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Richard Craig, Flute, David Revill, Electronics, SOLO, October 31, 2015

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NEW MUSIC @ LAWRENCE

Richard Craig, flute
David Revill, electronics

SOLO
Richard Craig, flute
David Revill, electronics

**SOLO**

October 31, 2015 • 8 p.m.
Harper Hall, Music-Drama Center

Richard Craig, flutes
David Revill, live electronics

*Unity Capsule* for solo flute
Brian Ferneyhough b. 1943

[title unknown] for fixed media electronics
David Revill b. 1964

**SOLO** for flute/s and live electronics
Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–2007)

*Alkahest* for flute and live electronics
David Revill b. 1964

[title unknown]

*947* for flute and sine tones
Alvin Lucier b. 1931

*Unity Capsule* (1975–76)
Brian Ferneyhough

*Unity Capsule* partakes, via its title, in the alchemico-scientific theme pervading Ferneyhough’s work of this period, but also in the thoroughgoing examination, deconstruction and reassembling of material on a multiplicity of levels that was, and still is to some extent, the composer’s signature style. The limitations of the instrument—which the composer knows intimately, having trained as a flautist himself—determine the boundaries, the hermetic circle that makes sorcery possible, of the work; but also form the musical material from which it is constructed. As the composer says, “the flute reveals itself as what it uniquely is—its ‘essence.’” From the *Four Miniatures* (1965) to *Sisyphus Redux* (2009), the flute haunts Ferneyhough’s oeuvre. What the piano was to Liszt and is to Finnissy (an experimental laboratory or confessional booth), to a lesser extent the flute is to Ferneyhough, and in *Unity Capsule* the piece becomes a transformational crucible: in an interview with Richard Toop, the composer describes the act of composition as transforming or refining the composer who writes it.

Fundamentally flawed or cursed seers and oracles loom large throughout Ferneyhough’s output, from Cassandra the Trojan prophetess, the insane, world-creating Adolf Wölfi, to (most recently) the tragic Jewish philosopher and aesthetician Walter Benjamin, heirs alike of Schoenberg’s Moses. Just as in the final scene of Ferneyhough’s opera *Shadowtime* (1999–2004), where the drama retreats back inside the composer’s skull as his transformed voice speaks for Benjamin and is bounced around the auditorium, in *Unity Capsule* we hear the composer’s “voice” speaking through his own instrument, and he himself attempts to speak the unspeakable, express the inexpressible (‘O Wort, du Wort das mir fehlt!’). What results is a dizzying, alienating and painfully human array of techniques and sounds which are held together not just by the flute, but also by the flautist. Instrument and instrumentalist, performer and composer: all are become one and transformed and transfigured by this unity capsule, and through performance, we the audience are invited to step inside the chalk circle and to take the risk of being similarly changed.

—John Hail

Solo (1965–66)
Karlheinz Stockhausen

By the mid-1960s, Stockhausen was starting to explore compositional and notational styles which took him beyond the fully and strictly (albeit often innovatively) notated serial and moment-form works which had made him famous. With the gift of hindsight, we can see this fresh direction almost as a palate cleanser, an antithesis before the synthesis of his later works which for the most part involved standard notation.

In this mid-to-late sixties period, there were text works (*Aus den sieben Tagen*, *Für kommende Zeiten*), and works of controlled improvisation and response in a “plus/minus” notation (*Prozession*, *Kurzwellen*), and at the beginning, *Solo*.

*Solo* is an open form work for an unspecified single instrument (flute, in this case) with live electronic feedback—here feedback is not meant in its most familiar sense of amplifier feedback as used with guitar in rock music, but in an informational sense: the flute plays against recorded loops of itself, transformed in new ways which open up formal and tonal possibilities. The score consists of pages of notated material and six “formschemes” which guide both the live interpretation and the electronic transformation. The composer also proposes that optional “differentiation of timbres may ... be achieved electronically;” ... “various filters, modulators, etc., may be added to create the timbral differentiations.”

As such, the piece is an early example of what we now call live electronics. Live electronic music was of necessity originally developed, in the 1960s, using analog circuitry. In *Solo*’s original form,
for instance, the feedback was achieved using a two-channel tape machine; the different loop lengths were available simply by virtue of the physical separation of the record head from the playback head. One obtained a specific loop duration by working out how many inches (calculated in relation to the tape speed) there need to be between the former and the latter, and could switch between loop durations by having multiple playheads, re-positioned in performance when the available lengths need to change.

