



Asbgate Studies in Theory and Analysis of Music After 1900

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MICHAEL FINNISSY

BRIGHT FUTURES, DARK PASTS

Edited by
Ian Pace and Nigel McBride



Critical Perspectives on Michael Finnissy

The composer and pianist Michael Finnissy (b. 1946) is an unmistakable presence in the British and international new music scene, both for his immeasurable generosity as prolific composer for many different types of musicians, major advocate for the works of others, and performer and conductor who has also been a driving force behind ensembles; he was also President of the International Society for Contemporary Music from 1990 to 1996. His vast and enormously varied output confounds those who seek easy categorisations: once associated strongly with the ‘new complexity’, Finnissy is equally known as a composer regularly engaged with many different folk musics, for working with amateur and community musicians, for a long-term engagement with sacred music, or as an advocate of Anglo-American ‘experimental’ music. Twenty years ago, a large-scale volume entitled *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissy* gave the first major overview of the output of any ‘complex’ composer. This new volume brings a greater plurality of perspectives and critical sensibility to bear upon an output which is almost twice as large as it was when the earlier book was published. A range of leading contributors – musicologists, composers, performers and others – each grapple with particular questions relating to Finnissy’s music, often in ways which raise questions relating more widely to new music, and provide theoretical foundations for further study both of Finnissy and other composers.

Ian Pace (b. 1968) is internationally renowned as the leading pianistic interpreter of Finnissy’s work, as well as a major scholar who has written extensively on compositional, aesthetic and performative aspects of Finnissy’s music, including major sketch study. He gave a six-concert series of Finnissy’s complete piano music in 1996 for the composer’s fiftieth birthday, and followed this twenty years later with an eleven-concert series of the now vastly expanded output, including a complete performance of Finnissy’s epic five-and-a-half-hour cycle *The History of Photography in Sound*, which he premiered in London in 2001, recorded for Divine Art, and about which he published a monograph. More widely, he is well-known as a staunch advocate of new music who has given over 300 world premieres, played in

over 25 countries, and recorded over 30 CDs. He is also a musicologist, and is Senior Lecturer and Head of Performance at City, University of London, having previously worked at Southampton University and Dartington College of Arts. His PhD was on new music and its infrastructure in West Germany from the Weimar Republic to the early Allied Occupation. Other areas of expertise include nineteenth-century performance practice, contemporary performance and practice-as-research, critical musicology, avant-garde aesthetics, and music under fascism and communism.

Nigel McBride (b. 1990) is a composer and researcher. He was educated at The Queen's University, Belfast, and St Anne's and Magdalen Colleges, Oxford. His research primarily focuses on philosophical approaches to compositional and musicological issues. While at Oxford, he taught composition and musicology extensively, as well as developed and convened the seminar series *The Composers' Forum* at Magdalen College. As a composer, he has collaborated with many leading performers of new music, including Ian Pace, Christopher Redgate, Gleb Kanasevich, Jack Adler-Mckean, The Cavaleri String Quartet, Jonathan Powell, and others. His music has been performed in Germany, across the UK, the USA, and elsewhere.

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A special website has been created in conjunction with this book. This includes a comprehensive bibliography of writings on Finnissy, a discography, a worklist, the full programmes from Ian Pace's 2016–17 series of Finnissy's complete piano music, and an interview between Finnissy and James Weeks. The URL for this is <https://michaelfinnissy.wordpress.com/>.

Acknowledgements

The process from initial conception of this book in 2016, through a more concrete form following the conference *Bright Futures, Dark Pasts: Michael Finnissy at 70* in 2017, to the writing, editing and proofing of all the contents for publication in 2019, has been remarkably smooth, and for that there are various people who the editors wish to thank. First of all we wish to thank Annie Vaughan, Laura Sandford, Joanna Harden Heidi Bishop at Routledge for their thorough support and help at all stages of the project, and also Rob Wilkinson for his editing work.

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Finnissy's catalogue is vast, and much of the work contained herein would not be possible without the amassing of a huge collection of scores on the parts of the editors, with the help above all of Finnissy himself, but also Dr Christoph Taggatz at Verlag Neue Musik, Berlin, George Jackson of Oxford University Press, Katie Wood at United Music Publishers, and Andrea Natale at Universal Edition. We would also like to thank all of these people for granting permission to use a considerable range of musical examples.

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memorably asked Michael Finnissy if she could ‘have Ian back now’ following his 2016–17 concert series; and Jemma McBride, whose encouragement and steadfastness – not to mention her good humour – has greatly helped Nigel McBride in working on the present volume.

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Notes on contributors

Dr Richard Barrett is internationally active as both a composer and an improvising performer, and has collaborated with many leading performers in both fields, while developing works and ideas which increasingly leave behind the distinctions between them. His long-term collaborations include the electronic duo FURT which he formed with Paul Obermayer in 1986 (and its more recent octet version FORCH), the ELISION contemporary music group, for which he has composed and performed since 1990, and regular appearances with the Evan Parker Electro-Acoustic Ensemble since 2003. Recent projects include CONSTRUCTION, a two-hour work for twenty-three performers and three-dimensional sound system, premiered by ELISION in 2011, and the hour-long life-form for cello and electronics, premiered by Arne Deforce in 2012. He studied composition principally with Peter Wiegold, was a professor of composition at Brunel University in London between 2006 and 2009, and has twice been a member of the staff of the Institute of Sonology, between 1996 and 2001 and again from 2009 to the present. Richard Barrett's work as composer and performer is documented on over 25 CDs, including six discs devoted to his compositions and seven by FURT.

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Currently working on three further articles on New Complexity (a reception study, an assessment of ensemble performance, and a study of notation and copyists), Hawkins is also a contributor to a forthcoming interdisciplinary book on aesthetics and complexity, as well as to a special issue of *Senses and Society* generated from the same project. Hawkins has also written on popular music, and a chapter on 'driving anthems' for the book *Popular Music and Automobile Cultures* is currently in press.

Prof. Christopher Fox is a composer, teacher and writer on new music and since 2006 has been professor of music at Brunel University London. His work has been performed and broadcast worldwide and has featured in many of the leading new music festivals, from the Amsterdam PROMS to the BBC Promenade Concerts and from St Petersburg to Sidney. He has established particularly close relationships with a number of ensembles with whom he regularly works, including Apartment House, EXAUDI and The Clerks in the UK, the Ives Ensemble in the Netherlands, and KNM Berlin in Germany. Fox's music is widely available on CD, with six portrait CDs on the Metier label, a portrait CD on the NMC label, and other recordings on Artifact, BVHaast, FMR, HatHut, Metier and NMC.

Fox has been hailed by *The Wire* as 'a tantalising figure in British Music' and the *Sunday Times* has described his music as 'impressive, thoughtful, entertaining and extremely varied'. His work regularly extends beyond the conventional boundaries of the concert hall and includes a number of extended ensemble works which defy categorisation.

Prof. Neil Heyde is the cellist of the Kreutzer Quartet and Head of Postgraduate Programmes at Royal Academy of Music. His research focuses on the interfaces between performance, composition and analysis. As a soloist and chamber musician he has appeared throughout Europe, broadcasting

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New music is central to his work but he is also dedicated to performing and recording neglected areas of the repertoire. Important projects have been Ferneyhough's Time and Motion Study II for solo cello and electronics (1973–6) and first recordings of the complete quartets of Michael Finnissy, Roberto Gerhard, David Matthews (ongoing) and Anton Reicha (ongoing). He has edited a series of critical editions for Faber Music. He has supervised numerous doctoral students to completion and currently has students working on Bartók, Piatti, Stokowski, and on developing innovative combinations of theatre and musical performance.

Dr Nigel McBride is a composer and research. He was educated at The Queen's University, Belfast, and St Anne's and Magdalen Colleges, Oxford. His research primarily focuses on philosophical approaches to compositional and musicological issues. While at Oxford, he taught composition and musicology extensively, as well as developed and convened the seminar series *The Composers' Forum* at Magdalen College. As a composer, he has collaborated with many leading performers of new music, including Ian Pace, Christopher Redgate, Gleb Kanasevich, Jack Adler-Mckean, The Cavaleri String Quartet, Jonathan Powell, and others. His music has been performed in Germany, across the UK, the USA, and elsewhere.

Dr 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 studied at Chetham's School of Music, The Queen's College, Oxford and, as a Fulbright Scholar, at the Juilliard School in New York. He is Head of Performance and Senior Lecturer in Music at City University, London, having previously held positions at the University of Southampton and Dartington College of Arts. He has 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 given world premieres of over 250 piano works, including works by Patrícia de Almeida, 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 performed in a landmark six-concert series in 1996, gave an eleven-concert series of his complete works in 2016–17, and also premiered in 2001, and later recorded, *The History of Photography in Sound*), Christopher Fox, Wieland Hoban, Volker Heyn, Evan Johnson, Maxim Kolomiets, Nigel McBride, André Laporte, Hilda Paredes, Alwynne Pritchard, Horatiu Radulescu, Lauren Redhead, Frederic Rzewski, Thoma

Simaku, Howard Skempton, Gerhard Stäbler, Andrew Toovey, Serge Verstockt, Hermann Vogt, Alistair Zaldua and Walter Zimmermann.

