

by Darragh Morgan at The Warehouse, London in June 2003. Lukoszevics has meanwhile given further performances of *Still/s 1*, including one in association with an exhibition by Swiss constructivist artist Richard Lohse at Haus Konstruktiv in Zürich.

The *Still/s* series relates to my work as a whole in the following way: a 'first period' in the 1970s and 1980s largely concerned with complex textures was followed, after a period of reflection and experimentation, by the production of a long series of works all in a greatly pared down solo piano idiom – a process of self-imposed constraint I now wish to extend to instrumental writing. The large number of works involved in the series results directly from the notion of an exhaustive exploration of possibilities ('combinations') in the context of a Beckettian process which moves towards "whiteness, absence, stillness and silence". (Richard Emsley)

Richard Barrett: *what remains*

what remains was commissioned with funds from the Arts Council of Great Britain by Harry Sparnaay for Het Trio, and completed in 1991, after which various planned performances failed to take place, for various more or less plausible reasons, so I should like to give special thanks to the performers of the premiere in July 1995 (Nancy Ruffer, Andrew Sparling, Ian Pace, with Roger Redgate conducting) for finally bringing it into the world.

The work forms a kind of postscript or epitaph to a group of eleven works under the collective title *Fictions* (indeed reworking materials and formal profiles from several of them), with the unfortunate complication that two of those compositions were still incomplete at the time of writing *what remains*. Nevertheless, *what remains* might be seen to have an atmosphere of piecing itself together, at first with some hesitancy (is the title a question or a description?), from a residuum of disparate "materials" (which include the disparate instrumentation), expanding into an intense polyphony where each instrument contributes several discrete layers, before disintegrating into an atomised state which is in turn abruptly and seemingly arbitrarily curtailed.

Another view: *what remains* as "chamber music", a succession of intimate formal chambers with dark secret corners, unexplained turnings, moments of startled illumination, a descendant of the disjointed, "experimental" forms of 17th century instrumental music. (Richard Barrett)

Libra Ensemble gave its first public performances in 1992, and since then has enjoyed consistent critical acclaim as one of Australia's most respected presenters of new music. Libra has established itself as an important part of the diversity of the Australian concert music scene, with a strong track record of advocacy in adventurous new music composition and performance. This is reflected in Libra's growing audience base of committed listeners with roots in both new and more established classical music traditions, seeking an alternative to the standard concert hall diet.

Besides presenting its own annual concert season in Melbourne since 1992, Libra has been featured ensemble at the 1997 Sydney Spring International Festival of New Music and in the 1999 inaugural season of concerts at The Studio in the Sydney Opera House. In June 2002 Libra took part in the Third Roaring Hoofs Festival of New Music in Ulaan Bator and the North Gobi Desert, Mongolia. In February 2003 Libra is presenting a tour of three concerts in Amsterdam, London and Stuttgart.

Libra's repertoire encompasses widely varying ensembles based around a core instrumentation of flute, clarinet, piano, percussion, guitar, violin and cello. This has been expanded up to chamber orchestra for works such as Berg's *Kammerkonzert*, Henze's *Kammermusik 1958*, and the Australian premiere of Elliott Carter's *Clarinet Concerto*.

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Libra ensemble

what remains?

7:30pm, Friday 14 February 2003

St Cyprian's Church
Glentworth Street
London NW1 6AX

Chris Dench	<i>'atsiluth/shîn</i> [1991] 15'
James Dillon	<i>Sgothan</i> [1984] 12'
Michael Finnissy	<i>Alkan — Paganini</i> [1997] 12'
James Erber	<i>Traces (B)</i> [1997-98] 18' UKP
Chris Dench	<i>Closing Lemma</i> [1992] 14' UKP
Chris Dench	<i>mem(e)</i> [1994] 5'
Maurizio Pisati	<i>Å</i> [1993] 7' UKP
Richard Emsley	<i>Still/s 22</i> [2002] 7' WP
Richard Barrett	<i>what remains</i> [1990-91] 10'

