigorous experimental milieu, and is barely a minute and a half in length. It is so short that it might take even an attentive listener a couple of tries to get it. However, the piece has an urgency and rhythmic drive that immediately perks up one's attention. While *Piano Study in Mixed Accents* is not famous, it has long been a favourite of pianists who specialise in 20<sup>th</sup> century American literature. It is an appealing, accessible virtuoso concert encore, despite its origins in the avant-garde.

### **John Cage                                    *In a Landscape* (1948)**

*In a Landscape* was written for the dancer Louise Lippold. The structure of the piece follows the rhythmic dance patterns of the choreography for which it was composed. It is a modal composition; the patterns alternate between a mode in B and a mode in G. With the use of both the soft and sustain pedals, Cage creates music that seems to suspend time. There is clearly an aesthetic indebtedness to Erik Satie. The score notes that the piece may be played on the harp or piano.

### **Sir Michael Tippett    *Piano Sonata No. 2* (1962)**

The influence of Tippett's opera *King Priam* (1961) on his output was far-reaching. As far as the second piano sonata is concerned, it extended to the direct quotation of motives from the opera and, more fundamentally, to the way the music behaves. Although the sonata includes passages of great beauty, in general it is arresting and uncompromising. There are spectacular glissando effects and it would have included the direction 'strike wood of the piano with the first' (at three places, to imitate a bass drum), if Tippett hadn't decided this was incongruous. It is highly sectional, short gestures being juxtaposed with other short gestures in a sequence of statements that makes it easy to understand why he originally planned to call the work 'Mosaics'. He abandoned the idea when he realised that in essence his material was shaped to form a single-movement sonata, with passages in double and triple octaves between the sections: thus, a 'first movement' with dynamic and lyrical material, a 'slow movement' in which the motives eventually reach a state of inertia, a 'development' with interpolated 'scherzo', and a 'slow finale' with interpolated recapitulation of fragments from the whole sonata. There

is a short coda returning to the beginning yet leaving the work hanging in mid-air, as if to say that positive conclusions are no longer possible.

**Olivier Messiaen      Three pieces from *Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* (1944)**

13. Noël

15. Le baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus

10. Regard de l'Esprit de joie

*Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* is Messiaen's highly personal celebration of the Nativity, and, as a devout Catholic, the significance he placed upon Christ's birth. It is not the stuff of cheery Christmas carols and songs around the Christmas tree: in it, Messiaen draws on the iconography of Medieval and early Renaissance religious art and literature in the telling of the Christmas Story in which the birth of an extraordinary infant is marked with joy, love and awe tempered by a portentous sense of what is to come in adulthood. The individual movements, with their special titles and Messiaen's own short, poetic explanations, are like staging posts in the great theological story, musical "stations of the cross", if you will, leading to a conclusion which is both terrifying and redemptive.

## **Pre-Concert Talk, 6.30pm – 7.15pm**

**Dr Edward Caine and David Power: 'The Piano in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century'**

with a complimentary glass of wine/juice

Dr. Edward Caine is a composer, pianist and choral conductor based in the West Midlands, where he works chiefly for Ex Cathedra, as Research Assistant to the Artistic Director, Jeffrey Skidmore OBE. He also works as a freelance Accompanist, Piano Teacher and Musical Director for various organisations across the Black Country, including Armonico Consort and Contemporary Music for All (CoMA), and works as a Quality Assessor for Arts Council England. He completed his PhD in composition at the University of York with Roger Marsh, and while there worked as organiser for Late Music for a number of years. His works have been performed by professional musicians up and down the country and abroad, with the most recent performance being a tour of Denmark by Soprano Annemette Pødenphant which featured his piece *Poem in Silence*.

