

intangible classics

 **métier**  
**msv 28540**  
0809730854026

**Vale**  
Richard Craig



## Becoming-breath, becoming-death

The flute is one of the instruments closest to the audible human breath and is caught in the process of continually becoming something other than a metal cylinder. The sound of the flute can tend towards the becoming-song of the singing voice, or towards the amplification of the breath as it leaves the body. The sound of the flute is physical and somatic, while also tending towards abstraction and purity. As the sound decays in the air, it becomes a reminder of what it was, a memorial for the instant that has passed.

Listening to Richard Craig's playing, one becomes aware not of the limitations of the flute but of its expansion into a vibrant sonic biosphere. We listen, not just to the flute, but to the flautist; singing, whistling, humming are added to his palette and become integrated with the sound of the instrument. Listening to a recording, the experience becomes even more intense as we lose the physical analogue to the sound.

In Evan Johnson's *émoi* the fragile breathy sounds of the bass flute are supplemented by whistles and singing that function not as a dialogue with the instrumental part, but an extension of it. The whistles become blurred with the fractured sounds of cracked transitory pitches falling apart as they leave the instrument. The sound of the instrument – the mechanism of the keys as they meet the fingers and as they meet the body of the instrument, the breath of the flautist as it makes contact with the mouthpiece and is scattered through the body of the instrument – become one with the flautist's vocal sounds which mimic and extend its instrumental gestures.

Followed by Esaias Järnegard's *PSALM*, one is momentarily wrong-footed as the breath of the flautist is soon supplemented by a soprano voice. For a minute we are left wondering if this is the flautist's voice until the characteristic timbre of a trained voice shatters this ambiguity. For the most part, this too is not a duet: the soprano voice extends the contrabass flute rather than supplements it. Even as they draw apart and the simultaneity of the two strands is asserted, the characteristics of the two instruments are blurred by the fragility of both parts. As the experience of listening to instruments and performers collapses through disembodied listening into sound without physical context, we are left with the paradoxical experience of being confronted by the inescapable physicality of the instruments involved without the ability to resolve them easily into their component parts.

A different kind of blurring occurs in Fabrice Fitch's *Agricola IX*, in which the playing of the solo flute is shadowed by the string trio in a way that resembles some forms of live signal processing creating resonance. As the strings express more of their inherent timbral nature at around 5' in, the texture blossoms into more of an ensemble, albeit one dominated by drones. The slowed-down nature of the flute melody and the subtlety of the microtonal and timbral articulation employed is reminiscent of classical gagaku ensemble writing, with the flute taking the role of the ryūteki (the Japanese transverse flute) and the strings the role of the shō (the mouth organ). As the unanimity of the ensemble collapses and resonance becomes distorted, all we are left with are memories.

The ferocity with which Richard Barrett's *VALE* begins seems a long way away from this soundworld, although the overblown fanfares of the opening which are soon overtaken by more traditionally articulated lines are similarly reminiscent of other flutes from other cultures. One texture grows out of another throughout this work, with unstable sounds and timbres alternating with the conventional sound of the instrument. While depending primarily on the sounds of the instrument rather than extending it through the performer's voice, Barrett's writing shifts through so many variations of colour and technique that the instrument itself seems to undergo a metamorphosis into something more organic than mineral. If this piece is a leave taking ('vale' translates as farewell from Latin), it is as if the flute is answered by a 'shadow flute', distorted and melted by the decay of time and sound, as if viewed through the mercury mirrors of Jean Cocteau's *Orphée*; the resonance here is not simultaneous but in dialogue.

John Croft's *Deux méditations d'une furie* are seemingly also a decayed memory of another work, his 2012 opera *Malédiction d'une furie*. This Fury is an echo of Aeschylus' Erinyes, the rage of her curse against Time (in Hesiod's account, the cause of their existence) has melted into a fluid disquieting texture that opens up windows into beautiful memories of sound. The two instruments are equally balanced in this work, sometimes blending together, sometimes describing parallel paths but always coming back together as their gestures, which bloom out of and merge into each other, decay together repeatedly. The gestures decay into silence, not the silence of resonance, but the silence of death. There is no reply from the other side of the mirror, or perhaps there is no question from the side of the living for this echo to respond to.