Kathleen Gallagher flute, bass flute
Carl Rosman clarinet in b flat, bass clarinet
Mark Knoop piano

Chris Dench: *'atsiluth/shîn*

When I finally began to compose the kind of music that I felt comfortable calling my own, in the mid-seventies, I almost at once hit a snag. The most important aspect of any music is its architectural coherence (or, handled carefully enough, incoherence); this is also the most large-scale and challenging aspect of organising one's sonic ideas. After much contemplation, it dawned on me that the form that most naturally suited my then-current musical thinking was that of the Creation Myth, the 'nothing-into-something' trajectory. I proceeded to write a sequence of large ensemble pieces that unfolded to a greater or lesser extent in mimicry of Big Bang cosmology: the first symphony, the 1982 brass nonet, *énoncé, symphony 2/afterimages*. However, I could not seem to get past this persistent obsession, and in 1992 I decided to finally exorcise myself by writing *'atsiluth/shîn*, which, unlike the previous hard-science-derived works, draws its ideas from the kabbalistic model of the world as emerging from the continual operation of a zone of archetypes. *'atsiluth* — named after the highest of the four realms of the Tree of Life, from which reality continually emanates — initially presents an amorphous world 'prior' to the birth of melody and harmony, and, as the music progresses, accrues more and more perceptible definition. The end result of this *autopoiesis*, or self-organisation, is the concluding bass flute solo, *shîn*, which demonstrates the fully-evolved sonic world that only existed as a potentiality at the beginning of the work. *'atsiluth* is dedicated to Larry Berryman. (Chris Dench)

James Dillon: *Sgothan*

Sgothan: Scots Gaelic: *Clouds, Nuages, etc.* Written in January 1984, the work is in one continuous movement and has a duration of 12 minutes. Articulated as 24 short sections, each of these 'sections' is comprised of a predetermined number of sub-units, which are interlaced according to combination/recombination rules. Generating complex configurations, these patterns are then diffracted, variegated and stratified to form a polyphony of clouds. (James Dillon)

Michael Finnissy: *Alkan – Paganini*

Alkan and Paganini shared certain qualities - most obviously the technical challenge of their music, its supposedly 'demonic' origin, its innate (if troubled) classicism, proximity to Berlioz (heroic, or Byronic, Romanticism rather than the later, darker more degenerate sort).

'Portraiture' includes symbolic, even abstract, delineation (of gods and totems), flattery and judicious adjustment, caricature and deprecating exaggeration, capturing 'artistically' the innermost qualities of the subject, polaroids taken on the spur of the moment. This musical portrait forms the fifth of eleven sections of *The History of Photography in Sound* – its 'shape' (episodes for left hand only, then right hand only, then a juxtaposition of the two) was suggested by Nicolas Hodges, for whom it was then written, to whom it is dedicated, and who graciously assured its commission from Southern Arts funding.

Alkan – Paganini was first performed by Nicolas Hodges at Oxford Contemporary Music Festival on 15 May 1998. (Michael Finnissy)

James Erber: *Traces (B)*

In 1991 I wrote a large-scale solo piece for the Australian flautist Laura Chislett. *Traces* was inspired by the track of a Roman road I had seen in an isolated part of the Lake District while on a walking holiday there over twenty-five years previously. Like much of my work from the 1990s, *Traces* consists of a single rhythmic arch, which in this case is subjected to anything from one to three levels of variative activity, while subsidiary grids control rhythm, dynamics and other aspects. These accretions form an analogy with the effects of time and of nature on the road, which is now visible only in outline, while the resulting non-hierarchical, non-narrative form parallels the road's inexorable journey through the inhospitable landscape.