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 by Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (Cambridge University Press, 2012), *Collected Writings of the Orpheus Institute: Unfolding Time: Studies in Temporality in Twentieth-Century Music*, edited by Darla Crispin (Leuven University Press, 2009), *The Modernist Legacy*, edited by Björn Heile (Ashgate, 2009), and *Beckett's Proust/Deleuze's Proust*, edited by Mary Bryden and Margaret Topping (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

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Lauren's music has been performed by international artists such as Ian Pace, the Nieuw Ensemble, Trio Atem, Philip Thomas, BLINDMAN ensemble and rarescale, and she has received commissions from Yorkshire Forward, the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Making Music and the PRSF for Music, Octopus Collective with the Arts Council of England and most recently from TRANSIT festival. Her opera, *green angel*, was premiered in January 2011 with the support of the Arts Council of England. Her work has been performed at Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Gaudeamus Muziekweek, the London Ear Festival, London Contemporary Music Festival, Firenze Suona Contemporanea, Composer's Marathon V (Vienna), Full of Noises Festival, the New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, and many locations throughout the UK and Europe. She is Senior Lecturer in Music at Goldsmiths College, University of London, having previously taught at Canterbury Christ Church University.

Prof. Philip Thomas is Professor in Performance, having joined the University of Huddersfield in 2005. He specialises in performing and writing about new and experimental music, including both notated and improvised music. He places much emphasis on each concert being a unique event, designing imaginative programmes that provoke and suggest connections.

He is particularly drawn to the experimental music of John Cage, Morton Feldman and Christian Wolff, and composers who broadly work within a post-Cageian aesthetic. In recent years he has been particularly associated with the music of Christian Wolff, performing and recording the solo piano music, and co-editing a book about his music. He has commissioned new works from a number of British composers whose ideas, language and aesthetic have been informed in some ways by the aforementioned American composers, such as Stephen Chase, Laurence Crane, Richard Emsley, Michael

Finnissy, Christopher Fox, Bryn Harrison, John Lely, Tim Parkinson, Michael Parsons, James Saunders, Howard Skempton and Markus Trunk. Solo recordings include releases on ‘another timbre’, ‘HatHut’, ‘Huddersfield Contemporary Records’, ‘Bruce’s Fingers’, ‘Edition Wandelweiser’ and ‘sub rosa’, featuring music by Laurence Crane, Michael Finnissy, Christopher Fox, Jürg Frey, Richard Glover, Bryn Harrison, Tim Parkinson, Michael Pisaro, James Saunders and Christian Wolff.

Dr James Weeks read Music at Cambridge before completing a PhD in Composition at Southampton University, studying with Michael Finnissy. His music has been commissioned and performed by many leading performers including London Sinfonietta, Apartment House, Quatuor Bozzini, Alison Balsom, EXAUDI, Morgan/Dullea, Wandelweiser, New London Chamber Choir, Uroboros Ensemble, Endymion, Anton Lukoszevics and Christopher Redgate. He has been performed at UK and European festivals and venues including City of London, Spitalfields and Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festivals, Gaudeamus (Amsterdam), Quincena Musical (San Sebastian), de Bijloke (Ghent), Wandelweiser (Düsseldorf, Munich), Weimarer Frühjahrstage and Mafra (Portugal). His music is heard regularly on BBC Radio 3’s Hear and Now, and in 2012 he signed to University of York Music Press.

As a conductor, he is best known for his work with the contemporary specialists EXAUDI, the vocal ensemble he founded with the soprano Juliet Fraser in 2002. With them he maintains a busy international touring schedule, collaborating regularly with the world’s leading composers, new music soloists and ensembles, and has released six acclaimed CDs, of Finnissy, Fox, Lutyens and Skempton on Mode, NMC and Metier.

Prof. Arnold Whittall is Emeritus Professor at King’s College London, and taught previously in Cambridge, Nottingham and Cardiff. He has also served as a visiting professor at Yale University, and lectured extensively in Europe and America. He was instrumental in expanding and promoting studies in music theory and analysis at King’s, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate topics concerning music since 1900. In 1982 he became the first Professor of Music Theory and Analysis at a British university, and collaborated with Jonathan Dunsby on *Music Analysis in Theory and Practice* (Faber Music, 1988). His list of publications began in the 1960s with two articles on Benjamin Britten, and his first book was a BBC Music Guide, *Schoenberg Chamber Music*, followed by *Music since the First World War*, a text that eventually transformed itself into *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 1999). He has also written extensively on Wagner and other aspects of nineteenth-century music. In 2000–1 Arnold Whittall gave a special series of six London University lectures to mark the turn of the millennium which became *Exploring Twentieth-Century Music: Tradition and Innovation* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). He has recently written the

Introduction to Serialism (Cambridge, 2008), and *The Wagner Style: Close Readings and Critical Perspectives* (Plumbago Books, 2015).

Prof. Gregory Woods is Emeritus Professor of Gay and Lesbian Studies at Nottingham Trent University. Since his earliest scholarly publication, a group edition of Milton's 'Lycidas' for Cambridge University Press (1975), he has published many essays and reviews in Britain, Italy, Norway, Finland, Australia and the United States. As well as with literature, these have dealt with queer politics, film and cultural studies. His main academic book is the 240,000-word *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition*, commissioned by Yale University Press and published by them in 1998. It was the first such history to be published.

From 2004 to 2013, he chaired the Gender Studies expert panel on the European Science Foundation's project to develop a European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH). He was a member of the peer review colleges of the European Science Foundation and the Arts and Humanities Research Council, assessing funding applications in gay and lesbian studies; and was a strategic reviewer for the latter, the AHRC. He has been a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and is a founding Fellow of the English Association.

Introduction

Ian Pace and Nigel McBride

In March 1977, Oliver Knussen noted that ‘Michael Finnissy is a young composer – 30 last year – whose reputation has been steadily growing since his first professional performance more than a decade ago (*Le dormeur du val* (1963–8) at a Macnaghten concert in November 1965).¹ He has been repeatedly performed at contemporary music festivals on the Continent where he has scored considerable success, but his work (despite an ‘underground’ reputation) remains virtually unplayed in his own country.’² As of 2018, now an Emeritus Professor of Composition at Southampton University, Finnissy’s seventieth birthday has just been celebrated, featuring global performances of his works, a year-long, eleven-concert festival of his complete piano works performed by Ian Pace between Oxford, London, and other parts of the UK, a weekend celebration of his works at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and a significant two-day conference on Finnissy’s work at City, University of London, which was the impetus for the present volume. Furthermore, Finnissy’s oeuvre now stands at around 500 works (not including various discarded pieces, juvenilia, film and theatre scores), some relatively large sub-sections of which – such as aleatoric and indeterminate composition, sacred music, work for amateurs, or organ composition – might have seemed peripheral twenty, let alone forty years ago. In contrast with Knussen’s account of Finnissy as a thirty-year-old, Finnissy is now a globally significant composer within the New Music world, with over thirty CDs of his work, many international performances, and a wider influence through numerous students and students of students. Many works previously considered practically unplayable now have a whole series of international interpreters. Yet, a cursory search on RILM Abstracts of Music Literature for entries related to ‘Finnissy’ returns 82 hits. A comparable search for Finnissy’s contemporary ‘[Brian] Ferneyhough’ yields 307, and a search for ‘[Harrison] Birtwistle’ proffers 305. The contributions of Finnissy and Ferneyhough to international trends in New Music on a technical, aesthetic, performative, and musical level are monumental, but neither has quite achieved the more ‘mainstream’ status we can attribute to Sir Harrison Birtwistle. Perhaps something of Knussen’s account of Finnissy holds true forty years later in terms of scholarly attention.

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Despite the comparative lack of scholarship on Finnissey, much of it is of high academic value. The multifarious nature of Finnissey's diverse and often extreme output has resulted in an equally diverse range of approaches to the study of his music. To date there have been two full volumes published on Finnissey's work. The first was the influential *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissey* published in 1997, featuring an extensive and highly illuminating interview with Finnissey, and individual essays from Julian Anderson, Christopher Fox, Ian Pace and Roger Redgate.³ Sixteen years later, in conjunction with a CD release, Pace published his single-author monograph *Michael Finnissey's The History of Photography in Sound: A Study of Sources, Techniques and Interpretation*, an extremely detailed exegesis of Finnissey's five-and-a-half-hour magnum opus for piano (hereafter simply the *History*).⁴

Most early publications on Finnissey's work were either informative if relatively general articles on his composition as a whole or descriptive pieces, sometimes extended reviews, on individual works.⁵ One major exception was a longer article on Finnissey's piano music by Brian Ferneyhough, written in 1978 to accompany a projected Australian recording of *English Country-Tunes* (1977, rev. 1982–5), but not published until 1995.⁶ In what is still a remarkable piece of writing today, written at a time when Finnissey's output for piano was a fraction of the size it is today, Ferneyhough gave an extremely detailed account of Finnissey's gestural language, multi-dimensional relationships between his musical materials, and approach to rhythm and metre, focusing upon *Song 9* (1968), *all.fall.down* (1977) and to a lesser extent *English Country-Tunes*. Ferneyhough also provided some contextualisation for Finnissey's work in the form of influential works and traditions, including Charles Ives' *Concord Sonata*, Pierre Boulez's *Structures*, Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Klavierstück X*, and the approach to transforming found musical materials seen in the work of Franco Donatoni, not to mention earlier precedents such as the piano music of Charles Valentin Alkan and Franz Liszt. Many of these themes were developed by later commentators and scholars.