The move in live electronic composition over the last twenty-plus years has been towards using digital means to carry out the electronic transformation, with all the implications of cost, portability and reproducibility this brings with it. The concomitant danger is that the earlier analog works are heard less and less, not least because of the technology for which they were designed being unavailable. Without digital simulation or re-creation of their original analog electronics, historically and musically important pieces receive fewer and fewer performances (as the original analog machinery becomes unusable or otherwise unavailable) and in the extreme case, the piece practically dies out except inasmuch as it might be preserved in archival recordings and oral history.

With this in mind, we have produced an entirely new digital realization of Solo, with the strictest attention paid to simulating all of the characteristics and advantages of the original technology, but even some of its limitations. Think of it as akin to performing early music as authentically as possible, but using modern instruments!

—David Revill

Alkahest became the title for a piece for Richard Craig in 2007, although initially it took a different form—a work for flute and percussion. Due mainly to Richard’s duo project reaching a hiatus, development of that piece was shelved for several years. It was eventually brought to fruition in the form heard tonight for flute with live electronics.

Although the realization has changed, it is still (in terms of the musical idea) the same piece. Back in 2007, Richard and I had found one of our many common points of interest in the idea of tendresse (tenderness and, one might say, sensuality), a foundation often lost when exploration of instrumental techniques and resources becomes focused on virtuosity for its own sake. And tenderness, of course, can be at the core of what we’re doing but expressed in stillness or in passionate fury, hence the motto at the start of the score, “toujours la tendresse, soit sur le calme, soit sous la violence,” (always tenderness, maybe above its calm, even under its violence).

There is another element to the continuity, throughout its long gestation, of the piece in its core concept. Often (though not always) a title can contain the whole piece, and Alkahest is an example. For most of my composing life I have been focused on the notion and the compositional problem of unity, and the relation of unity to multiplicity. Alkahest (originally spelled Alcahest—spelling with a “k” works better in French and German!) was a title I first jotted down something like thirty years ago; the title refers to the universal solvent of the alchemists, and a solvent, of course, loosens or unties; it is something in which another substance is dissolved. The title finally found the piece to go with it.

There is much to be said about the performance techniques employed in the piece, and the live electronics, but in new art music in particular there is a constant danger of written information overwhelming the naive aural experience of the piece. Richard and I are planning to be available for discussion after the concert, and we’d be glad to discuss this (and any other topics) with you then.

[p][t][k] for piccolo and live electronics (2012) Diana Soh
The title of the piece refers to the sounding instrumentalist uses throughout the piece. Using only real-time processing and no sound file, it allowed to me work on a very intimate relationship between the piccolo and electronics. I wanted to find an instrumental writing which was neither voice nor typically instrumental and in this way the electronics are designed as an increase and an extension of the instrumental music. The use of real-time electronics enabled me to make this aspect of responsiveness that I was looking for from the piece. The work is dedicated to Adriana Ferreira and Emmanuel Jourdan, with my warmest thanks for their investment and support.

—Diana Soh

947 for flute (2001) Alvin Lucier
Similar to many of Lucier’s recent works, the interplay of sine-tones and the pitch variations of an acoustic instrument are the crux of this piece. The flute player must alter the pitch of the instrument to a microscopic degree, resulting in numerous vortices of sound to envelope the concert space.
Biographies

**Richard Craig** (b.1979) studied at flute at RSAMD (now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) with Sheena Gordon and later with Richard Blake. After graduating with honors, he continued his studies at the Conservatoire de Strasbourg, France, with Mario Caroli.

Richard has performed with groups such as ELISION, Musikfabrik, Klangforum Wien and Das Experimentalstudio ensemble, which has taken him to international festivals such as Maerzmusik Berlin, Wittener Tage für Neue Musik, the Venice Biennale, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, the Festival D’Automne in Paris and the Lincoln Center Festival New York. Equally active as a soloist, Richard has given recitals throughout the world performing new work and presenting his collaborations. At the center of Richard’s work in contemporary music is the collaboration and development of new repertoire for the flute, and he is involved in commissions with both established composers and the younger generation. As a chamber musician, Richard is a member of Distractfold Ensemble, the winners of the 2014 Kranisteiner prize and the Spanish ensemble SMASH.