## Concert Three: Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century

### Karlheinz Stockhausen *Klavierstück IX* (1956-61)

Stockhausen originally planned a series of 21 *Klavierstücke*, eventually completing 19. They vary in scale quite considerably from the miniature *Klavierstück III* to others which last around 30 minutes; most were conceived for piano but from *Klavierstück XV* onwards he was thinking more in terms of electronic instruments. He described them as his 'drawings', which might imply that they were sketches for bigger pieces but could equally represent an attempt to capture the impression of 'monochrome' pieces when his sound-world was more often dominated by a search for new colours.

According to Roger Smalley, *Klavierstück IX* "presents two strongly contrasted ideas, an incessantly repeated four-note chord at a moderately fast speed in periodic rhythms, and a slowly rising chromatic scale with each note of a different duration. These ideas are alternated and juxtaposed, and finally resolved in the appearance of a new texture of irregularly spaced fast periodic groups in the upper register."

*Klavierstück IX* was premiered by Aloys Kontarsky on 21 May 1962 in a *Musik der Zeit* concert at the WDR studios in Cologne.

### John Adams *China Gates* (1977)

Adams wrote *China Gates* as a companion piece to his much longer *Phrygian Gates*, the two pieces marking what the composer now regards as the beginning of his mature style, one which shows a clear debt to Steve Reich's minimalism while at the same time signalling a sharp move away from its austere formality.

*China Gates* is written in three parts: in the first, the tonality alternates between A-flat mixolydian and G-sharp aeolian, which sound almost like major and minor versions of the same key. The third part alternates between F lydian and F locrian, whilst the second alternates more rapidly between all four of those modes; the title alludes to the 'gates' of electronic music, a term indicating rapidly shifting modes.

### Judith Weir *The Art of Touching the Keyboard* (1983)

The title of this music is an over-literal translation of the title of Francois Couperin's harpsichord tutor of 1716, *L'art de toucher le clavecin*. It seemed appropriate for a piece which begins with the player pressing single keys tentatively, as if encountering the instrument for the first time, and ends ten minutes later with the same repeated notes marked 'confident and relaxed'. In the interim, the music,

which is in a single continuous movement, demonstrates the many ways in which the piano keys can be touched, from the gentlest of strokes to the most vicious of blows.

*The Art of Touching the Keyboard* was commissioned by William Howard with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain and was written in 1983.

### **Pierre Boulez**                      ***Trope from Third Piano Sonata (1958)***

The Third Piano Sonata was first performed by the composer in Cologne in 1958, in a 'preliminary version' of its projected five-movement structure:

1. "Antiphonie" (unpublished except for a fragment, called *Sigle*)
2. "Trope"
3. "Constellation" (published only in its retrograde version, as "Constellation-Miroir")
4. "Strophe" (unpublished)
5. "Séquence" (unpublished, except for a facsimile of the preliminary-version manuscript)

Only the second *formant* - Trope – and the retrograde of the third - were completed and published in anything like a final form, and although later in life Boulez returned to many of his earlier works to unlock their evident potential, he never completed the Third Sonata.

*Trope* is made up of four fragments, each taking its name from related terms of literary criticism: *Text*, *Parenthesis*, *Commentary*, and *Gloss*. The performer is free to choose which fragment serves as the beginning, but *Commentary* must be played either before or after *Gloss*, and the performer is instructed to play through each complete fragment in accordance with specific directions. A clear inspiration here is *Finnegans Wake* – and the title of the first *formant* may have been inspired by Joyce's *Sigla* whereby his main characters could be represented by small icons or symbols. Boulez indicated that the score for *Trope* should be bound in a spiral in order to emphasise its nonlinearity.

– interval –

### **Thea Musgrave**                      ***Monologue (1960)***

This short work (duration 5 minutes) was written in 1960 for Margaret Kitchen.

