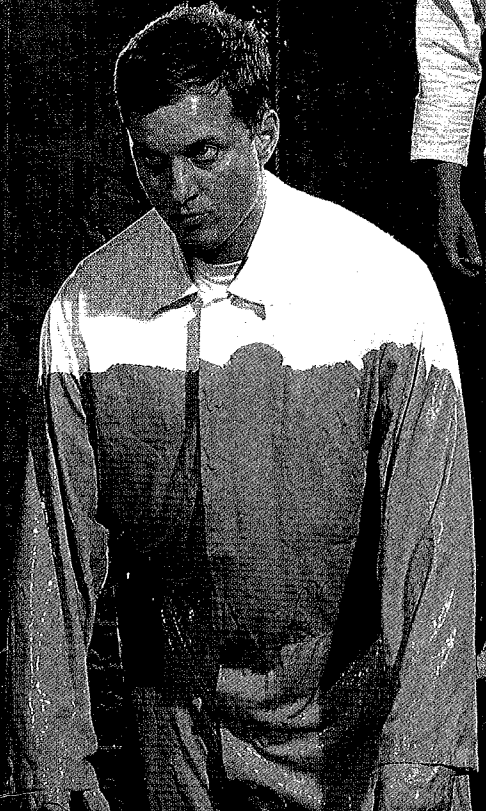


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Modern Composition

By Andy Hamilton

Richard Craig

Inward

Metier CD

Flautist Craig is either unaccompanied, or the accompaniment is subdued, in a superbly conceived programme that includes Ferneyhough's groundbreaking *Unity Capsule*, Sciarrino's *Venere Che Le Grazie La Fioriscono* and Richard Barrett's *Inward*, plus world premiere recordings of pieces by younger composers Dominik Karski, Evan Johnson, John Croft and Malin Bång. The album has been six years in preparation, during which time Craig worked with all of the composers – an effort totally justified by the results. The CD title *Inward* is mostly apt, but not for the high octane interpretation of Ferneyhough's *Unity Capsule* from 1975–76. The idea of New Complexity was meant to be that authentic performance 'failed' heroically (echoes of Theodor Adorno). Possibly Ferneyhough guessed that performers would overcome the fearful difficulties of Newly Complex notation, thus losing the appearance of struggle against an impossible ideal of accurate performance. Ironically Craig's remarkable mastery may be bringing that about. *Inward* (1994–95), by Ferneyhough descendant Richard Barrett, was first performed as part of the cluster-work *Opening Of The Mouth*. The flute is surrounded by a 'fragile halo' of percussion – bell trees, bamboo sticks, Thai gong and temple block – which, in its concluding intensity, extinguishes it.

Friedrich Cerha

Bruchstück, Geträumt/Neun Bagatellen/Instants

Kairos CD

In the late 1950s and early 60s, Cerha developed sound-mass composition independently of Ligeti or Lutoslawski; his completion of Alban Berg's opera *Lulu*, first performed in 1979, perhaps obscured recognition of his own work. Now in his eighties, he completed these pieces between 2006–09. Performed by Klangforum Wien, Zebra Trio and Sinfonieorchester Köln, they combine filigreed detail with a stoical power. In recent years he has gradually returned to more traditional structures, even with melody breaking through – as on the intensely dramatic *Instants* for orchestra. But it's less true of *Bruchstück, Geträumt (Broken Piece, Dreamed)*, which begins almost impalpably and builds continuous strings and tubular bell sonorities into a haunting reverie.

Donaueschinger Musiktage 2009

Various

NEOS CD

Live recording of works by Beat Furrer, Jimmy López and Salvatore Sciarrino's *Libro Notturmo Delle Voci* from 2009, inspired by flute soloist Mario Caroli and performed by SWR Sinfonieorchester. "To conceive a 'concert piece' according to all the known rules appears to me an impossible, unclear thing today. Bourbon-ish," comments

Sciarrino, referring to the reactionary French monarchy. In his new inconceivable 'concert piece', movements are grouped incoherently, imbalance is intentional – despite the orchestral resources, this is mostly chamber music with a theatrical dimension. Flute is the authentic vehicle for his concern with the bounds of perception, where breath shades into tone. Nothing is what it seems, meaning is suppressed – as in the final movement, where muted brass against rumbling percussion could be ominous, but ends inconclusively, almost absurdly, in a chorus of bland flute calls. A masterly musical theatre of the absurd.

Morton Feldman

Piano, Violin, Viola, Cello

BVHAAS 2×CD

This historic recording of the premiere of Feldman's last work, at Nieuwe Muziek Zeeland in 1987, was made in the presence of the composer shortly before his death. Aki Takahashi (piano), Mifune Tsuji (violin), Matthijs Bunschoten (viola) and Tadashi Tanaka (cello) make up the ensemble. It's a long late score lasting 85 minutes, in which piano is a central constant, echoed by the strings, which Feldman regarded as a second, prepared piano. The piano's depressed right pedal conveys a sense of uninterrupted sound, to which a well-projected recording contributes.

Cat Hope & Lindsay Vickery

Decibel – Disintegration: Mutation

HeliosSquare CD

Formed two years ago, West Australian New Music ensemble Decibel release their first recordings. Their electroacoustic exploration of tone and texture features in two compositions each by Cat Hope, who plays flute, double bass and bass guitar, and Lindsay Vickery, on reeds and Max/MSP programming. The ensemble is completed by Stuart James, Malcolm Riddoch, Aaron Watt and Tristen Parr. Hope's *In The Cut* is a "celebration of disintegration", a study in entropy, with pitches starting high and gradually declining into loose open strings and embouchures. There's an analogous fragmentation and rejection of stable tones on her *Kuklinski's Dream* for three carving knives, bass clarinet, double bass, cello and Max/MSP programming – an anti-tribute to Mafia hitman Richard 'The Iceman' Kuklinski. A dark and viscerally unsettling release.

Mauricio Kagel

L'Oeuvre Pour Violoncello

Hérisson CD

A wonderful disc showcasing works for an instrument Kagel himself played. Underlying his surreal comedy was a serious purpose – his subversion of tradition rested on affection for it – and demanded total application from performers. *Match* (1964) presents cellists Rohan de Saram and Christophe Roy in dialogue, with percussionist Jean-Charles François as