

# J&P MUSIC BUILDING

Friday 3 March 2017, 7.30pm

## Piano Weekend I: Hommmage to David Tudor



Ian Pace *piano*



St Hilda's College  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

# Jacqueline du Pré Music Building

## Pre-Concert Talk - 6.45pm

with **Professor Martyn Harry**

JdP Artistic Director, Associate Professor, Fellow and Tutor, St Anne's College, Lecturer at St Hilda's College, University of Oxford

## Hommage to David Tudor - 7.30pm

### PROGRAMME

<b>Franco Evangelisti</b>	<i>Proiezioni sonore, Strutture per piano solo (1955-56)</i>
<b>Morton Feldman</b>	<i>Extensions 3 (1952)</i>
<b>Stefan Wolpe</b>	<i>Passacaglia (1936, rev. 1972)</i>
<b>Pierre Boulez</b>	<i>Deuxième Sonate pour piano (1948)</i>

### INTERVAL

<b>John Cage</b>	<i>Music of Changes (1951)</i>
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The pianist and composer David Tudor (1926-96) played a vital role in the history of post-war modern music, developing a whole performance practice, in many cases practically from scratch, for ferociously demanding works which presented new types of pianistic and intellectual challenges. His role as performer and advocate of all of the works in this programme cannot be underestimated; those who have taken up the works since (including myself) will always be in his debt to varying degrees. Tudor played Boulez's Second Sonata and the world premiere of Cage's *Music of Changes* (and other works) at a concert on January 1st, 1952 at the Cherry Lane Theatre, New York, and the inclusion of both these works here is an attempt to render today something of what that experience might have been like.

### **Franco Evangelisti, *Proiezioni sonore, Strutture per piano solo* (1955-56)**

In common with much of Evangelisti's music from the period (before he abandoned notated composition for 16 years from 1963), this work is organised in terms of 'structures' deriving from particular compositional rules. These are clearly articulated, but the composer's note makes clear that the performer is free to gauge the development of the work their own way. Characteristically for the period, the music is characterised by contrasting extremes of density, dynamics, and other parameters.

The piece was premiered by David Tudor at Darmstadt in 1958.

### **Morton Feldman, *Extensions 3* (1952)**

Morton Feldman's early works from the beginning of the 1950s onwards explore a variety of notational and performance techniques: the *Projections* series specify only register and type of technique, leaving specific pitches in particular up to the performer, while the *Durations* series leave individual tempo and various aspects of rhythm relatively free. The *Extensions* series, however, are fully notated, and *Extensions 3* is characterised by a high degree of repetition, with continuous oscillations between a few pitches, or repeated pitches. Feldman himself wrote that 'By extensions I do not mean continuities. I had the feeling of a bridge where you don't see the beginning or the end, where what you see seems trans-fixed in space.'

David Tudor premiered *Extensions 3* on May 2nd, 1952 at the new School for Social Research, followed by a discussion which was led by Henry Cowell, and continued to play the work (and other of Feldman's early piano piece) regularly in later concerts.

### **Stefan Wolpe, *Passacaglia* (1936, rev. 1972)**

Stefan Wolpe studied with Ferruccio Busoni in Berlin and became a leading figure in 1920s Berlin musical life, engaging variously with the Dada scene, the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, new dodecaphonic techniques, and left-wing cabaret. After the Nazis came to power in 1933, Wolpe (who was Jewish) and his then-partner Irma moved first to Austria, and then to British-controlled Palestine in May 1934, where they taught at the Jerusalem Conservatory before moving again to New York City in 1938. During the time in Palestine, Wolpe also travelled to Brussels in the spring and summer of 1935 to attend Hermann Scherchen's course for conductors in Brussels, and met a further range of young composers here. Wolpe wrote his *Vier Studien über Grundreihen* (*Four Studies on Basic Rows*) (1935-36), of which the *Passacaglia* is one. This is based upon a series of 22 pitches (hear at the very outset) which in sequence incorporate every interval from the minor second to the major seventh, reflecting a fascination with the possibilities of intervallic composition which dates back to the 1920s. From this series, Wolpe derives a series of twelve-tone rows each founded the recurrence of one of the intervals. But the piece is far from being simply an academic exercise, and has considerable dramatic power. Wolpe creates a series of tableaux, each with their own particular harmonic colouration and clearly defined character, whether pensive and brooding, fastidious and contrapuntal, or march-like and charged, somewhat in the manner of his more explicitly 'political' music. Austin Clarkson has suggested that the piece contains five broad sections: the first the presentation of the theme and various offshoots from this; the second a Palestinian dance dominated by minor thirds, suggesting C minor, then expanding outwards until the material is dominated by octaves, in a stark climax; the third a 'Ricercar' in three- and four-voice counterpoint, featuring many repeated notes; the fourth more march-like (though Clarkson denies it is a 'workers' march') in three parts, leading to a climax in major sevenths; the fifth a return to the world of the opening, albeit modified, ending in an enigmatic major seventh chord.