The first serious musicological attention given to Finnissey came in the form of Richard Toop's influential 1988 article, 'Four Facets of the "New Complexity"'.⁷ Toop sought points of unity and divergence between the four composers considered and their work – Richard Barrett, Chris Dench, James Dillon and Michael Finnissey. Toop himself acknowledged the potential short-livedness of the moniker, but the term 'the New Complexity' has survived well into the new century, not only to describe the composers Toop discussed, but also newer generations. While the description did succeed in capturing something of the character of the works it applied to, it was not without its drawbacks. Various composers were unhappy, not least Finnissey:

MICHAEL FINNISSY: It horrifies me that people say the music is complex. It isn't, except in a very superficial detailed kind of way. It's complex if you accept that human beings are complex, and that all art is complex.

But to say that it's complex with the implication that somehow it's not 'refined', enough, or that somehow it should conform to the ideals of an 18th-century French garden – you know, geometric precision, economy of pitch-statement *à la* Webern: that's completely ridiculous. Hardly any music is like that, and critics who think that contemporary music *ought* to be, have got their heads stuffed up their arses.⁸

Toop's article also included the first sketch-based work on Finnissey's music. On the basis of access to Finnissey's sketches, he outlined his ways of transforming a small series of pitches derived from a Verdi melody to supply close-packed trichords which are then used to create a para-microtonal type of linear writing employed in the first of the *Verdi Transcriptions* (1972–2005). He also traced the dramatic structure of the *String Trio* (1986), its use of a vocabulary of rhythmic cells and their distribution, and the employment of a pitch sequence derived from Mahler's Ninth Symphony as an underlying *cantus firmus* for the work as a whole.

The early 1990s was a transitional period for Finnissey, as some of his previous admirers remained ambivalent about his turn towards sacred composition in such works as *The Cambridge Codex* (1991), *Seven Sacred Motets* (1991), *Anima Christi* (1991) and the *Liturgy of Saint Paul* (1991–5). Furthermore, his stage works *Thérèse Raquin* (1992–3, rev. 1997, 2006) and *Shameful Vice* (1994–5) received very mixed responses from critics. However, as 1996, the year of his fiftieth birthday, approached, several commentators used the occasion to form broader perspectives upon what was already a substantial output of over 200 works. In 1995, Richard Barrett identified many recurrent features and concerns: musical influences and parallels, in the forms of tribute pieces to various composers, settings of works of others (such as Machaut, Obrecht, Verdi and Gershwin), and then more complex machinations upon a range of found materials from art and folk musics; particular types of instrumentation, including works with indeterminate scorings; the employment of texts (in many languages) and theatrical traditions from the York Mystery Plays, through music-hall and Japanese ritual theatre, to experimental contemporary Polish work; the use of quasi-cinematic montage; and very individual approaches to musical notation.⁹ Of particular importance in this overview was Barrett's acknowledgement of the changing role of musical allusion:

One obvious development in Finnissey's music between the early works and the Gershwin and Verdi pieces is a greatly increased confidence in allowing the inherited material to occupy more of the foreground.¹⁰

However, in a broad article like this, space did not permit a wider discussion of the musical, or other reasons for this shift. As in the *History*, and as addressed later in Max Erwin's chapter on the *Political Agendas* (1989–2016) in the present volume, Finnissey utilises varying levels of salience in his quoted

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material in order to project the opportunity for a more coherent commentary through the semantically rich materials he weaves together.

In another article in the same volume as Barrett's, theatre director Lynn Williams presented the first extended writing on Finnissey's theatrical works.¹¹ Focusing in some depth on the then relatively recent *The Undivine Comedy* (1985–9, rev. 2017), Williams elucidated the conflicts between the spiritual and earthly dimensions of the work, as well as drawing it into a comparison with Philip Glass's *Akhmaten* and exploring Finnissey's use of different forms of intervallic emphasis as a structural device. She went on to give a brief account of Finnissey's little-known 1970s theatrical works such as *Tsuru-Kame* (1971–3), *Circle, Chorus and Formal Act* (1973), and *Tom Fool's Wooing* (then 1975–8, subsequently revised 2015) and then the subsequent group of works *Mr Punch* (1976–9), *Vaudeville* (1983–7) and *Soda Fountain* (1983), including a significant amount of interview material with the composer. This article, combining both theatrical and musical perspectives, served to introduce a new range of readers to this important component of Finnissey's output, and its engagement with ritualistic and archetypal approaches to the medium, in contrast to a predominantly realistic music-theatrical aesthetic which then and now continues to dominate in the UK.

In a two-part article, Ian Pace presented a related if somewhat distinct overview, considering first Finnissey's approach to register, harmonic fields, use of intervals, and structures derived from these; the employment of binary oppositions, influenced by the work of anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and others; a brief consideration of ideas from the cinema, and then from literature, theatre and the visual arts; the relationship between line and structure, instrumentation and indeterminacy; Finnissey's relationship to earlier post-war European modernists, tribute pieces and the use of found source materials; transcription as a central concern; Finnissey's once-contentious turn to sacred music in the early 1990s; his interest in folk musics, focusing on the series of works with Japanese, Javanese, Sardinian, Balkan, Central Asian, Australian and Native American allusions, the engagement with English traditions and evocations of an imaginary 'England', and the 'meta-folkloristic' cycle *Folklore* (1993–4), which was then Finnissey's most extended work for piano.¹² In a briefer article, Jonathan Cross focused on then-recent work, such as the piano trio *In Stiller Nacht* (1990, rev. 1997) and its allusions to Brahms, *Glad day* (1994) for baroque-style orchestra, alluding to Henry Purcell but also a motet by the Scottish composer Robert Carver, a little on the *Verdi Transcriptions* and the simultaneous interplay between tonal and atonal music, and the allusions to African-American spirituals in *Folklore*.¹³

The publication of *Uncommon Ground* made available to readers much more comprehensive and detailed overviews of Finnissey's output, much of it at the time forgotten and little-known except to a few aficionados. It also expanded considerably the range of published analytical and sketch-based study, especially that focused upon compositional process, though some of the contributions could be argued with hindsight to be a little hagiographic.

Pace's sketch-based work on *G.F.H.* (1986) delineated the compositional processes used to construct the work, noting in particular the role of both quasi-serial operations combined with random-permutations applied to the original source material, taken from Handel, in order to generate new pitch and rhythmic content, and then further transform this in turn.¹⁴ Similarly, in his analysis of *William Billings* (1990–1), Pace identified a distinct approach towards the quoted material from Billings' own hymn tunes, involving fragmentation and re-assemblage of the source material.¹⁵ Pace's reading of *Folklore*, however, set out a methodology for close examination of Finnissey's most complex transformations and also the types of intercuttings between contrasting materials which are used for dramatic effect.¹⁶ The folk materials used by Finnissey in the construction of *Folklore* were contrasted in their original (and unmodified) forms against the transformed counterparts from the score itself, while an exhaustive catalogue clarified the trails of reference such as form a type of hidden narrative (also encompassing the composer's personal 'folklore', through allusions to musics important to him at an early age).¹⁷

Roger Redgate's chapter on Finnissey's chamber music focused upon the ways in which Finnissey articulates multi-dimensional temporal schemes, particularly in the works *Afar* (1966–7), *as when upon a tranced summer night* (1966–8), and *alongside* (1979). Redgate discussed the various facets of Finnissey's notation which contribute in undermining the sensation of regular metrical groupings, including the roles of barlines and differing lengths of simultaneous phrase structures.¹⁸ In his discussion of the orchestral music, Julian Anderson examined all of the orchestral works, especially their delineation of points, lines and chords (which had some roots in some of the broad parametric approaches of Boulez and others), as well as identifying particular scales and chordal structures employed by Finnissey.¹⁹ Furthermore, an analysis of the temporal structure of *Sea and Sky* (1979–80) revealed some proportions rooted in Fibonacci sequences.²⁰

