# INNER FOX

ANTON LUKOSZEVIEZE - CELLO

METIER

## inner

### cello music by

# christopher fox

performed by

## Anton Lukoszevieze - cello

	Straight Lines in Broken Times <sup>3</sup>	8:30
<b>.</b> .	chant suspendu	8:16
	Generic Compositions #3, #4 & #5	10:16
<b>–34</b> .	inner	45:10

Total Time 72:42



This recording was made in The Early Music Centre, York on 20-21 April 2001. Recording Producer / Balance Engineer / Digital Editor: David Lefeber Digital Editing (track 3): Christopher Fox Cover Image: detail from *Blues in B flat* by Jayne Parker Booklet design and layout: David Lefeber

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#### CHRISTOPHER FOX

#### Straight lines in broken times<sup>3</sup>

This is the third of four pieces with the same title (the others are, respectively, for organ, for a trio of clarinet, violin and piano, and for two bass clarinets and tape) each of which spins its music out of a continuous stream of notes. The *Straight lines in broken times* pieces are not, however, a cycle, intended to be heard together; rather, each piece is a complete, but different, realisation of the same preconception.

Straight lines in broken times<sup>3</sup> for cello was written between April and October 1994 for Friedrich Gauwerky and takes advantage of the microtonal tuning possibilities of string instruments. The predominant interval during the piece is three-quarters of a tone wide; since there are three different three-quarter tone scales possible within an equal tempered tuning system, a sort of 'modulation' is possible where the line can slip sideways by a quartertone or semitone onto a new scale. These modulations occur at those points where my musical lines reverse direction or repeat themselves (often accompanied by a slight change in timbral articulation too).

Straight Lines in Broken Times<sup>3</sup>



With his solo cello suites, Bach provided an exhaustive (and endlessly fascinating) definition of a particular way of writing for the cello. More recently Xenakis and Richard Barrett (the latter the dedicatee of my piece) have written superb cello music based on an empirical (and in Barrett's case, quasi-erotic) exploration of the cello as sound object. In writing *Straight lines in broken times*<sup>3</sup> I have tried to imagine a quite other musical tradition within which my piece would be regarded as unexceptional, indeed classical. I hear the piece not as a perverse denial of hundreds of years of musical tradition but as the only representative of a parallel musical universe in which, while there may be cellos tuned in fifths, and melodies, and modulations, their functions are all subtly different.

#### chant suspendu

While Friedrich Gauwerky and I were preparing the premiere of *Straight lines in broken times*<sup>3</sup> he asked me to think about writing him a piece for cello and piano. I considered it but had no ideas. A couple of years later the pianist Ian Pace mentioned the same possibility for the duo he then had with Anton Lukoszevieze - again a blank. So it was a surprise one day in August 1997, sitting under an olive tree in Puglia, to be able to fill a couple of sketchbook pages with the outline of what is now *chant suspendu*. The realisation of those sketches was completed a year later and the premiere was given soon after by Ian Pace with another fine cellist, Judith Mitchell.

chant suspendu

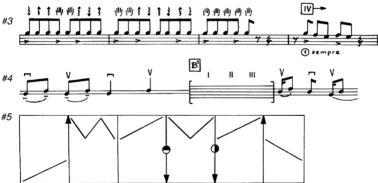


In that first version of *chant suspendu* the 'song', the cello part, is suspended over a rich, dark mass of sound in the piano. The cello part is written in sixth-tones, the cello sounds highlighting constantly changing clusters of overtones within the mass of the piano sound -'microtonal' piano music without the inconvenience of re-tuning. But the cello also provides its own accompaniment - melodic writing on the middle two strings is always supported by a drone on one of the other strings (and the outer strings are both re-tuned to Gs) - and Anton Lukoszevieze soon persuaded me that the cello part could stand as a piece in its own right. At Judith Mitchell's suggestion I also made a computer-generated accompaniment in which a particle of the piano sonority is stretched out over the duration of the piece; it is this version which appears on this CD. Anton's performance of the cello part was recorded in a single take.

#### Generic Compositions #3, 4 and 5

The Generic Compositions are a set of seven pieces for solo instruments, part of the ensemble installation Everything You Need To Know which I wrote for the Ives Ensemble between 1999 and 2001 and which is dedicated to Susanna Eastburn. Each of the seven Generic Compositions isolates an aspect of instrumental behaviour for especial compositional attention: in Generic Composition #3 it's the varying contact between a player's left and right hands and the strings of a plucked instrument, in Generic Composition #4 it's changes in the direction and length of bow strokes across one, two or three strings on a bowed string instrument, and in Generic Composition #5 it's the interrelationship of continuous pitch changes with intermittent register and tone changes in a sliding instrument. What interests me in these Generic Compositions is the extent to which instruments seem to write their own music when composers (players too?) let them.

