



Multiplicities

Nancy Ruffer *flutes*



métier

Multiplicities

Recent music for solo flute performed by **Nancy Ruffer**

Brian Ferneyhough

1 Superscriptio 6.07

Jason Eckardt

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Henry Cowell

3 The Universal Flute 3.29

James Dillon

4 Sgothan 14.13

Chris Dench

5 Caught Breath of Time 10.40

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9 Maïastra 9.40

total CD duration 64.56

BRIAN FERNEYHOUGH *Superscriptio*

Brian Ferneyhough was born in 1943 in England. After several years teaching composition in Freiburg, Germany, he moved to the U.S.A. where he taught at Stanford University and at the University of California, San Diego.

Ferneyhough writes of *Superscriptio*: "The sound of any extremely high or low instrument tends, at least for me, to evoke associations with borders, boundaries, and with whatever lies beyond. Thus, in this little one-movement composition, I attempted to reflect these sensations in such a way as to suggest the fleeting sketching-in of the brittle outline, the trace without dimensions representing some ultimate 'inside of the outside', itself never to be captured in sound."

JASON ECKARDT *Multiplicities*

Jason Eckardt (b. 1971) played guitar in rock and jazz bands until, upon first hearing the music of Webern, he immediately devoted himself to composition. He has received numerous international commissions and his works have been widely performed on four continents and at many major festivals, including Darmstadt, the ISCM World Music Days, Voix Nouvelles and Musica Nova Sofia. Eckardt is a co-founder and director of Ensemble 21. He lives in New York City with his wife, pianist Marilyn Nonken.

The title *Multiplicities* refers to the work's multiple, simultaneous melodic projections. Three lines stake their own harmonic, registral, dynamic, rhythmic, and articulative paths while rapidly interacting with one another. The resulting surface is characterized by individual voices that seek continuity, despite the often violent interruptions. While the middle line remains intact throughout, the upper and lower lines exchange their parametric assignments before ultimately returning to their original formation for the closing, which finds the polyphonic totality transformed into a more homogeneous whole.

HENRY COWELL *The Universal Flute*

The American composer Henry Cowell (1897-1965) was a tireless musical explorer and inventor who revolutionized American music. He influenced John Cage, Lou Harrison and George Gershwin, among others.

The Universal Flute was originally written for the Japanese flute, the shakuhachi. It is a short solo piece in which the Eastern influence, so prevalent in much of Cowell's music, is clearly illustrated.

JAMES DILLON *Sgothan*

James Dillon was born in Glasgow in 1950. He is self-taught as a composer, his formal studies being in both acoustics and linguistics. Growing up on the west coast of Scotland has

given Dillon a strong sense of the elemental flux in nature. All these influences come together in his music. A further interest in Indian music during the early 1970s, studying with Punita Gupta, introduced rhythmic techniques that found their way into works such as *Ti.re-Ti.ke-Dha*, for solo percussion. European ensembles with whom he has worked closely include Accroche-Note, Cikada and Ensemble InterContemporain. Among others, he has been commissioned by IRCAM, Ensemble InterContemporain, the BBC, the Oslo Sinfonietta and Glasgow 1990 European City of Culture. He has been a guest lecturer at many universities throughout the world. Dillon's music has been published by Peters Edition since 1982.

Written in January 1984, *Sgothan* 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/re-combination rules. Generating complex configurations, these patterns are then diffracted, variegated and stratified to form a polyphony of clouds.

CHRIS DENCH Caught Breath of Time

Chris Dench was born in London and is self-taught as a composer. He is now resident in Australia. His works aim to awaken and illuminate rather than comfort or entertain; their forceful, optimistic expressivities result not from an urge to self-expression, but from the composer's concern with shamanism: direct psychic contact with archetypal forces. *Caught Breath of Time* was commissioned and first performed by Nancy Ruffer.

JAMES DILLON Diffraction

A complex figuration will 'bend' or 'spread' as it touches a pre-determined frequency margin - in this case a low piccolo F - with the resultant emanation of an 'interference spectrum'. This process occurs seven times in the work.

MICHAEL FINNISSY Ulpirra

Born in 1946, Michael Finnissey studied music at the Royal College of Music with Bernard Stevens, Humphrey Searle and Nadia Boulanger. His musical interests range widely from traditional and 'ethnic' musics, through popular forms and jazz, to composers from the Western 'classical' canon. The general principles of Ives' music, its inclusiveness and its reflection of "man's thoughts and ideas, remain a kind of totem" for Finnissey. He has taught composition at universities and schools in the UK and in Australia, currently holding a chair in composition at the University of Southampton. As a pianist he is highly regarded for his performances of a broad range of contemporary repertoire. He also plays for and directs the ensemble Ixion.