The first public performance of the *Passacaglia* was given by Irma in 1947; it was originally dedicated to Edward Steuermann, but he claimed it to be unplayable, so Wolpe changed the dedication. David Tudor, aged 17 in 1943, had heard a recital by Irma in 1943, and afterwards studied with both the Wolpes from 1944

and 1950, a relationship which has been viewed by many as central in Tudor's development. He worked on the *Passacaglia* during this time, having been impressed by Irma's rendition, and performed it in public for the first time in 1948, going on to perform it many times, making the first recording in 1954 (re-released on hat ART CD 6182), then giving the German premiere at the Darmstadt Summer Courses, on July 12th, 1956.

### **Pierre Boulez (b. 1925), *Deuxième Sonate pour piano* (1948)**

Boulez's *Deuxième Sonate*, written when the composer was only 23, stands both as a pioneering work of the immediate post-war years and also as the end point of an early period in the composer's output. In the first and third of the four movements of the work, Boulez draws upon traditional forms, for the last time in his compositional career, whilst in the second and fourth movements he develops modes of presentation, commentary and parentheses that were to become fundamental to his later compositional language.

Whilst influenced by some of the more vehement piano writing of Schoenberg (for example the *Klavierstück* Op. 11 No. 2) and the strategies for extracting and developing gestures in Webern, Boulez also alludes to a Beethovenian model of the piano sonata. In the first movement, the pungent opening gestures (deriving from a twelve-note row that is also employed in modified form in the third movement) contrast with chordal material soon afterwards, in the manner of a contrasting second subject. The movement itself can be apportioned into sections corresponding to those of a classical sonata first movement, though with unfamiliar proportions due to the logic and development deriving from the manipulation of cells rather than more conventional tonal interplay.

The slow movement opens with an exposition of a twelve-note row then manipulations of this, in order to set out categories of gesture, articulation, resonance and register. All of these elements are developed in a long free and immensely sensuous continuous variation, interrupted at various stages with violent, wrenched gestures. After distilling the activity to form a somewhat grandiose and sonorous climax, Boulez intersperses a quasi-cadenza like passage before using process of fragmentation to lead the material back to a manner akin to the opening.

The scherzo is the simplest movement and perhaps the closest Boulez ever came to writing a neo-classical work. Consisting of four interrelated scherzo passages interspersed by three contrasting trios, Boulez himself described it as

an attempt 'to combine variation and scherzo form', whilst others have commented on its Bartókian character.

The last movement is the most complex and also the most radical both in its expression at any single point and through the psychological complexity engendered by its trajectory. A dialectical interplay between various fragmentary (and often highly violent) gestures in the opening section eventually subsides into a fugue whose main theme is itself separated into constituent elements which assume motivic qualities. This is followed by what has been described as a rondo section (in the sense of a category of material that recurs between its different developments, though not in a thematic form, ultimately leading to an apocalyptic culmination, with the composer instructing the performer to 'pulverise the sound'. Boulez concludes the movement with a hushed coda that has been seen as a type of reduction to the essential elements underlying the whole work.

The world premiere of the work was given by Yvette Grimaud on April 29th, 1950. David Tudor gave the US premiere on December 17th, 1950, at Carnegie Recital Hall, New York. The sonata has found many other champions, including Yvonne Loriod, Claude Helffer, Herbert Henck, David Burge, Idil Biret, Pi-hsien Chen and Pavvali Jumppanen.

## **INTERVAL**



## John Cage, *Music of Changes* (1951)

Cage's *Music of Changes* has roots in the composer's encounters with Boulez in Paris from 1949 onwards. Cage was deeply impressed by Boulez's Second Sonata, and took copies of the score back to New York, giving a copy to his friend Morton Feldman, who in turn introduced Cage to Tudor, who performed the work in December 1950, as mentioned before.