Brice Pauset's *Eurydice* is perhaps set in the Underworld – art having died. Although the work opens with what is possibly the most conventionally flute-like gesture, this coherence and familiarity dissolves into a series of obsessive interjections which appear to dissect and reassemble elements of language from the ground up. Without using many extended techniques, beyond the disorientating microtones which blur the precision of the equal tempered pitches of the instrument, the player negotiates a linguistic obstacle course; occasionally a gestural archetype that sounds familiar will surface and the music works at it until it falls away. Doomed to forever look back by the looking back of Orpheus, this Eurydice sings of the landscape of the underground world, a landscape that is made up of things past. The speaker in the mirror realises that they are, in fact, on the other side; they have moved beyond.

*Notes © 2017 John Hails*

# The music: notes by the composers

Evan Johnson

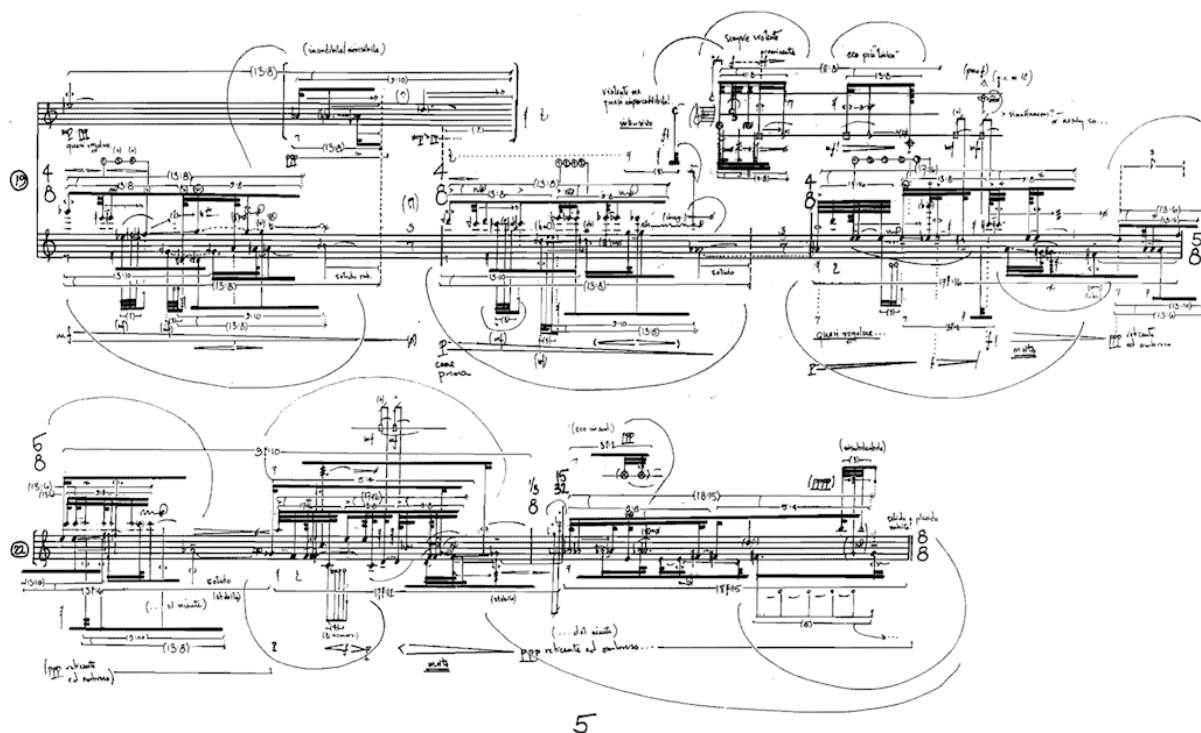
*émoi* (2010) for solo bass flute

Commissioned by BMI and Concert Artists Guild, and written for Claire Chase.

*émoi* (esmai, confusion, agitation...) – dismay, “the most profound form of being disturbed in the dimension of movement” (Lacan); *ex-magere*, to deprive of powers, of strength, of energy; to make so it cannot be done. *Et moi*.

All of this is a way of approaching the two main concerns of this work, as of my work in general: the relationship of local musical material to unsuitable durational contexts, the inhibition, dismay, the deprivation of forced repetition, restatement, being bled into silence by durational pressure; and the instability of the exuberantly excessive notation’s relationship to instrument and to instrumentalist, the removal of mastery, a profound form of being disturbed. And moi: the performer and her instrument, the breath and throat that articulate everything.