Although the music is rhapsodic in character, it is nevertheless composed over a structural background of variation form. The textures build up gradually though the impetus is momentarily checked when a fugal passage makes its appearance and

then quickly leads to the culminating point of the work, a big declamatory climax. (TM)

**Howard Skempton      *Well, Well, Cornelius* (1982)**

This short piece in Eb major was composed in memory of Skempton's close friend and colleague Cornelius Cardew, who was killed in 1981. Its sublime, haunting melancholy is strongly reminiscent of the folk-like songs Cardew composed late in his career.

**Tristan Murail      *Cloches d'Adieu et un Sourire* (1992)**

"Bells of Farewell, and a Smile..."

This unpretentious little piece was written at the request of the German Radio, Deutschlandfunk, in memory of Olivier Messiaen.

It borrows several aspects (the conducting of the discourse, and the three final notes, the adieu) of one of Olivier Messiaen's earliest works, his piano prelude *Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu* (1929). I tried to mix in, amongst other allusions, a few echoes of bells which are featured in many of my own works. These are answered by luminous echoes and clusters of chords in cheerful keys, as the "smile" of Messiaen's last works managed to triumph for good over the "anguishes" and "tears" of the past-for there is no final farewell. (TM)

**Michael Finnissy      *Snowdrift* (1972)**

*Snowdrift* takes its title from the poem 'The White Peacock' by the Scottish poet William Sharp from his 1891 collection *Sospiri Di Roma*:

Here, as the breath, as the soul of this beauty  
Moveth in silence, and dreamlike, and slowly,  
White as a snow-drift in mountain-valleys  
When softly upon it the gold light lingers

The work received its premiere in 1973 at the Wigmore Hall and lasts 10 minutes.

**Toru Takemitsu      *Rain Tree Sketch* (1982)**

*Rain Tree Sketch* is one of several water-themed works composed by Takemitsu during the late 1970s. Many of his pieces draw on the imagery of nature, and several evoke the open space and pointillist design found in the serene traditional gardens of his native Japan. Those water pieces (including *Rain Tree*, *Rain Coming*, *Toward the Sea*, and *I Hear the Water Dreaming*) are inspired by water in movement: droplets falling from the sky, the shifting sea, or rivulets and rivers in their fluid downhill motion. Most writers associate the irregular pace and organic

texture of *Rain Tree Sketch* with Kensaburo Oe's *The Clever Rain Tree*, a short story written in honour of French music critic and impresario Maurice Fleuret; Takemitsu dedicated his piece to Fleuret. Oe's story describes a tree with countless tiny leaves that collect and retain water from the morning rain shower so that throughout the day, after the storm has abated, the rain still falls from the tree. Takemitsu's piece works in a similar manner: its precipitation falls alternately in single droplets of quiet, sustained notes and in sudden dissonant clusters, as if shaken from waterlogged branches. The composer carefully notates differentiated dynamics and accents, as well as precise pedalling techniques to lend careful nuance to these moment-to-moment contours. The piece's overall form follows an ABA structure marked by tempo changes, but the rigidity of this form is rendered opaque by the irregular flow of Takemitsu's gestures and the care and patience with which he releases them.

### **György Ligeti                      Three pieces from *Études Book 1* (1985)**

Ligeti composed a cycle of 18 études for solo piano (divided into two sets) between 1985 and 2001; they form one of the major creative achievements of his last decades. Tonight we hear just three, drawn from the first set:

1) Fanfares. Vivacissimo, molto ritmico, semibreve = 63, con alegría e slancio

This is a very fast polyrhythmic study in which melody and accompaniment frequently exchange roles. It features a driving ostinato which divides the bar of 8 quavers into 3+2+3.

2) Arc-en-ciel. Andante con eleganza, with swing, semiquaver = ca. 84

This slow music rises and falls in arcs that aptly evoke the rainbow of the title. The influence of Debussy seems clear but the tempo instruction also alludes to the influence of jazz composers, particularly that of Thelonius Monk and Bill Evans, on Ligeti's late style.