In the *String Quartet in Four Parts* (1949-50), Cage first used a 'gamut' of thirty-three sonorities or chords, created independently, and presented with no transpositions, fragmentation or arpeggios in each part. By using whichever element in the gamut featured a note in a melody, Cage was able to produce a succession of harmonies which eschewed any sense of progression and create a truly static music. In the *Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber Orchestra* (1950-51) he extended this gamut technique by creating rectangular charts of elements, each row favouring different instruments, and using these to provide a means of moving from one element to another. Most importantly, for the third movement, Cage derived a method from the I Ching, the Chinese Book of Changes, a copy of which had been presented to him by Christian Wolff, whose father had produced a translation. In line with the use of tossing coins to determine particular hexagrams from the I Ching, Cage tossed coins to work out a number between 1 and 64, which would determine either a sound moves from a selection of 32 possibilities, or the use of silence.

From 1949 to 1951, Cage had become more deeply interested in Zen Buddhism, after attending the lectures of Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki at Columbia University during this period, and became committed to a more profound doctrine of musical 'non-intentionality', whereby compositional decisions could be determined in a manner aloof from his own intentions and preferences. This would be decisive for the composition of the *Music of Changes* in 1951. Drawing upon but extending and modifying the techniques employed in the *String Quartet* and the *Concerto for Prepared Piano*, Cage derived charts of 64 cells, which could be correlated with the 64 hexagrams of the *I Ching*. The odd-numbered cells would contain sounds, the even-numbered ones silence. He would toss coins to identify a hexagram and then link this to a cell on his charts. There were no longer fixed ways of moving between elements, so any element could potentially be chosen. But he also derived further charts relating to sonority, duration (series of durations forming rhythmic patterns) and dynamics (including transitions from one dynamic to another). An element from each of these would be determined in a similar manner to be applied to a cell.

Not everything in the work came about by chance, however, as Cage chose the very distinctive cellular elements intuitively; he characterised them as single notes, two-note intervals, aggregates (chords) and constellations, the latter being more detailed combinations of pitches, gestures, chords, and trills. Some elements would entail plucked strings on the piano, damped notes, and percussive sounds produced from the body of the instrument.

In order to sustain an extended work without endlessly going over the same elements, Cage also used the *I Ching* to determine states of mobility and immobility for each chart. When immobile, the cells would remain fixed; when mobile, a cell would be replaced by a new one after it had been used. Cage also composed the work in multiple simultaneous layers, each supplied through these techniques, which leads to a variable degree of density (depending on which layers consist of silence at any point). Various compositional work was done with rhythm to make elements able to be heard individually in the denser passages. Tempos were determined by further random processes using the *I Ching*.

Cage employed the rhythmic structures he had used from the 1930s, by which certain proportions are employed to produce both local and global durations. Here these are expressed in terms of changing tempi. The structure is 3 – 5 – 6  $\frac{3}{4}$  – 6  $\frac{3}{4}$  – 6 – 3  $\frac{1}{8}$  (which adds up to 29  $\frac{5}{8}$ ), this indicating the relative proportions of different sections. The work is then divided into four books, the first containing one section, the second two, the third one, the fourth two, though the processes for determining tempo made these more flexible. Book I is probably the most frenetic, then Book II, whereas the last two books are generally sparser, though the direction of travel in this respect is not simply linear.

The experience of the work is to my mind kaleidoscopic and quite hypnotic, exhibiting a range of sonic events unlikely to have ever been conceived by human intuition alone, yet by no means free from such an element, expressed through the often angular, delicate, or mysterious constellations, and the very decision to compose a piece in such a manner, and determine the compositional process in such a way as would produce a certain type of result. There is a vehemence in the music which Cage creates, not least through the gnarled gestures, which may reflect the influence of Boulez (and also that of Antonin Artaud, in who both composers and also Tudor took a deep interest), and is only rarely found in Cage's later output.



**Ian Pace** is a pianist of long-established reputation, specialising in the farthest reaches of musical modernism and transcendental virtuosity, as well as a writer and musicologist focusing on issues of performance, music and society and the avant-garde. He was born in Hartlepool, England in 1968, and studied at Chetham's School of Music, The Queen's College, Oxford and, as a Fulbright Scholar, at the Juilliard School in New York. His main teacher, and a major influence upon his work, was the Hungarian pianist György Sándor, a student of Bartók.