Shortly after completing *Traces*, I felt that it would be an interesting and fitting challenge to compose two further pieces for solo flute, which would extend the compositional and technical language of the original piece and thus form an hour-long cycle. To date only a second piece, *Traces (B)*, has been completed. It was given its world premiere by Mario Caroli in Cremona on 17th November 2001 as part of the *Spazionovecento* festival. (James Erber)

Chris Dench: *Closing Lemma*

Closing Lemma was written over an extended period, between 1986 and 1991. The last of my four large-scale flute works (the others are *Vier Darmstädter Aphorismen, dé/ployé*, and *sulle scale della Fenice*), it is in many ways a consolidation of all that I know about the flute, and is probably the most complex of all my works, both structurally and expressively; indeed I had to develop a whole new approach to compositional thought in order to imagine the work through. The skeleton of the piece is a girder based on the almost unplayable solo flute flourish at the end of my large ensemble work *Afterimages*, which I back-analysed down to its minutest detail and then used that detail to generate an up-scaled architecture. The flourish itself I retrospectively segmented into seventeen subgestures, and each up-scaled section is preceded by a literal statement of the subgesture from which it derives – the whole flourish never appears (doubtless to players' relief). I also allowed the tessitura range of each subgesture to govern the intervallic character of the sections, which means that much of this material inhabits a highly microtonal world. A second, rather less nuanced, layer of material was then interpolated into this primary structure – the second layer is highly fenestrated. Several further layers and inserts were applied before the piece achieved its final form. A closing lemma is a mathematical penultimate, drawing together threads preceding the final argument. One day perhaps I will write the piece for which *Closing Lemma* is the closing lemma. (Chris Dench)

Chris Dench: *mem(e)*

It was Richard Dawkins, in *the Blind Watchmaker*, who coined the term *meme* for a unit of cultural heritability, analogous to the gene. This little duo was written in 1994 at the request of Ross Hazeldine for a Red House publication; as I knew that Ross proposed to computer-set the score, I decided to emphasise the imprecise sonic outcome of the resultant visually exact *meme*, by writing a piece where the notation was so extreme as to become iconic. *mem(e)* is therefore a piece both for the eye and the ear, independently. The work was originally intended to be a companion piece to *'atsiluth/shîn*, and for this reason the title invokes the Hebrew letter *mem*. It is derived from the name "Gregory Bateson", and is dedicated to Richard Toop. (Chris Dench)

Maurizio Pisati: *Å*

Å (pronounced aw) is a word/letter/sound which in Swedish signifies a little river, a brook in the forest. Å, for bass flute and bass clarinet, follows by two years the composition of Ö ('island' in Swedish) for alto saxophone and alto trombone, a homage to Magister Leoninus and Magister Perotinus; two duets for winds, two titles of different tonal characteristics used as initial suggestions, but, on another level, two works forming part of a larger vocal/instrumental project based on some of the less well-known writings of August Strindberg, and on the idea of Northern Europe as a last boundary of water before the true, white, empty North. Å and Ö are essential sounds from a world of water which is not my own: from my city [Milan] I see the first border – the Alps – beyond which are the seas: on one side water bathing the land, on the other water permanently frozen.

Å, like Ö, assimilates the two instruments into one great resonant lung – but in Ö the energy is gradually built up to explode breathlessly at the end, while in Å all is concentrated, transforming itself along the way. (Maurizio Pisati)

Richard Emsley: *Still/s 22*

In early 2002 I began work on a collaboration with the British painter Joan Key. This was designed in such a way that the artist's production of a group of six paintings and the composer's production of a piece for solo cello would be processes which did not inhibit one another but yet which intersected at a deep-seated structural level. The collaboration was commissioned by the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill, and Key's Six White Paintings for Composition were hung there as part of the 'Colour White' exhibition in July 2002 during which the cellist Anton Lukoszevieve premiered the musical component of the collaboration, *Still/s 1*.

Keen to continue a close exploration of the seam of material exposed by the project, I decided that the cello piece would be the first of 24 pieces composed for all the solo, duo and trio combinations of a 5-instrument ensemble, the idea of combinations being particularly germane to the project. *Still/s 22* for clarinet and piano was completed in late 2002 and *Still/s 13* for solo violin is scheduled for first performance