As a performer/composer, he is currently working with amplification and feedback. These initial experiments led to the CD collaboration Amp/Al with musician Rodrigo Constanzo and artist Angela Guyton in 2013. As a recording artist, Richard has recorded for the BBC, WDR Cologne, YLE Finland, Radio France, Radio Nacional de España, Swedish Radio, ARTE, Icelandic RUV, Wergo and a solo debut disc inward was released on the Métier label in 2011 to critical acclaim. INWARD has since been nominated as the only classical music disc for the Scottish Album of the Year in 2012. He is currently preparing a second disc with Métier for release in 2015. This will include new works by Esaias Järnegard, Richard Barrett, John Croft, Brice Pauset, Evan Johnson and Fabrice Fitch with support from the funding agency, Creative Scotland. He is also the recipient of an Artist Bursary from Creative Scotland for 2014–15.

Richard is currently Head of Performance at Bangor University, Wales. As a lecturer he has given master classes and seminars at UMBC in Baltimore, Huddersfield University, the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Scottish Conservatoire, and was appointed as Visiting Fellow in Performance at Aberdeen University, 2009–11. From 2012–14 he was a visiting lecturer on the post-graduate performance course at Huddersfield University, and he will be honorary research fellow at the University of Huddersfield for the period of 2014–16.

As a producer, composer and musicologist, **David Revill** has worked in countries such as Austria, Poland, Romania, Croatia, Canada, his native England and particularly, in recent years, France, Germany and the United States. Compositional residencies include the “Begegnungen” festival, Innsbruck, Austria; McKnight Visiting Composer to St. Paul, Minnesota; portrait concerts at the Zagreb Biennale; “Sound” in Aberdeen, Scotland; and (last year) the Birmingham Conservatoire in England. His electronic work includes visits to the Experimentalstudio in Freiburg, Germany and residencies at C.C.M.I.X. in Paris, most recently featuring software development for his Nichtzweiheit project. As a producer, he has in recent years become increasingly in demand for his surround sound production. Dr. Revill has been an Avid Certified Instructor since 2006, a Master Instructor for the S6 Worksurface course, one of few Avid-certified Pro Tools Experts in the country and one of only fifteen beta testers worldwide for the S6. He also wrote the authorized biography of John Cage, *The Roaring Silence*.

Lecture tours have included visits to Mills College; University of California – Davis; UC–Santa Cruz; colleges in Wisconsin and Minnesota, including Carleton, St. Olaf and Macalester; Amherst College; Columbia University; the Manhattan School of Music; Peabody; Bowdoin College; and lecture tours across Missouri, New Hampshire and Virginia. In autumn 1999 he lectured at the Tiroler Landeskonservatorium in Innsbruck; in February 2002 he spoke on “Limites de l’analyse structurelle” at the Université de Paris VIII, returning there in 2004 to deliver a paper on the history of American music. In 2012, lectures and workshops were presented to, among others, the Percussive Arts Convention, the Cage 100 festival in Lublin, Poland, and the Newman Symposium for Musicological Film Studies. He has also presented surround mixing workshops in Seoul, South Korea (2009, 2013).

As a percussionist and live electronics performer, he has presented numerous first performances. He has also toured as a rock drummer, including an extended tour in the U.S. in 2000–01. Since the fall of 2011, David Revill has been living and working in Baltimore, Maryland.
eighth blackbird
Friday, October 2, 2015 • 8 p.m.
Memorial Chapel

Singer Pur
Tuesday, October 13, 2015 • 8 p.m.
Memorial Chapel

Richard Craig, flute, and
David Revill, electronics, SOLO
Saturday, October 31, 2015 • 8 p.m.
Harper Hall, Music-Drama Center

David Kaplan, piano
Wednesday, February 3, 2016 • 8 p.m.
Harper Hall, Music-Drama Center

Steve Reich, Music for Eighteen Musicians:
40th anniversary celebration
Sunday, April 24, 2016 • 8 p.m.
Memorial Chapel

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