Pace considered briefly the use of quasi-cinematic devices (including cuts, dissolves and fades) in some of the early *Songs* (1966–78) and *Snowdrift* (1974) for piano, all of which are explored in more detail in the final chapter of this volume. Christopher Fox's discussion of Finnissey's vocal music began with the observation that 'the great piano sets, for example, all in some way transform vocal music for Finnissey's own digital "voice", the keyboard'.²¹ Considering *Maldon* (1991), Fox noted that Finnissey is not generally concerned with "good" word-setting', rather he treats the textual elements of songs as a pseudo-schemata of timbres, consonants and vowels.²² This creates a curious situation in which the idiom which for Finnissey could be the most direct, in terms of extra-musical narratives, actually becomes among the most abstract. Fox framed Finnissey's approach to choosing and employing texts in terms of cinematic techniques, by which the text is considered in terms of 'the "establishing" shot', "'reaction" shots', and 'a montage of "cut-aways"'.²³ Fox also provided detailed technical analysis of Finnissey's

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vocal writing, focusing particularly on the evolving lines and structural use of different vocal groupings in Finnissy's vocal sextet *Kelir* (1981).²⁴

Pace's chapter on Finnissy's theatrical works, picking up from and extending the treatment of the subject by Williams, featured sketch-based studies of *The Undivine Comedy*, *Thérèse Raquin* and *Shameful Vice*, as well as chronicling the exegeses of Finnissy's earlier theatrical works. He began by situating Finnissy's first acknowledged theatrical work *Tsuru-Kame* (1971–3) in the context of ritual theatre, in which the traditional dramatic scaffolding of dialogue and story-telling are supplanted in favour of 'a focus on ritual and a communion with the elemental, pre-rational aspects of the mind'.²⁵ *Tsuru-Kame* is notable in the context of Finnissy's wider output from the 1970s, as it introduced the *gagaku*-style counterpoint that would emerge in other non-Japanese inspired works such as *alongside* and *Seven Sacred Motets*.²⁶ Pace also dwelt at some length here on the nature of Finnissy's revisions of works such as *The Undivine Comedy*; following the first production, Finnissy modified the work to alleviate fears that the instrumental forces lacked character, and to ensure that the ensemble writing would support the dramatic narratives.²⁷

There have been several interviews with Finnissy since the publication of *Uncommon Ground*, but the 'Conversations with Michael Finnissy' featured in that volume is the most comprehensive and wide-ranging, and has become something of an essential piece of reading for student composers interested in Finnissy's work. It is this article that introduced a multi-faceted Finnissy to the reader, in which the binary oppositions and unlikely pairings that are so integral to the effect of much of his work are also reflected in his thinking about music and culture more generally:

When I was a student I was made fun of by the other composers who were my contemporaries, because I liked Tchaikovsky and I was ready to defend composers like Tchaikovsky, Bellini and Verdi, who were – and probably still are – out of favour with the modernists. [...] playing for ballet classes, I really enjoyed improvising in that style of music yet I also liked to go to concerts of Webern.²⁸

Not only does the incidental account of Finnissy's indifference to compositional orthodoxies and schools demonstrate the multifarious influences that are frequently referred to in his works, it also subtly introduces the tension present in Finnissy's relation to the mainstream new music world. By identifying with the poet Arthur Rimbaud, Finnissy characterised himself as an 'outsider' in the New Music world, which forms a recurring trope that emerges not only in the kinds of narratives that surround Finnissy's reception, but is also evidenced in the frequently unorthodox analytical approaches that are applied to the study of his work.²⁹

Finnissy featured regularly in the first wave of writing on the 'new complexity'. The origins of the term are a little ambiguous: Roddy Hawkins cites

a 1982 review by Keith Potter of an opera by Oliver Knussen;³⁰ Richard Toop suggests around 1980 by the composer Nigel Osborne;³¹ Finnissy gives an earlier date of 1978 and attributes the term to the late critic and writer Harry Halbreich.³² Few of the composers routinely associated with the term have been fond of it, but it has persisted (and much promotional literature in particular has continued to evoke it).³³ The first major article on musical ‘complexity’ was published by François Nicolas in 1987,³⁴ but this did not mention the term ‘nouvelle complexité’ and considered no composers other than Ferneyhough. By contrast, in his influential article ‘Four Faces of the “New Complexity”’ from the following year,³⁵ Richard Toop presented Finnissy, alongside Ferneyhough (who does not however feature in the article, as Toop had discussed his work amply elsewhere) as the elder figures in a ‘school’, with James Dillon, Chris Dench, and the younger Richard Barrett.

For a while, the type of ‘school’ consolidated by Toop, around three younger British composers whose own work more obviously resembled that of Finnissy (and Xenakis) than Ferneyhough, was reflected in other publications on musical complexity.³⁶ Composers clearly influenced by Ferneyhough, such as Klaus K. Hübler, Alessandro Melchiorre, Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, James Erber or Roger Redgate, occupied a more marginal position in this body of literature, though a review of the Darmstadt courses of 1988 by Keith Potter suggests that a view was well developed by which, alongside Ferneyhough, ‘Barrett, Dench and Dillon (*probably not Finnissy*, though maybe some of the others [James Clarke, Richard Emsley, James Erber and Roger Redgate])’ were ‘the 1980s equivalents of the 1950s serialists in their quest for a synthesis of intellectual rigour and musical forms consistent with acoustic realities’ (editor’s emphasis).³⁷ It is not surprising that by this stage, when Finnissy had recently completed the first book of *Gershwin Arrangements* (1975–1988) as well as works with titles such as *Catchpenny Rhymes* (1986), *Red Earth* (1988) or the *Beuk o’ Newcassel Sangs* (1988), that his work would have been seen at an increasing distance from such a movement, issues considered in the chapter by Christopher Fox in Chapter 1 of this volume. An article by Mahnkopf in a 1990 mini-symposium in German initiated a shift towards a different focus upon a long historical tradition whose contemporary representatives were selected much more in terms of their relationship to Ferneyhough.³⁸ A similar if less didactic attempt at outlining a complex ‘tradition’ came in a subsequent article by Ulrich Mosch,³⁹ and many publications since the late 1990s, especially those by Mahnkopf, have continued in this vein.⁴⁰ Toop, in a later article, appeared rather daunted by the debate that he had unleashed and, like Mahnkopf, Mosch and others, attempted to broaden the concept to encompass a long period of polyphonic music.⁴¹

A substantial monograph on ‘new complexity’ published in 2008 by the French writer Nicolas Darbon, the first of its type, was centred around Ferneyhough but still made plenty of space for Finnissy, though most of the relevant material was essentially a paraphrase of other existing scholarship.⁴²

Then two years later, a doctoral dissertation by Roddy Hawkins, an intellectual and cultural history of the very concept of ‘complexity’ and thus associated with it, developed the ‘two complexities’ thesis, identifying two ‘spheres of influence’, one in Germany around Ferneyhough, the other in Britain around Finnissey, which served as a valuable synthesis of the divergent paths within writing on the subject.⁴³ While this model works mostly well for the focus of this thesis (Britain from the 1970s until the late 1980s), its geographical reach needs to be broadened when considering later periods, as both Finnissey and Ferneyhough’s teaching and influence have spread wider, and some of their students have themselves had students and generated spheres of influence.⁴⁴

Hawkins’ thesis focuses upon both performers (not least the ensembles Suoraan and Exposé) and ‘cultural intermediaries’ (such as Keith Potter, Richard Steinitz, Graham Hayter, Roger Wright, and also composer Christopher Fox) for their role in building and consolidating the reputations of various composers. He was also one of the first to cast a more critical eye over some aspects of the public construction of Finnissey as found in both journalistic and scholarly literature, especially themes of exile and marginality,⁴⁵ which are developed further in his chapter in this volume. Hawkins looked in particular at the early reception of *World* (1968–74) and *Pathways of Sun and Stars* (1976), comparing this with that of then-contemporary works of Ferneyhough and elucidating early constructions of Finnissey as influenced by, but distinct from, the European modernist mainstream. Like other commentators (including Richard Barrett in this volume), he also considered the important role of Finnissey’s *alongside* for younger figures, and then the importance of Finnissey’s work as a pianist in ensembles Suoraan and Exposé, and his performances at the British Music Information Centre, upon which he expands further in this volume. Overall, Hawkins’ thesis serves as an invaluable resource in terms of reception and quasi-institutional history (in the sense of complex composers, and those around them, as an ‘institution’) though he does not deal with other aspects (compositional, performance-related, analytical, referential) of individual works of Finnissey or others.

In 2003, Maarten Beirens produced an important article on *Folklore*,⁴⁶ which is referenced extensively in Lauren Redhead’s contribution to this volume. Following Pace’s detailed account of the sources employed in the work and their transformation, Beirens focused more broadly upon the nature of the contrasts and drama embodied in the work, identifying ‘filtering’ as a crucial component of the piece. He went on to explore themes of marginalisation and the figure of the ‘outsider’ in a manner more reminiscent of Cross than in Hawkins’ later work, arriving at hermeneutical, quasi-programmatic readings of parts of the work as a result which were distinct from those of Pace (for example, Beirens reads the use of Rumanian melodies in *Folklore II* in relation to the Ceaucescu regime, and dwells further on the function of folk music in regimes propounding a socialist realist aesthetic,

and how this related to the politics of Cornelius Cardew, whose music is also referenced in the cycle).