3) Automne à Varsovie. Presto cantabile, molto ritmico e flessibile, crotchet = 132

*Autumn in Warsaw*, refers to the annual festival of contemporary music which takes place in the city, and it is dedicated to the composer's Polish friends. Ligeti called this a *tempo fugue*: a study in *polytempo*. It consists of a continuous transformation of the initial descending figure involving overlapping groups of 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, ending up at the bottom of the keyboard.

## Biography

**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 throughout Britain, Europe and the US. His absolutely vast repertoire of all periods focuses particularly upon music of the 20th and 21st Century, including a wide range of works by contemporary British, French, German and Italian and other composers as well as the 'classics' of modern music by composers such as Boulez, Stockhausen, Barraque, Xenakis, Ligeti, Nono, Kagel and Cage. He has given world premieres of over 100 pieces for solo piano. He is renowned for ambitious and ingenious programming, and for his ability to surmount the most transcendental of pianistic challenges. Ian has played in 23 countries and at most major European venues and festivals. Many of his recitals and recordings have been broadcast, by British, French, Belgian, Dutch, German, Swiss, Austrian, Italian, Polish and Australian Radio. He has recorded numerous CDs on the Metier/Divine Art, Mode, NMC, Black Box, Albedo, Stradivarius and Naive labels, which have been received with great critical acclaim.

Ian has been Head of Performance at City University London since 2011. As an academic teacher and researcher, his specialist areas include 19th and 20th century musical history and performance, the post-1945 avant-garde, especially in West Germany, historical performance practice, issues of music and society (in particular focusing upon the work of Theodor Adorno), aesthetics of romanticism, modernism and post-modernism, music and the cold war, instrument history, nineteenth-century opera, site-specific music, and the role of musical institutions. He co-authored and co-edited the volume *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998) and has published widely in *The Musical Times*, *Tempo*, *Contemporary Music Review*, *International Piano*, *Open Space Magazine*, *Liszt Society Journal*, *Classical Music*, *Musiktexte* and *Musik und Aesthetik*, as well as authoring many programme and CD liner notes. His book *Brahms Performance Practice: Documentary, Analytic and Interpretive Approaches* was published by Ashgate in 2013, and his chapter on 19th century instrumental performance was published in Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (Eds), *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[www.ianpace.com](http://www.ianpace.com)



## A timeline of today's composers

Janáček (1854 – 1928)

Debussy (1862 – 1918)

Busoni (1866 – 1924)

Satie (1866 – 1925)

Scriabin (1871 – 1915)

Schoenberg (1874 – 1951)

Ives (1874 – 1954)

Ravel (1875 – 1937)

Bartók (1881 – 1945)

Webern (1883 – 1945)

Prokofiev (1891 – 1953)

Lili Boulanger (1893 – 1918)

Crawford Seeger (1901 – 1953)

Tippett (1905 – 1998)

Messiaen (1908 – 1992)

Cage (1912 – 1992)

Ligeti (1923 – 2006)

Boulez (1925 – 2016)

Stockhausen (1928 – 2007)

Thea Musgrave (\*1928)

Takemitsu (1930 – 1996)

Michael Finnissy (\*1946)

John Adams (\*1947)

Tristan Murail (\*1947)

Howard Skempton (\*1947)

Judith Weir (\*1954)

# Coming up in the Late Music Concert Series

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1pm**

## ***Carmen Troncoso — Recorder and Electronics***

Recorder virtuoso and York PhD student Carmen Troncoso explores and expands the recorder's limits, with new music by Roger Marsh, Jia Chai, Desmond Clarke, and Carlos Zamora.

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 7.30pm**

## ***Late Music Ensemble — Thea Musgrave at 90***

LME celebrates the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday year of Thea Musgrave with three solo works for flute, cello and piano. The programme also features music by fellow Scottish composer Martin Suckling, Musgrave's teacher Nadia Boulanger, a radiant trio by Martinu, plus new works by LME alumnus John Cummins and a York St John University student.

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