Michael Finnissy writes: "*Ulpirra* was written sometime between my two first visits to Australia (1982-3), and it reflects on my experiences of and research into Australian Aboriginal culture. It also shares some materials with the earlier ensemble pieces *Banumbirr* and *Ouraa*. The title means both 'token of friendship' and 'reed pipe' both of which seemed appropriate for the work's dedicatee Nancy Ruffer, who performed it for the first time at the Purcell Room in London on 18th June 1983. At that time both Nancy and I had played in the ensemble 'Suoraan' for almost a decade, and a solo 'tribute' to her wonderfully sensitive artistry was long overdue."

MICHAEL PARKIN *Elegy*

Michael Parkin studied at Huddersfield School of Music and the University College of North Wales with William Mathias and Jeffrey Lewis. During the 1980s he was instrumental in establishing new ensembles such as Ancient Voices with Alan Hacker, the Firebird Ensemble, and the music / dance ensemble Commedia. In 1988 he became lecturer in composition at Huddersfield Polytechnic and later at the University College of St John in York. In 1991 he moved to Pembrokeshire in West Wales to concentrate exclusively on writing and composition. In 1995 he established the Go West Festival, which has now become one of the biggest festivals of music and education for young people in Britain.

In 1980 a friend of Michael Parkin's returned from a trip to Africa with a series of recordings she had made of Pygmy music. The intense period of study that followed the transcribing and notating of these recordings proved to be revelatory and brought about a significant change of direction. The solo alto flute piece *Elegy* (1984) came as a direct response to African music and over the next decade or so there followed a series of solos, duos and trios written for individual performers. *Elegy* was one of only two British works selected for the 1984 Gaudeamus International Musicweek in the Netherlands. *Elegy* is dedicated to Nancy Ruffer.

SIMON HOLT *Măiastra*

Simon Holt was born in Lancashire. He has been closely associated with The London Sinfonietta, which has toured his works in Europe and America. His compositions often employ traditional virtuoso techniques such as fast technical passages and extremes of dynamics and registers. His music always manages to engage and to enchant. An early grounding in the visual arts has left its mark, and has often provided inspiration.

Written in 1981, *Măiastra* refers to a large mythical bird and is the name of a sculpture by Brancusi.

NANCY RUFFER was born in Detroit and received a Master of Music degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 1976. She was awarded a Fulbright-Hays Scholarship to do post-graduate study at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and she has remained in London working as a freelance flautist specializing in contemporary music.

She is principal flute in various contemporary music ensembles including Matrix, Music Projects/London, The Almeida Ensemble, Apartment House and Topologies, and has performed in ensembles at the Royal National Theatre. In addition, she records frequently both as soloist and ensemble player for the BBC and has played on many CDs of contemporary music including John Tavener's *Mary of Egypt*, John Casken's *Golem*, Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Greek* and Jonathan Dove's *Tobias and the Angel*. She has had works written for her by composers including Michael Finnissy, Chris Dench, Graham Fitkin, John White, Michael Parsons, and Ian Wilson.

Previous engagements have included playing piccolo with the Canadian percussion ensemble Nexus in Steve Reich's *Drumming* at the Barbican Hall, London; premiering Brian Ferneyhough's piccolo solo *Superscriptio* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall; performing in the Pittsburgh International New Music Festival in 1986 and performing at the Computer Music Conference in Glasgow in 1990. She presented a solo recital in Pittsburgh's New Music Series in 1997. In 1999 she toured Canada performing works by, among others, Dillon and Ferneyhough, and in February 2002 she toured Georgia and Tennessee with pianist Helen Crayford, performing works by British and American composers.

Ms. Ruffer was awarded the Kranichsteiner Prize for Performance at Darmstadt in 1984 and was recently appointed an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music. In March of 1996 she devised and presented, along with the saxophonist John Butcher, a highly-successful series at the Conway Hall in London entitled 'SoundArt '96' in which 'new-complexity' music was presented alongside improvised music. The series was repeated in February 1998. Her recordings have included works by Justin Connolly (MSV CD92046), Richard Emsley (MSV CD92044) and Sadie Harrison (MSV CD92053), also for Métier. She has also released a CD entitled 'British Fantasies, American Dreams' on Guild (GMCD 7230), in which she performs twentieth-century British and American works for flute and piano, with the pianist Helen Crayford.

This CD is dedicated to Pierre-Yves Artaud

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