Since the publication of *Uncommon Ground*, the most significant addition to Finnissy's output has been his monumental *The History of Photography in Sound* (1995–2000) for solo piano, which weights-in at five-and-a-half hours and was premiered complete by Ian Pace in January 2001. Christopher Fox wrote an overview of the work and some of its conceptual and other concerns (not least relating to the writings of Roland Barthes) in an article published in 2002, following the second complete performance in Leuven, Belgium in October 2001. In particular, Fox raised the important questions of the discernibility of Finnissy's musical 'photographs' and the meaning of composing in a para-semiotic fashion; he included some anecdotal evidence from playing sections of the cycle to students. Richard Beaudoin published an article five years later which examined in great detail the opening of the eighth chapter of the cycle, *Kapitalistisch Realisme*.⁴⁷ Distancing himself from the source-based approaches of Pace and others, Beaudoin instead concentrated upon the immanent properties of the resulting work, claiming that 'we are engaged by its handling of musical materials *on its own terms*'.⁴⁸ Beaudoin took something of a hard-line formalist approach, working on the assumption 'that both performer and listener are unaware of all original source material, or at least are unable to link the two in real time when encountering the *History*', though immediately tempered this to a wish to 'investigate the piece without overemphasizing the cultural importance of its source material'.⁴⁹ He also argued rather sweepingly that 'almost none of the quotations can be heard'.⁵⁰ Fox's article suggested on the contrary that even if the specific sources could not be identified by students, nonetheless they had a sense of some of the wider generic qualities, for example of hymn-like material. Beaudoin himself could not avoid mentioning Finnissy's obvious Ivesian allusion to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony at the beginning of the work. Nonetheless, he attempted to downplay its significance, focusing instead on the precise details of the configuration, and then went on to explore some of the resulting tonal implications of Finnissy's superimposed materials (working under the assumption – which may be contingent upon approaches to performance – that they will be heard by listeners as part of a unified whole). These issues and Beaudoin's article are further addressed by Ian Pace in Chapter 3 of this volume. Beaudoin also included two reproductions of pages of sketches, which made visually manifest some of the detailed 'edits' employed by Finnissy during the compositional process. A later article by Beaudoin and Joseph Moore is much closer to the mainstream of Finnissy scholarship. This explored Finnissy's *Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen sind* (1992), based on a Bach chorale prelude, in the context of earlier transcriptions of Bach by Busoni, Ignaz Friedman, Webern and Stravinsky, and christened the process of rendering a musical source in a new musical 'dialect' as *transdialektion* (though found that this term had a history of its own).⁵¹

In 2013, Pace published his own monograph on the work after some ten years' gestation, which engaged with various concerns of Fox and Beaudoin and many others. Above all, this book combined a strong emphasis upon compositional process – in an attempt at demystification – based upon exclusive access to Finnissy's complete collection of sketches; it stands as by far the most comprehensive sketch-study to date of any of Finnissy's music.⁵² This was combined with a series of critical explorations of various hermeneutic themes and implications of the cycle, examining issues of post-colonial representation and appropriation in the context of the chapters *North American Spirituals* and *Unsere Afrikareise*, meanings of popular culture and its interactions with militarism in *My parents' generation thought War meant something*, Beethoven as a symbol of the composer as entrepreneur in *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, issues of gay culture, consumerism, archaism and masculinity in *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets* and *Sizilianische Männerakte*, and the dichotomy between expressionism and rationalism in *Eadweard Muybridge – Edvard Munch*. Pace provided exacting detail of the sources of practically every quoted material in the cycle and the nature of their transformations, and the highly complicated structural workings at both microscopic and macroscopic levels of the work, but also considered aspects of the wider harmonic working at medium-range levels, arriving at somewhat different conclusions to Beaudoin. The second chapter of the monograph, in particular, 'Material as Archetype in *The History of Photography in Sound*', set up a methodology for examining the cycle as a whole through assembling disparate materials into three 'macro-categories' of Chords, Gestures, and Lines (relating to Anderson's earlier identifications), each of which are further divided into sub-categories.⁵³ While this methodology was developed with the *History* in mind, it can facilitate the analysis of Finnissy's works from across his output.

The release of the CD and monograph of the *History* stimulated a free literary fantasia from Arnold Whittall, setting the work in a wider context of British music, including Vaughan Williams, Britten, Tippett and Peter Maxwell Davies, as well as that of Charles Ives in particular.⁵⁴ Whittall concentrated especially upon Pace's observation that the end of the *History* consisted of an affirmatory near-cadence into E-flat major which then dissolves, and also one of the key motives from Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, reflecting Whittall's much wider Wagnerian expertise. In an attempt to expand Pace's range of reference, Whittall also related the *History* to the work of Berg, specifically the Violin Concerto and operas *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, and even to some of Maxwell Davies' *Naxos Quartets*.

Performance of Finnissy's music has received only a relatively small amount of sustained treatment. Amongst the most important contributions to this subject remains Philip Thomas' 1999 PhD thesis, dealing with interpretation of a range of contemporary composers, but in which Finnissy was a regular presence. Thomas considered at some length the nature of Finnissy's notation, the role of the bar line, beaming, dynamics, tempo, rhythm, grace notes figurations and their relation to time, Finnissy's own performances and

recordings, the function of work titles and the relationship of the music to improvisation. The thesis is also valuable for the inclusion of original interview material with Finnissey himself and several other pianists relating to their experiences of performing Finnissey's compositions.⁵⁵ Pace wrote a section about Finnissey in a wider article on notation, time and performance of contemporary music, looking briefly at the *Verdi Transcriptions* and *Gershwin Arrangements* (revisited in Chapter 3 of this book),⁵⁶ and also included a chapter on performance in his monograph on the *History*,⁵⁷ though this was small in comparison to the attention given to the work's composition and meanings.

A series of articles authored or co-authored by Amanda Bayley relating to rehearsals and performances of the Second String Quartet (2006–7) made bold claims for a new methodology. In an article relating to a DVD released relatively soon afterwards (essentially a database of filmed or scanned materials), Bayley and Michael Clarke presented their approach, essentially independently of other Finnissey scholarship, through consideration of successive stages between composition, rehearsal, performance and reflection of the work, with some of these stages feeding back into the others.⁵⁸ They drew upon a series of interviews, recordings of rehearsals, performances, questionnaires and discussion between composer and performers. This approach was said to examine 'all aspects of creativity' compared to 'conventional text-based analysis'. A large part of the article was spent discussing and promoting the methodology and associated software, but some of the actual findings have been covered in more detail elsewhere. For example, Bayley and Clarke noted that the individual parts of the quartet are unsynchronized, with no score, but this is true of many other Finnissey works (see Philip Thomas' extensive treatment of the subject in Chapter 2 of this book), and this compositional strategy has been discussed extensively in earlier literature. Furthermore, a large number of musicians have developed corresponding performance practices, but this was not considered by Bayley and Clarke. A simple block diagram was given of which players are active at various points during the piece, turning into diagrammatic form the type of information collected in early descriptive reviews. However, there was no consideration of the pitch or rhythmic content of the musical material, how the performers might respond to this, or how the work relates to pre-existing materials or styles (other than to mention that Finnissey referenced Haydn's String Quartet op. 64 no. 5 in rehearsal). A further 2011 article by Bayley alone sought to locate this type of approach within the scholarly sub-discipline of 'ethnomusicology at home',⁵⁹ but again spent a good deal of the article extolling the merits of the approach rather than proceeding to investigate in depth the music, rehearsal process, performance or reflection. The method did not involve an analytical approach to score or performance (going little beyond saying, for example, that the use of portamento and vibrato provides a more 'romantic' interpretation), but drew extensively upon rather incidental information picked up through filming, without engaging critically with pronouncements by

Finnissy or the quartet members. Nonetheless, this article did include some interesting figures on percentages of time spent on play, co-ordination, sound quality, and general conversation. Otherwise, much of its content would be unremarkable to those with even a small degree of familiarity with this music and its performance, while it is not clear how much of what is said would not be equally applicable to numerous other composers and performers, so the contribution specifically to understanding Finnissy may be slight. A further article published in French contained some valuable interview material from Finnissy and copies of some sketches,⁶⁰ and used a few musical examples to demonstrate some basic textural similarities between Finnissy's work and some of its sources. The nature of Finnissy's transformations of source into final work was not however explored in the manner of the work of Toop, Pace, Beaudoin and others, nor the implications of this for performance.