Generic Compositions #3, #4 & #5



Generic Composition #3 is scored for any plucked string instrument with at least four strings, Generic Composition #4 is scored for any bowed string instrument in any tuning and is played entirely on natural harmonics, and Generic Composition #5 is scored for any sliding instrument. The Generic Compositions can be played as solo pieces, in combination with any other parts of Everything You Need To Know, or can be superimposed one on another. On this CD Generic Compositions #3 and 5 have been collaged together with two versions of Generic Composition #4 in different tunings.

#### inner

Since 1997 Anton Lukoszevieze has performed a number of my works - the piano quartet *Memento, chant suspendu* and *Straight lines in broken times*<sup>3</sup>, and the string trio *skin* (written for Anton's ensemble, Apartment House). All these works are relatively short however and in 1999 we began to talk about a work on a more ambitious time scale, *inner*. I also wanted to create a work which is not bound to the concert hall or to concert-style presentation, which can through the simplicity of its technical requirements and its duration create its own context in many different spaces.

#### inner



I am fascinated by the intimacy of the relationship between an audience and a solo performer, whether that solo performer be a musician, stand-up comedian or a storyteller. It seems to me that any extended solo performance involves the establishment of a sense of time and expectation, of a bond of trust, out of which the dynamic of the performance evolves. I wanted to create that sort of engagement between Anton and his audience, to establish a sense of a musical narrative within which there's time for introductions, explanations, digressions, some space for surprises and varying degrees of attentiveness and, at the end, a feeling of appropriate conclusions being reached. On this CD each section of the music has a separate track ID, so it is possible to trace family resemblances and evolutions between different parts of the piece. Tracks 4, 7, 12, 18, 24, 31 and 34 constitute one family tree, as do tracks 5, 16, 25 and 33, tracks 6, 15, 21 and 26, tracks 8, 10, 13, 19, 22, 27 and 29, tracks 9, 11 and 32 and tracks 14, 17, 20, 23, 28 and 30. *inner* is dedicated to Anton who commissioned it with funds from the South West Arts Board.

#### Christopher Fox in conversation with Richard Ayres

**Ayres:** How and why did you start composing? And how did you end up becoming a composer?

Fox: I started writing music on paper when I was 12 (because the boy who sat next to me in school did - it was a sort of doodling for him, I think, and we certainly didn't do it in what passed for music lessons) and that turned into something like composing a little while later. I played music (piano lessons aged 7-8, not a success; playing the recorder and singing, much better; playing French horn, aged 12 and onwards, good apart from the presumption that I might practise) and listened to lots. Music seemed the most exciting medium in which to be creative. I kept going and 'became' a composer, in that certainly by the time I was about 16 I thought of myself as a composer, even though I had a pretty undeveloped sense of how, professionally, this was achieved.

**Ayres:** The audible working out of processes and systems is a striking characteristic in a lot of your pieces. From where did you derive this interest - was it the influence of serialism or American minimalist or gamelan or perhaps renaissance Europe?

Fox: Is it really such an 'audible working out'? It seems to me that while the continuity of many of my pieces derives from the permutation of possibilities within musical materials (which often change from piece to piece rather more than is supposed to be good for a composer - unlike desert climates my seasonal change is alarming but my diurnal change is relatively small, maybe?), this doesn't happen in a particularly predictable way. In that sense it's not like American minimalist composition where after a minute or two you can have a pretty accurate idea of what the next five minutes will involve. The processes in my work are much more temperamental and conditional.

But you're right, it was minimalism that put me onto audible systems and processes - especially Glass from *Music in Fifths* to *Einstein*, and Reich around *Music for 18 Musicians* - and before that serialism had introduced me to systematic ways of thinking about composing. I suppose part of my 'personal struggle' has been to find a way of marrying the audibility of process in minimalism with the potential for complexity of process in most serial music. Gamelan? No. Renaissance Europe? Yes.

Ayres: I agree it's not usually obvious what the process is precisely but I do hear / feel a strong sense of being driven along with great energy and purpose, and the driving mechanism appears to be on the surface, it's the thing to which I'm listening - I hear the act of structuring as an integral part of the musical result - you're not trying to hide anything - it's part of the subject. Would you agree with this?

Fox: Absolutely, in fact I'd almost say that real musical energy can only be achieved when

the process does come up to the surface. But it's also important for me that the music is only finished in the listener's head - the music shouldn't be closed off, it should have an element of irresolution that invites listeners to carry on where I stopped.

**Ayres:** How do you see the relationship between the structuring of individual elements and the entire form of the piece?

**Fox:** Sometimes they're closely interrelated, sometimes the 'form' cuts across the life of elements within the music. It depends on the sort of music I'm trying to create; there's a very different dynamic in a piece where things are interrupted, or one where many different things co-exist, from one which unfolds continuously.

Ayres: Could you tell me something about your use of microtones?

