

A black and white photograph of a beach. On the left side, there is a large, tangled pile of driftwood, including logs and branches, some of which are covered in seaweed. The beach is composed of dark, coarse sand. In the distance, the ocean meets the shore with a thin line of white surf. The sky is a uniform, light gray.

James Weeks

TIDE

Apartment House

portion, extent, or space of [...]; an age, a season, a time, a [...]

James Weeks' *TIDE* is three solo pieces – for cello with a special curved bow that enables the sounding of all four strings simultaneously, for clarinet with electronics, and for oboe d'amore – which may be played separately or as a trio. When heard together, as they are on the first disc here, they may be overlaid however the performers choose. The points of entry are left entirely free; the components are not so much simultaneous as coexistent, each independently working its own narrow furrow, following similar principles with different means. The three works end where they begin in a theoretically endless loop, with the option given to begin again; each is in fact an investigation of what it might mean to demarcate a long span of time. They all, in very different ways, draw an arc across duration.

[...] stream [...] current [...]

The longest of the three, and the backdrop for the trio version, is *Sky* for clarinet with electronics. *Sky* is a slow canon: the clarinet line is heard first alone but is then, at each passing minute, joined by another, recorded version of itself, six in all. The piece, or rather one trip around its circle, ends when the last version to enter finally falls silent thirty minutes later.

The central line is a series of twelve pitches, rising, then falling, then rising, in a slow sine curve mapped out by leaps of a fourth, more or less. Each pitch is trailed by between five and nine more versions of itself, very slightly higher or lower, with very slightly adjusted timbre and perhaps very slightly changed dynamic envelope or pattern of articulation, before moving on to the next. Out of this slow wave of waves, the accumulating canonic voices slowly create an unstable but static cloud, a slowly shimmering stack of approximate fourths, before, finally, dissipating.

*[...] in the duration of the day, month, or year, of human life, or of other [...] period;
in reference to an action or repetition*

Burnham Air bursts out of nowhere. It is an unrelenting, keening, and locally unpredictable series of similar gestures for oboe d'amore: scale fragments, little arpeggiations, trill-like alternations, oscillating waverings, all within the same moderately high register and all repeated two or three or, eventually, four times. The only expressive marking on the score is a simple *piano e dolce*, but this instrument can only be so *piano* and so *dolce*. The surface is still piercing, constantly moving, separated into subcutaneous segments, even as it gradually undergoes a slow, fitful relaxation into narrow wavelets: wailing gradually giving way to whimpering, coming closer and closer to *Sky*.

[...] its alternate rising and falling [...] the flood and ebb [...] recurrent flow [...] or increase and decrease [...]

Tide, for cello with 'Bach bow', is the last to enter in the trio version, thirteen minutes in, mediating between the swelling placidity of *Sky* and the penetrating insistence of *Burnham Air*. There is a tension here. The strings are tuned a little higher than normal, the extra pressure held by the instrument giving a menacing bit of edge to the thickly microtonal cloud formed by the four continuously bowed strings. As that cloud inches higher, irregularly, slowly but inexorably, internal swells rise and break like wavelets, the fingers of the cellist's left hand briefly spreading across the fingerboard before retreating. This movement is limited at first to a single string but gradually overtakes all four, until a maximum point is reached, a high tide, halfway through, and the whole literally reverses. Like each of the other pieces in this assemblage, it could then begin again, carried back, inflow.

The very different surfaces of these three works – the milky stasis of *Sky*, the gutturally tense moanings of *TIDE*, the wailing sirens of *Burnham Air* – belie a deeper connection.

They are, in fact, a trilogy, because they are, fundamentally, the same thing. *Sky* has its regular tiny oscillations around the central notes that make up its larger wave; *TIDE* is one large rise and fall, inflected by smaller undulations within its band of sound; *Burnham Air*'s series of looping modules form a continuous foam of whorls and eddies; but they are all cycles within cycles, involuted recurrent processes – epicycles – maybe the most ancient structure there is for suggesting, and harnessing, the idea of endless undifferentiated time.

This nested looping structure appears in every civilization's calendars, as well as classical Greek astronomy, as both generator and model of infinite duration. It suggests perpetuity both through circularity (the promise of continual renewal) and through recursion (the extension of this promise across time scales, from recurrences verifiable through lived experience—days and lunar cycles and seasons—into the imperceptibly vast). *TIDE*, infinitely extensible as it is, is a toy model of the temporal universe and all its incidents.

About two thirds of the way through the trio as performed here, as *Burnham Air* reaches its conclusion, its increasingly smooth oscillations seem to merge with *TIDE*'s sinking heavings and the gently inexorable pulsings of *Sky*. Then, after a small surge of energy, the oboe d'amore drops out entirely, followed eventually by the cello, leaving us with the fading remnants of the clarinet's recorded echoes. This is a piece that could go on indefinitely, each independent part smoothly linking with its opening to restart the cycles of cycles, but in this recording it ends, a tentative unanimity having been almost reached. The last three minutes of fading canonic clarinet echoes remind us that all we have been hearing all along, surface differences apart, is waves, alternate risings and fallings, floods and ebbs, recurrent flows, increases and decreases: ages, seasons, times, tides.

Italicized passages: s.v. "tide," Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed.