A more focused and practical approach towards performance scholarship was taken by Graziela Bortz in her 2003 doctoral thesis, 'Rhythm in the music of Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Finnissy, and Arthur Kampela: a guide for performers'.⁶¹ Bortz proposed four strategies, with a chapter on each, for dealing with complex rhythms in the work of the three named composers: strategy 1: Least Common Denominator; strategy 2: Calculating changes of tempo by finding the new metronome marking of an entire ratio; strategy 3: Finding New Metronome Markings in Irrational Meters; and strategy 4: Calculating the metronome marking of the last sub-ratio in a nested rhythm. In the introduction Bortz stated that 'Finnissy's music does not present nested tuplets, he uses series of different consecutive ratios in independent lines, each line dividing the measure differently'.⁶² This is incorrect. The *Piano Concerto No. 4* (1978, rev. 1996), *English Country-Tunes*, the *History*, *Yvaroperas 1 and 2* (1993–5), and other Finnissy works use this rhythmic construction. However, Bortz's dissertation is the most extensive resource on preparing the sorts of rhythms one might find in Finnissy's scores, focusing on two works, *Banumbirr* (1982–6), for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano, and *...above earth's shadow* (1985), for solo violin and ensemble. On the latter Bortz concluded from Finnissy's performance indications that the vertical coordination of the two violin parts is to be approximate, and the flow of the music matters more.⁶³ This can be understood in the context of Finnissy's other works as a localised point of asynchronicity, rather than the aberration of strict rhythmic writing, which Bortz seems to suggest. Bortz also demonstrated how in her view, the 'least common denominator' approach can be applied to achieve rhythmic fluency, applied the various methods outlined to both the above-mentioned works, and then combined strategies one and two to apply to a section of *Banumbirr* (1982–6).⁶⁴

Michael Hooper, like Bayley and Clarke, also looks at a collaborative process (though in a quite different fashion), in this case between Finnissy and oboist Christopher Redgate in the composition of *Greatest hits of all time* (2003).⁶⁵ Hooper examined Finnissy's treatment of the source material from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (which is employed simultaneously with other material

derived from Beethoven, Mahler and Korean court music), commenting that 'it is as if compressing the Vivaldi into six bars has heightened each of its constituent elements'.⁶⁶ The crux of Hooper's discussion was the collaboration between Finnissy and Redgate, specifically focusing on Redgate's search for a consistent means of producing the extended ranges requested by Finnissy.

There are a number of other articles which warrant consideration here. Larry Goves' article 'Michael Finnissy and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: The Composer as Anthropologist' applies Timothy Ingold's metaphor of the 'wayfarer' to Finnissy's output.⁶⁷ In the article, Goves characterised Ingold's methodology (which could be argued to be equally applicable to almost any composer) by outlining two distinct kinds of travel. One of these is 'wayfaring', which is a transformative approach to travel in which the wayfarer *is* movement, continually travelling, as where 'transport' is a goal-oriented mode of locomotion.⁶⁸ Goves was correct to identify that Finnissy's approach to quotations and allusions is transformative, though this has already been demonstrated through others' detailed technical analyses. However, he did not go beyond an initial summary of how, say, *Cibavit eos* uses verbatim material from Mozart, and inserts 'sections of new decorative linear writing';⁶⁹ this makes it harder to argue a convincing case for Finnissy as a wayfarer. Goves' article is a useful account of Finnissy as an anthropologist, as opposed to an ethnographer, but then the question remains of what subject exactly is he an anthropologist? The wayfarer may transform that which he encounters, but it is not unreasonable to conceive of Finnissy transforming his own mythos, incorporating elements from his real surroundings, something which he alludes to in the preface to the *History*:

'History' in the title conveys 'remembered or invented past and present'; or 'a chronological continuum'; or 'the appearance and stylistic attributes of previous and current eras'.⁷⁰

Georgios Theocharous's 'Not Too Violent: The Fall Of Notation In Michael Finnissy's *Autumnall* For Solo Piano' was considerably more problematic, because of a cursory knowledge demonstrated of Finnissy's work and its musical context.⁷¹ Starting from an antagonistic and rather caricatured view of so-called 'Darmstadt composers' and associated performers who had 'to read the unreadable and render the unrenderable', via a detour, a rather tortured discussion of the spelling of *Autumnall* (1968–71), Theocharous went on to discuss Finnissy's use of measured and unmeasured rests in the piece. He accounted for the shift between both of these in terms of a technical deficiency in Finnissy's writing, without allowing the possibility that distinct notational practices might also be performatively and hermeneutically distinct. This was followed by a 'philosophical reading' of the piece, though this did not engage with any wider philosophical background, such as that on metaphor theory. Nigel McBride develops this critique in his chapter on ontological implications in Finnissy in Chapter 4 of this volume.

The current volume expands considerably upon previous scholarship and seeks in particular to supplement fruitful areas of research which have previously been neglected or only treated in a cursory fashion: aesthetics and relationship to other aesthetic movements; critical engagements with borrowing and orientalism; Finnissy himself as performer and strategies for performing his music; compositional process and relationship to the compositions of others; notations; and the influence of film. Then there are a series of new studies on works or groups of work which have not previously received sustained scholarly attention. The contributors include musicologists (Whittall, Pace, Hawkins, Beirens, Erwin), performer-scholars (Pace, Thomas, Heyde, Weeks), composers (Fox, McBride, Redhead, Barrett) and a poet and scholar of literature and issues of sexuality (Woods).

The first four contributors to this volume all deal with Finnissy's relationship to different modern musical movements, aesthetics and styles. Christopher Fox focuses upon a series of Finnissy works from the 1970s and early 1980s, in particular *Pathways of Sun and Stars* and *English Country-Tunes*, as well as later works such as *Folklore* and *The History of Photography in Sound*, and relates these to the work and aesthetics of then-contemporary movements in European modernism, especially the new generation of Gérard Grisey, Helmut Lachenmann and Salvatore Sciarrino. He concludes that narrow views of Finnissy as either 'continental' or 'British' are simplistic, and that his work needs to be viewed in terms of an interaction between these traditions. Philip Thomas looks westwards, in order to consider Finnissy's relationship to a so-called 'experimental' tradition from Charles Ives through John Cage. He considers the relationship of some of Finnissy's notational strategies, including unsynchronised parts and pure textual instructions, to the work of figures in this tradition, focusing especially upon 'kit' pieces such as *Post-Christian Survival Kit* (2003–5). But Thomas is one of several writers also to filter in Finnissy's work as a pianist, and considers briefly the composer's championing of the music of British 'experimentalists' such as Howard Skempton, John White, and Laurence Crane in terms of his own music.

Much of Finnissy's work draws upon a range of existing sources, which are invariably transformed in many ways, often quite radically. In Ian Pace's first chapter, the most extended contribution to the volume, he develops models from the work of J. Peter Burkholder and others on musical borrowing, placing these in the context of a short history of scholarly work on the subject and the work of Gérard Genette on intertextuality, and considers the implications of the resulting models for performance. Furthermore, he considers at length the issue of musical *genre* and its refractions via Finnissy's borrowing, in a dialectical relationship with the factor of compositional *mediation* between borrowed sources and the final work, not least to demonstrate again some of the possible implications for performance. Pace uses a series of examples from Finnissy's works based on Gershwin, Verdi, Johann Strauss II and Skryabin, to demonstrate how different approaches to performance can be conceived in terms of differing degrees of emphasis of either genre or

mediation, as well as considering briefly how these relate to earlier genres of ‘transcription’ literature.

In the first of two chapters, Nigel McBride also considers questions of performance, in relation to fundamental ontological questions appertaining to Finnissy’s work. Taking as a starting point the arguments presented in Theocharous’ article mentioned above, McBride notes the ontological assumptions in this essay, especially the application of a model of the ‘work’ as a type of Platonic ideal over and above particular realisations. He offers an alternative ontological model, drawing on the thought of Jerrold Levinson and Nelson Goodman, whereby Finnissy’s compositions can be fruitfully modelled as a ‘composite of performing-means and their notational realities’.

The next four chapters consider multiple identities or personae associated with Finnissy. Roddy Hawkins considers Finnissy’s work as a pianist from when he began to give public concerts in 1977, and how his work in this respect, often playing at ‘fringe’ venues such as the British Music Information Centre in Central London, has informed wider discourses of marginality and ‘outsider’ status. Drawing upon a wide range of archival information, Hawkins surveys the important work Finnissy undertook with ensembles *Suoraan*, *Exposé*, and *Ixion*, and their role in developing the reputations of a range of other composers who have come to be categorised as ‘complex’.

The poet and writer Gregory Woods, himself the first of Finnissy’s *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*, delves into the disparate range of poets celebrated by Finnissy in this work, considering their work and poetic tone, politics, relationship to popular culture, development of theories of sexuality, and self-positioning relative to homosexual and other subcultures. This is framed as part of Finnissy’s supposedly ‘personal themes’, alongside other works with explicit references to gay culture, or events involving gay men. Woods argues, however, that to view all such things simply as ‘personal’ reflects unequal sexual hierarchies, even since the end of decriminalisation.