Evan Johnson



## Esaias Järnegard

### PSALM (2011) for voice and contrabass flute

Commissioned by Richard Craig and Creative Scotland with support of the Katz Jewish Cultural Fund

PSALM, the second part of my Order-cycle, is my first attempt of interpreting the poetry of Paul Celan. I do it through merging the words of Celan with the words of the Swedish poet, Lars Norén. Through a strategy of slow erosion of the rhythmic and timbral content of repeatedly reciting (or rather, singing) the two poets I gradually unfold a suppressed, austere, but still expressive, sound-world, where each phrase – at least on a rudimentary level – emancipates itself further and further from the source (the text) toward my growing sounding sensation of reading, of singing, of imagining their art.

*Esaias Järnegard*

The musical score is written for four parts: Cora-air, Cora-p, AIR-fl, and Key-s. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of 8 measures. The Cora-air part is marked with a triangle and the number 8. The Cora-p part is marked with a triangle and the number 8. The AIR-fl part is marked with a triangle and the number 8. The Key-s part is marked with a triangle and the number 8. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Annotations include: "(the key-sounds should affect the upper staffs colour and rhythm.) sim etc.", "(gradual transition)", "keep the mouth shut and make a cracking distorted sound", "a (m) (m)", "tongue pizz. (with a lot of air, not to distinct)", "B.C.", "O.C.", "pp", "poco", "mf", "f", "ppp", "mp", "pp", "ppp", "poco", "mf".

© Esaias Järnegard (2011)

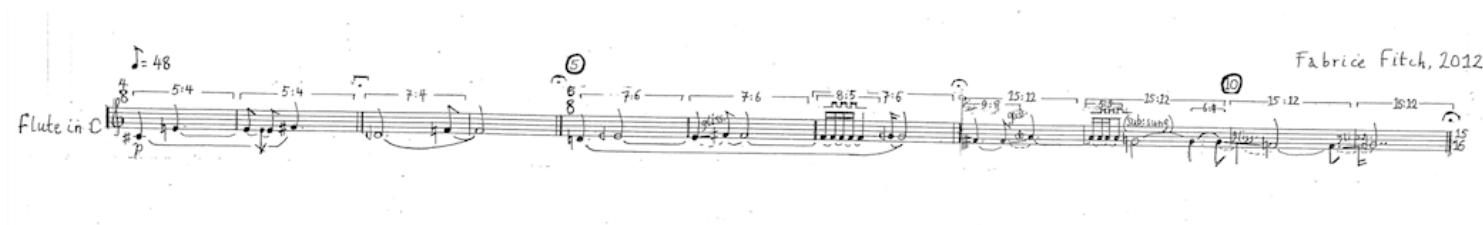
**Fabrice Fitch**  
**Agricola IX (2013) for solo flute and string trio**

My *agricologies* draws both its inspiration and its materials from the music of Alexander Agricola (c.1456–1506). The title 'Agricola' also refers to an eponymous cycle of sculptures by David Smith (1906—1965).

*Agricola IX* is a series of settings for solo wind instruments (cornetto muto, tenor sackbut, oboe, flute, and bass clarinet), with or without ensemble. Their materials are taken from the opening phrases of the rondeau by Johannes Ockeghem, *Je n'ay dueil que je ne suis morte*, to which Agricola also composed a response. In this setting, these phrases are segmented, transposed, and some compressed into quartertones. As with the other ensemble versions, the strings' material is neither development nor commentary on the flute material, but acts rather as a ground or a resonator.

This version of *Agricola IX* is dedicated to my brother Sébastien Fitch on his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.

*Fabrice Fitch*



**Richard Barrett**

**vale (2006-12) for solo flute**

Commissioned by Richard Craig, the Hope Scott Trust and Kathleen Gallagher.

**vale** for solo flute was begun in 2006 and completed in 2012.

The music has its origins in the image of a leaf (or, as in Andy Goldsworthy's film *Rivers and Tides*, a string of leaves connected together by thorns) floating down a stream, sometimes moving rapidly, sometimes held up for a while behind an obstruction in the water, sometimes becoming caught up in circular or seemingly random turbulences, and so on. The unfolding line of the flute embodies many different kinds of motion, often dissolving individual sounds into a continuous flow uncharacteristic for a Western woodwind instrument, and could be said to consist of a sequence of 59 "movements", some so brief as to be barely noticeable while on the other hand the opening one occupies the first sixth of the overall duration.