Based in London since 1993, he has pursued an active international career, performing in 24 countries and at most major European venues and festivals. His absolutely vast repertoire of all periods focuses particularly upon music of the 20th and 21st Century. He has given world premieres of over 200 piano works, including works by Julian Anderson, Richard Barrett, Konrad Boehmer, Luc Brewaeys, Aaron Cassidy, James Clarke, James Dillon, Pascal Dusapin, Richard Emsley, James Erber, Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Finnissy (whose complete piano works he first performed in a landmark 6-concert series in 1996), Christopher Fox, Wieland Hoban, Volker Heyn, Evan Johnson, Maxim Kolomiets, André Laporte, Hilda Paredes, Alwynne Pritchard, Horatiu Radulescu, Lauren Redhead, Frederic Rzewski, Thoma Simaku, Howard Skempton, Gerhard Stäbler, Serge Verstockt, Hermann Vogt, Alistair Zaldua and Walter Zimmermann. He has presented cycles of works including Stockhausen's Klavierstücke I-X, and the piano works of Ferneyhough, Fox, Kagel, Ligeti, Lachenmann, Messiaen, Radulescu, Rihm, Rzewski and Skempton. He has played with orchestras including the Orchestre de Paris under Christoph Eschenbach (with whom he premiered and recorded Dusapin's piano concerto *À Quia*), the SWF Orchestra in Stuttgart under Rupert Huber, and the Dortmund Philharmonic under Bernhard Kontarsky (with whom he gave a series of very well-received performances of Ravel's Concerto for the Left Hand). He has recorded 34 CDs; his most recent recording of Michael Finnissy's five-and-a-half hour *The History of Photography in Sound* (of which he gave the world premiere in London in 2001) was released by Divine Art in October 2013 to rave reviews. Forthcoming recordings will include the piano works of Brian Ferneyhough (to be released in 2017), the Piano Sonatas of Pierre Boulez, and John Cage's *The Music of Changes*. The 2015-16 season saw appearances in Oslo, Kiev, and around the UK, and new commissions including a major new work from Finnissy. In 2016-17 he gave a new cycle of 11 concerts of Finnissy's complete piano works, as well as playing in Leuven, Lisbon, Prague, Basel and around the UK.

He is Lecturer in Music and Head of Performance at City University, London, having previously held positions at the University of Southampton and Darting-

ton College of Arts. His areas of academic expertise include 19th century performance practice (especially the work of Liszt and Brahms), issues of music and society (with particular reference to the work of Theodor Adorno, the Frankfurt School, and their followers), contemporary performance practice and issues, music and culture under fascism, and the post-1945 avant-garde, in particular in West Germany, upon which he is currently completing a large-scale research project. He co-edited and was a major contributor the volume *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissy*, which was published by Ashgate in 1998, and authored the monograph *Michael Finnissy's The History of Photography in Sound: A Study of Sources, Techniques and Interpretation*, published by Divine Art in 2013. He has also published many articles in *Music and Letters*, *Contemporary Music Review*, *TEMPO*, *The Musical Times*, *The Liszt Society Journal*, *International Piano*, *Musiktexte*, *Musik & Ästhetik*, *The Open Space Magazine*, as well as contributing chapters to *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*, edited Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), *Collected Writings of the Orpheus Institute: Unfolding Time: Studies in Temporality in Twentieth-Century Music*, edited Darla Crispin (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), *The Modernist Legacy*, edited Björn Heile (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), and *Beckett's Proust/Deleuze's Proust*, edited Mary Bryden and Margaret Topping (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). Forthcoming articles will appear in *Search: Journal for New Music*, and the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*.

**Piano Weekend 1:**  
**Nicolas Hodges: Domenico  
Scarlatti / Salvatore Sciarrino**  
Saturday 4 March 2017, 7:30pm  
*with a pre-concert talk at 6:45pm*



**Wednesday 15 March 7:30pm**

# SPECTRALISMS

Part of the Faculty of Music's Spectralisms conference on 15-16 March 2017

Works by:  
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**Piano Weekend 2:**  
**Maki Sekiya | Jonathan Powell**  
Friday 12 & Saturday 13 May 2017, 7:30pm



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