James Weeks considers the central role of the human voice and its relationship to line in Finnissy’s work, and goes on to consider two important works for multiple voices (all of which he has directed with the group EXAUDI): *Tom Fool’s Wooing* (1975–8, rev. 2016), and *Gesualdo: Libro Setso* (2012–13), and their specific qualities of ‘vocality’ and its relationship to the dramatic aspects of the pieces. Neil Heyde explores the identity of the performer of Finnissy’s compositions, via a detailed consideration of his own collaborations with the composer on a range of pieces for string quartet which he has performed and recorded as cellist of the Kreutzer Quartet, and also *Chi Mei Ricercari* (2013) for multiple cellos, and its relationship to specific instruments. As well as dwelling upon the function of Finnissy’s notation, like several other contributors to this volume, Heyde also focuses upon Finnissy’s gentle rejection of a ‘projected’ approach to certain strands of musical material in the work, but also the meaning of his quartet’s interactions with recorded bird song in the Third String Quartet (2007–9).

The third group of chapters deals more intensely with composition and the compositional process. Nigel McBride's second chapter expands on an aspect of his first, in order to give a detailed account of Finnissy's notational practice, an area often casually remarked upon, but never investigated in detail. He identifies a range of key tendencies across Finnissy's output, focusing in particular on those types of notation which entail a high degree of indeterminacy of output, not least in some of the 'kit' works also discussed by Thomas.

Arnold Whittall dwells upon Schoenberg's favoured term 'pantonality' (as opposed to 'atonality') as a useful paradigm from which to survey Finnissy's compositions. He considers how various tonal elements remain intact in several works of Finnissy, not least those which rework older tonal music, and compares this to the work of very different figures who Finnissy nonetheless greatly admires, Howard Skempton and Chris Newman.

Lauren Redhead also considers the commonality between Finnissy and Newman, through both composers' distinct but related strategies for employing borrowed material, and the political connotations of so doing. Redhead applies Newman's subject-object distinction, alongside Nicholas Bourriaud's concept of the *exform*. James Weeks considers quite simply Finnissy's 'hand': the hand that writes, the hand that plays, as extension of the body in motion and by implication the relationship of some of Finnissy's work to contemporary dance. Presenting Finnissy's notation as 'the hand moving across the page', Weeks also examines the composer's early training in draughtsmanship, and the relationship between writing and transcription.

The last set of chapters is a diverse collection of contextual analysis and specific case studies of Finnissy's work. Maarten Beirens situates Finnissy's folk music-based works, in particular *Folklore* and *Unsere Afrikareise*, in the context of a wider tradition of compositional folklorism from the twentieth century, including the African influences upon Steve Reich and the work of György Ligeti. Beirens draws Finnissy's work into the context of debates on 'orientalism', as theorised in particular by Edward Said. He reads these works relative to common critical themes relating to exoticism while noting the particularity of Finnissy's approach.

Max Erwin considers Finnissy's three tripartite *Political Agendas*, which make reference both to specific political events and also (in the *Second Political Agenda*, much longer than the other two) to three composers: Satie, Schoenberg and Skryabin. Erwin considers points of contact between the three very different cycles, but also examines the precise concept of the 'political' in Finnissy's music, relating this to other models from John Cage (especially in light of recent scholarship reconsidering the role of Cage's sexuality) and Cornelius Cardew.

Richard Barrett centres his essay on a pivotal work of Finnissy, the ensemble piece *alongside*, written in 1979 for the London Sinfonietta. Like Fox, Barrett considers in this context Finnissy's relationship to the post-1945 European avant-garde (though also in this work to Japanese influences from *gagaku* music), but presents this work as the culmination of such a tendency,

after which Finnissy moved in different directions, away from this degree of abstraction and complexity. Present at the first performance, Barrett also explores this work as a catalyst for a range of younger composers, including James Dillon, Richard Emsley, Chris Dench, James Clarke and himself. In this way it stimulated a further range of composition drawing upon its achievements, at the very same time as Finnissy himself was turning towards a more eclectic music drawing upon found materials.

In the final chapter, Ian Pace presents the most in-depth treatment to date of Finnissy's relationship to film and moving images, considering the subject from multiple perspectives. He surveys models available within the uneven existing body of work on cinematic influences upon music, and also looks to 'neo-formalist' film theory for some concepts but also anti-methodological approaches and attitudes to analysis, which can be fruitful for music in general and Finnissy's heterogeneous body of work in particular. He considers some of the most important film-makers from whom Finnissy drew ideas and inspiration, not least Stan Brakhage, Gregory Markopoulos, Jean-Luc Godard and Pier Paolo Pasolini, and details how in various works Finnissy employs different types of musical 'montage' akin to the categories delineated by Sergei Eisenstein. Then he considers the relationship of the work of radical television screenwriter Dennis Potter to Finnissy, especially in parts of the *History*, and also a little-remarked-upon central influence on this cycle, that of Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinéma*.

This volume does not pretend to be comprehensive, nor exhaustive, in terms of potential areas for investigation. For example, there is more to be written about Finnissy's penchant for revising his works, often in a most extensive fashion (as for example with the stage works *The Undivine Comedy* or *Therese Raquin* (1992–3, rev. 1997, 2005)). Also, while various contributors to *Uncommon Ground*, and also Richard Barrett in his earlier overview, tended to conceptualise Finnissy's output in terms of two fundamental 'periods', the first of which culminated in *alongside*, the huge growth in Finnissy's output in the two decades since then, not to mention rediscoveries and revisions of earlier works, suggests a more complex picture, in which several strands of composition which had previously seemed exceptional and uncharacteristic now can be seen as the beginnings of more sustained tendencies. For example, Finnissy's relatively intense period of sacred composition in the early 1990s (including *The Cambridge Codex* (1991), *Seven Sacred Motets* (1991), *Anima Christi* (1991), *Two Motets* (1991) and *The Cry of the Prophet Zephaniah* (1992)), which once seemed a short-lived change of aesthetic direction, could be related back to earlier works such as *From the Revelations of St. John the Divine* (1965–70) and the *Mysteries* (1972–9), but also forward to such works as *This Church* (2001), *Post-Christian Survival Kit* (2003–5), the first and second *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis* (2006–7) and various subsequent works, simply in terms of sacred themes, while the particular uses of modal material and elaborate counterpoint thereof in several of these works have clear parallels in many of Finnissy's secular compositions. The

History might also be viewed as a turning point, even ushering in a ‘third period’, but various contributors here eschew such a monolithic view. Philip Thomas considers a long-term strand of indeterminacy over the breadth of Finnissy’s output, Max Erwin deals a little with the issue of different periods, and Richard Barrett returns to the role of *alongside*, but periodisation is not a central theme of the present volume (and would perhaps be best dealt with in a single-authored monograph). Nonetheless, this volume provides a series of rigorous, detailed and critical examinations of Finnissy’s music by a distinguished range of expert commentators who variously situate the music in wider musical, theoretical, political and other contexts, and also provide elucidation of processes at play in the music which lie beneath its obvious surface features. Furthermore, many of the approaches and findings have potential implications and applications not only to Finnissy’s music, but for wider scholarship on aesthetics, borrowing, historiography, notation and performance.

Notes

- 1 This took place on 19 November 1965 at the Arts Council, St James’ Square, featuring the Arrigia String Quartet, Josephine Nendick, mezzo, Suzanne Rozsa, violin, Neil Black, oboe, Susan Bradshaw, piano and celeste, Colin Tilney, piano and harpsichord, and Eric Allen, vibraphone. The rest of the concert featured works of Hans Werner Henze, David Barlow, Alfred Nieman, Karlheinz Stockhausen (his *Refrain*) and William Walton. See ‘London Diary for November’, *The Musical Times*, vol. 106, no. 1472 (October 1965), p. 821.
- 2 Oliver Knussen, ‘Finnissy’s *Pathways of Sun & Stars*’, *Tempo*, New Series, no. 120 (March 1977), pp. 48–50.
- 3 Henrietta Brougham, Christopher Fox and Ian Pace (eds.), *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).
- 4 Ian Pace, *Michael Finnissy’s The History of Photography in Sound: A Study of Sources, Techniques and Interpretation* (Swarland: Divine Art, 2013), available for download at www.divine-art.co.uk/CD/77501info.htm (accessed 5 April 2017).
- 5 For example Oliver Knussen, ‘Finnissy’s ‘Pathways of Sun & Stars’; Keith Potter, ‘Michael Finnissy’, *Classical Music*, 1 December 1979; Paul Driver, ‘Michael Finnissy’s ‘alongside’’, *Tempo*, New Series 132 (March 1980), pp. 42–5; and ‘Michael Finnissy’s ‘Sea and Sky’’, *Tempo*, New Series, nos. 133/134 (September 1980), pp. 82–3. Andrew Clements, ‘Finnissy’s *Undivine Comedy*’, *The Musical Times*, vol. 129, no. 1745 (July 1988), pp. 330–2; John Warnaby, ‘Michael Finnissy’, *Music and Musicians* (February 1988).
- 6 Brian Ferneyhough, ‘Michael Finnissy: The Piano Music’ (1978), in *Collected Writings*, edited James Boros and Richard Toop (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers), pp. 183–96.
- 7 Richard Toop, ‘Four Facets of the “New Complexity”’, *Contact* 32 (Spring 1988), pp. 4–50.
- 8 *Ibid.* p. 5.
- 9 Richard Barrett, ‘Michael Finnissy – an overview’, *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 13, no. 1 (1995), pp. 23–43.
- 10 *Ibid.* pp. 26–7.
- 11 Lynn Williams, ‘Reinstating “The Spiritual Quest”’, *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 13, no. 1 (1995), pp. 45–63.