Fox: I want to say that I do not write 'microtonal music'. I write the music I need to do at any particular time and sometimes it uses small intervals, but the obsession with 'microtonal music' as a special case for development within new music is not for me. Straight lines in broken times<sup>3</sup> for solo cello uses scales made up of three-quarter tones, whereas chant suspendu uses sixth tones; chant suspendu uses small intervals as an expressive, inflectional means, Straight lines uses three-quarter tones to sound alien and strange.

**Ayres:** When thinking about certain pieces of yours I always find myself thinking about the sculptures of Jean Tinguely - mechanisms that are instilled with such intuitive humanity, crazy, quirky, sometimes peaceful or mesmerizing, sometimes frantic and disturbing. Do you feel particularly close to anyone artistically - do you have creative heroes or role models?

Fox: Tinguely is great (I got that book *The Bride and the Bachelors* by Calvin Tomkins about Cage, Rauschenberg, Tinguely and Duchamp when I was about 14), but so is John Berger (fantastic clarity), Beuys (great colour), Schwitters (messy and precise), Jenny Holzer (cool), Dickens, Auden, Jane Austen (funny and a moralist), Gunter Grass (another social democrat), Nelson Riddle (great arranger), Cage, Beethoven, Stravinsky (musically my main man), and many more.

**Ayres:** How do you see the function of the music you are making - where does it fit in the world? What purpose is it fulfilling?

Fox: Well, above all, I do it because I want to, and I do in music the things I'm interested in doing; any musician who does otherwise is asking for trouble. But the social dimension of music-making is very important for me too - I try to interact with the world in a way which is not destructive - maybe even positive? - and so the music I do is influenced by that too. Does it have a purpose? Perhaps it interests other people - I think any considered human endeavour is always interesting. What I do is music and music is a wonderful phenomenon.

Christopher Fox (b.1955) is a composer, teacher and writer on new music. The Wire has described him as 'a tantalising figure in British music' and his work defies ready categorisation; it has, as a result, been variously described as 'complex', 'minimal', 'senile' and 'like a steamroller'. Recurrent in Fox's output are large-scale works, often made up of a number of more or less free-standing component parts, which are held together as much by their shared ideas as by any simplistic notion of stylistic consistency. These include the 'geomorphological' sequence, stone.wind.rain.sun, the Schwitters works (two sets of songs and a radio work, commissioned by the BBC in 1993 and nominated for the Prix Italia), and Alarmed and Dangerous, another BBC commission which draws together brass instruments, security alarms and millenialist warnings. He enjoys a particularly close working relationship with the Ives Ensemble of the Netherlands, who have featured his work regularly for the last nine years. In 1996 they premiered his 45 minute long instrumental cycle Themes and Variations and in 2001 the evening-long ensemble 'installation' Everything You Need To Know with soprano Barbara Hannigan.

Fox's work habitually oversteps the boundaries of conventional concert media and includes collaborations with video artists and printmakers, a 'musical box' made with the poet lan Duhig, and *Strangers in our Midst*, an outdoor and indoor piece premiered in Vienna in October 2001. His music is available on CD from Metier, Clarinet Classics, HatHut and NMC. As a writer on new music he has published in *Musical Times, Contact* (of which he was also an editor), *Contrechamps, Contemporary Music Review* and *Tempo* and is co-author of the books *Uncommon Ground: the music of Michael Finnissy* and *Von Kranichstein zur Gegenwart.* He joined the Music Department of the University of Huddersfield in 1994 where he currently holds the position of Reader in Composition.

Anton Lukoszevieze is renowned world-wide for his sublime performances of avant-garde, experimental and improvised music. In England he has given solo performances at the Bath, Huddersfield, Oxford New Music. Sonorities, LMC, Hoxton and Aldeburgh Festivals as well as at numerous international festivals throughout Europe and the USA. He has also made frequent programmes and broadcasts for BBC Radio 3, Danish Radio, Deutschland Rundfunk and WDR, Germany, Anton has also appeared as a soloist with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. He has had close working relationships with many avantgarde composers in the UK, USA and Europe, notably Gerhard Stäbler, Michael Parsons, Amnon Wolman, Helmut Oehring, Kunsu Shim, Christopher Fox, Richard Avres, Philip Corner, Phill Niblock, Malcolm Goldstein and Laurence Crane. Keen to explore other art forms Anton is also the subject of 4 films (FoxFire Eins) by the renowned artist film maker Jayne Parker, commissioned by the Arts Council of Great Britain in 2000. He is also unique in the UK through is use of the curved bow (BACH-Bogen) which he is using to develop new repertoire for the cello. In October 2002 he will give the world premiere of Helmut Oehring's ER.eine She, (aus: 5ÜENF/ Haare-Opfer) for 5 deaf woman, solo cello and live electronics at the Donaueschinger Musiktage, Germany. Anton Lukoszevieze is also founder and Director of the ensemble Apartment House. Since it's formation in 1995 Apartment House has rapidly established itself as the leading British exponent of avant-garde and experimental music from around the World.



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