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Apartment House was created by Anton Lukoszevieze in 1995. Under his direction it has become a venerable exponent of avant-garde and experimental music from around the World. Disregarding style, fashion, hip things and forging nowhere with a zeitgeistian zeal, Apartment House's performances have included many UK and World premieres of music by a wide variety of composers. Notable portrait events have featured the composers Jennifer Walshe, Christian Wolff, Luc Ferrari, Dieter Schnebel, Christopher Fox, Laurence Crane, Michael Parsons, James Clarke, Helmut Oehring, Clarence Barlow, David Behrman, Philip Corner and Richard Ayres. The Apartment House group is of flexible instrumentation, allowing for a vast range of performance possibilities. Their recordings and videos have been released on Mere Records (Jennifer Walshe's XXX Live_Nude_Girls!), Cold Blue Music (Peter Garland String Quartets), Matchless Recordings (Cornelius Cardew Chamber Music) and Asphodel (Zbigniew Karkowski). In May 2012 they received the Royal Philharmonic Society award for outstanding contribution to Chamber Music and Song.
www.apartmenthouse.co.uk

Cellist and inter-disciplinary artist **Anton Lukoszevieze** is one of the most diverse performers of his generation and is notable for his performances of avant-garde, experimental and improvised music. Anton has given many performances at numerous international festivals throughout Europe and the USA. He has performed as a soloist with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra. Anton is founder and Director of the group Apartment House, co-founder of Lithuanian experimental duo Zarasai and a member of the Berlin group Zeitkratzer. www.antonlukoszevieze.co.uk

For thirty-five years **Christopher Redgate** has specialised in the performance of contemporary oboe repertoire, re-thinking several aspects of the instrument's techniques. He has performed throughout Europe, the USA, China and Australia. With the help of an AHRC fellowship at the Royal Academy of Music (2009-12) he designed the Howarth-Redgate system oboe, an instrument built specifically to meet both the demands of the contemporary repertoire and to expand the potential of the instrument: he now performs exclusively on this instrument. He has had many works written for him and, recently, a number of works

written for the new instrument from composers such as Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Finnissy, Richard Barrett, Sam Hayden and Edwin Roxburgh.

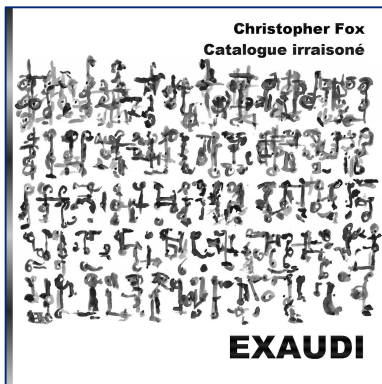
He gives frequent master classes and presentations, regular BBC broadcasts and his CD recordings can be found on the *Oboe Classics* label and *Metier/Divine Art*. He has contributed articles to *Contemporary Music Review*, to both the British and US professional journals and is currently writing a book: *21st Century Oboe*.

Andrew Sparling has appeared as soloist at festivals in London, Huddersfield and Belfast and with the Philharmonia at the Royal Festival Hall. In 2004 he was featured on an NMC disc of solo and chamber music, and in 2012 Lorelt released his first entirely solo CD. He has played in St Helier and Ho Chi Minh City with pianist Thalia Myers, and with the Dante Quartet at the Wigmore Hall and the Nyman Quartet at the QEH. He is a member of Lontano, Apartment House and Ensemble Exposé, and was principal clarinettist for Almeida Opera for 14 years. He also plays classical and baroque period instruments, at Glyndebourne and Covent Garden as principal clarinet with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and on the BBCTV series *The Genius of Mozart* and *Beethoven*; in the former he also acted the role of Mozart's friend and clarinettist Anton Stadler. He has played for The Opera Group, Tête à Tête, New Kent Opera, Broomhill Opera and Barefoot Opera. Elsewhere in the operatic field he has played in the wings of the Coliseum for Jonathan Miller's *Rigoletto* at ENO, and on stage for Theatre Hullabaloo in Martyn Harry's gothic thriller for children *My Mother Told Me Not To Stare*.

James Weeks's music has been performed by Apartment House, Quatuor Bozzini, Wandelweiser, EXAUDI, London Sinfonietta, Endymion, New London Chamber Choir, Phoenix Trio, Apartment House, Alison Balsom and Anton Lukoszevieve, among many others. Since 2005 the main focus of his music has been on solo and small-ensemble works exploring elemental or primary musical materials and processes, either left bare or built up into polyphonic structures of considerable density. Recent major works include *Schilderkunst* (for mixed ensemble, 2003-4) *Stacking*, *Weaving*, *Building*, *Joining* (for any number of players, 2006), the *South London Harmonies* series (for various ensembles, 2008-11), *TIDE* (for ensemble and electronics, 2007-10), *Parnassus* (for vocal and string sextets, 2008-9), *Mala punicia* (for eight solo voices, 2008-9), and *The Freedom of the Earth* (for chorus and instruments, 2011). He is Artistic Director of EXAUDI and maintains a busy international

touring schedule with the ensemble. In great demand as a conductor of new music, he has also worked with musikFabrik, London Sinfonietta, New London Chamber Choir, BCMG, L'Instant Donné, BBC Singers, Theatre of Voices and Endymion. He is Associate Head of Composition at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London. www.jamesweeks.org

Also featuring James Weeks with EXAUDI:



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RECORDING OF THE MONTH 7/2011

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James Weeks