- 12 Ian Pace, 'The Panorama of Michael Finnissy (I)', *Tempo*, New Series 196 (April 1996), pp. 25–35; 'The Panorama of Michael Finnissy (II)', *Tempo*, New Series 201 (July 1997), pp. 7–16.
- 13 Jonathan Cross, 'Vive la différence', *The Musical Times*, vol. 137, no. 1837 (March 1996), pp. 7–13.
- 14 Ian Pace, 'The Piano Music', in *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 78–81.
- 15 *Ibid.* p. 84.
- 16 *Ibid.* pp. 113–14.
- 17 *Ibid.* pp. 120–2.
- 18 Roger Redgate, 'The Chamber Music', in *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 135–68.
- 19 Julian Anderson, 'The Orchestral Music', in *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 169–210.
- 20 *Ibid.* pp. 181–3.
- 21 Christopher Fox, 'The Vocal Music', in *Uncommon Ground*, p. 211.
- 22 *Ibid.* pp. 211–12.
- 23 *Ibid.* p. 216.
- 24 *Ibid.* pp. 236–7.
- 25 Ian Pace, 'The Theatrical Works', in *Uncommon Ground*, p. 260.
- 26 *Ibid.* p. 262.
- 27 *Ibid.* pp. 303–16.
- 28 'Conversations with Michael Finnissy', in *Uncommon Ground*, p. 4.
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 Specifically a preview by Potter of the London premiere of Oliver Knussen's opera *Where the Wild Things Are* (1982), in which he says that in some respects 'Knussen has things in common with a very different group of English composers, who represent what might crudely be called the New Complexity: Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Finnissy, James Dillon and Chris Dench' (Keith Potter, 'Wild Romantic Things', *Classical Music*, 13 March 1982, p. 17, cited in Roderick Hawkins, '(Mis) understanding complexity from *Transit* to Toop: "New Complexity" in the British Context', (PhD thesis: University of Leeds, 2010), pp. 8–9).
- 31 When introducing a concert of works of Dillon and Dench. See Richard Toop, 'Against a Theory of Musical (New) Complexity', in Max Paddison and Irène Deliège, eds., *Contemporary Music: Theoretical and Philosophical Perspective* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 89.
- 32 Michael Finnissy and Marilyn Nonken, 'Biting the Hand that Feeds You', *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 21, no. 1 (2002), p. 75.
- 33 Roddy Hawkins presents a sophisticated argument by which various composers have tended to evoke the term but simultaneously disown it, thus foregrounding their membership of something bigger but also stressing their individuality at the same time (or, some might say, having their cake and eating it). See Hawkins, '(Mis) understanding Complexity', pp. 89–133.
- 34 François Nicolas's article 'Éloge de la complexité', *Entretemps* 3 (1987), pp. 55–68.
- 35 Richard Toop, 'Four Facets of the "New Complexity"', *Contact* 32 (1988), pp. 4–50.
- 36 See Jöel Bons (ed.), *Complexity in Music? An Inquiry of its Nature, Motivation and Performability* (Amsterdam: Job, 1990), based on the eponymous symposium; the two issues of *Perspectives of New Music* centering upon 'complexity', guest-edited by James Boros (vol. 31, no. 1 (1993) and vol. 32, no. 11 (1994)); and the issue of *Contemporary Music Review* edited by Tom Morgan, entitled *Aspects of Complexity in Recent British Music* (vol. 13, no. 1 (1995)). Erik Ulman, writing in the second *Perspectives* issue, listed Ferneyhough, Finnissy, Dench, and Barrett as representatives of the school (Ulman, 'Some Thoughts on the New Complexity', *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 32, no. 1 (1994), pp. 202–6).
- 37 Keith Potter, 'Darmstadt 1988', *Contact* 34 (1990), p. 28.
- 38 Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, 'Kundgabe. Komplexismus und der Paradigmenwechsel

- in der Musik', *MusikTexte* 35 (1990), pp. 20–32. For the wider symposium, see *ibid.*, pp. 3–40. A good deal of this issue consisted of re-prints in German of material in the Bons volume; Mahnkopf's own contribution was a significantly expanded version of his own 'Complexism as a New Step in Musical Evolution', in Bons, *Complexity in Music?*, pp. 28–9.
- 39 Ulrich Mosch. 'Musikalische Komplexität', *Darmstädter Beiträge zur Neuen Musik* 20 (Mainz: Schott, 1994), pp. 120–9. As Mosch points out, the differing meanings of the terms 'complex' (*complexe*) and 'complicated' (*compliqué*) had already been explored in the 1950s by Boris de Schloezer and Marina Scriabine (in their book *Problèmes de la musique moderne* (Paris: Minuit, 1959)), but this should be considered a distinct if not unrelated debate to that around 'new complexity.'
- 40 See in particular Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, *Kritik der neuen Musik. Entwurf einer Musik des 21. Jahrhunderts. Eine Streitschrift* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1998); 'Adornos Kritik der Neuern Musik,' in Richard Klein and Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf (eds.), *Mit den Ohren denken. Adornos Philosophie der Musik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1998), pp. 251–80; 'Neue Musik am Beginn der Zweiten Moderne', *Merkur* 594/595 (1998), pp. 864–75; and 'Complex Music: An Attempt at a Definition,' trans. Frank Cox, in Mahnkopf, Frank Cox, and Wolfram Schurig (eds.), *Polyphony & Complexity* (Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 2002), pp. 54–64. In the latter, Mahnkopf lists the 1980s complex composers as Dench, Finnissy, Barrett, Redgate, Erber, Dillon, the earlier Ole Lützlöw-Holm, René Wohlhauser, Hübler, Frank Cox, and Mahnkopf himself, followed in the 1990s by Wolfram Schurig, Brice Pauset, Aaron Cassidy, Wieland Hoban, Simieon Pironkoff, Claude Lenners, Franck Christoph Yeznikian, Ian Willcock, and Mark André, whilst identifying as engaged with similar issues the following composers: Steven Kazuo Takasugi, Chaya Czernowin, Amrto Garuti, Gerald Eckert, Liza Lim, Walter Feldmann, Klaus Ospald, James Clarke, and Erik Ulman. Lützlöw-Holm and Dillon are seen as having distanced themselves from complexism, though oddly Finnissy is not mentioned in this context.
- 41 Richard Toop, "'New Complexity'" and After: a Personal Note', in Mahnkopf et al, *Polyphony and Complexity*, pp. 133–5; also Toop, 'Against a Theory of Musical (New) Complexity,' pp. 89–97 (this article was originally published in French in 2001). Chris Dench takes a similar line in his essay 'Complexity and Polyphony', *ibid.*, pp. 180–7.
- 42 Nicolas Darbon, *Brian Ferneyhough et la Nouvelle Complexité* (Notre-Dame de Bliquetuit: Millenaire III Editions, 2008). Darbon's book is one of two which he collectively entitles *La capture des forces*; the other being *Wolfgang Rihm et la nouvelle simplicité* (Notre-Dame de Bliquetuit: Millenaire III Editions, 2008).
- 43 Hawkins, '(Mis)understanding complexity', p. 2.
- 44 From the late 1980s onwards there were new waves of Finnissy students, including Andrew Toovey, Morgan Hayes, Luke Stoneham, Alwynne Pritchard, Paul Steenhuisen, Thomas Désy, Matthew Shlomowitz, and later many others (particularly following Finnissy's appointment as Chair of Composition at the University of Southampton in 1998) who started to gain some prominence. It should also be noted that none of the older figures – Dillon, Dench, Barrett, or James Clarke and Richard Emsley – had actually studied with Finnissy, though some of them had had an involvement with his playing and music, not least through the work of the ensembles Suoraan and Exposé. See Hawkins, '(Mis)understanding complexity', pp. 116–23, 178–90, for more on this.
- 45 *Ibid.* pp. 30–1.
- 46 Maarten Beirens, 'Archaeology of the Self: Michael Finnissy's *Folklore*', *Tempo*, vol. 57, no. 223 (January 2003), pp. 46–56.
- 47 Richard Beaudoin, 'Anonymous Sources: Finnissy Analysis and the Opening