*Richard Barrett*

The image displays two staves of musical notation for the piece 'vale' for solo flute. The top staff, labeled '41', shows measures 41 through 46. It includes a piano part with LH and RH staves and a flute part. The flute part features a series of notes with various dynamics: mp, ppp, mp, pp, mp, p, mp, pp, ppp, pp, ppp, ppp. The bottom staff, labeled '42', shows measures 47 through 52. It also includes a piano part with LH and RH staves and a flute part. The flute part features a series of notes with various dynamics: ppp, p, mp, f, ppf, p, mp, f, mp, pp, mf. Both staves include a series of notes with various dynamics and a series of notes with various dynamics.

**John Croft**

**Deux Méditations d'une furie (2011-13) for soprano and bass flute**

I. par cette vie infirme et vacillante

II. ô phosphorescence

These two pieces set fragments from Jean Tardieu's theatre piece *Malédiction d'une furie* (*A Fury's Curses*). The first, 'par cette vie infirme et vacillante', is taken directly from my monodrama, also entitled *Malédiction d'une furie*, which sets Tardieu's complete text. It is a moment of contemplation and reflection on impermanence, on the fleetingness of life. Each phrase is a brief intertwining of flute and voice, sometimes dying too soon, sometimes offering a forlorn gesture towards continuation: the text conveys the sense – difficult to render in English – of both 'dying at any moment' and 'dying at all moments' – suddenly dying and ever-dying. The second piece, 'ô phosphorescence', is set in the monodrama for voice and electronics, and is here re-composed for voice and bass flute. In the original text this comes before 'par cette vie...', but here, coming second, it has a redemptive aspect, albeit a cold and distant one, to be found in the depth of the night sky.

*John Croft*

I.

par cette vie infirme et vacillante

ô lampe creuse, ô flamme qui se meurt à tout  
moment!

by this ailing and vacillating life,

O empty lamp, O suddenly extinguished flame!

II.

ô phosphorescence couleur de la nuit sidérale

O phosphorescence colour of sidereal night

Original texts by Jean Tardieu: *Malédiction d'une furie* (Poèmes à jouer / Théâtre II) printed by permission of Editions Gallimard

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à tout mo- ment!

2 4 aol. 6 6 7 3 4

poco aol. → aol. molto aol. → poco aol.

f 6 mp p < mf > p mf n mp n pp p



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**Brice Pauset**  
**Eurydice (1998) for solo flute**

Pauset's *Eurydice* alludes to the heroine of the legend of Orpheus. She is trapped in the underworld, a place that is without colour or dimension, existing as a shadow of her former-self. Despite this pale existence, I find a certain radiance in Pauset's work, as well as a veiled disquiet. The faint warmth of the musician's breath momentarily restoring her presence in the material world.

*Richard Craig*

## **The composers**

**Evan Johnson** (b.1980) is an American composer whose music focuses on extremes of density and of reticence, of difficulty and of sparsity, and on hiding itself. Described as "conjuring a Beckett-like eloquence from stammers and silences" (Ivan Hewitt, *The Telegraph*), and as "creating genuine magic ... music [which] will be with us for a very long time" (Tim Rutherford-Johnson, *The Rambler*), his work has been performed by leading ensembles and soloists throughout North America, Europe and beyond, at American and international festivals of contemporary music and at venues such as Miller Theatre and Wigmore Hall.

The recipient of numerous prizes and fellowships in composition, he is also active as a writer on music for both specialist and general audiences. More information is available at <http://www.evanjohnson.info>

**Esaias Järnegard** (b.1983, Stockholm). After various studies, mainly in Sweden, but also through projects, courses and master classes abroad graduated with a m.mus in 2013. Most defining artistically has been the possibility during recent years to work closely with musicians throughout the composing process. As a result, his work is mainly focussed on chamber music, with an increasingly phenomenological approach: to try to emphasise the relation between body and instrument, not just the physicality of sound, but also the magic of it: to be in touch with sound.

[www.esaiasjarnegard.se](http://www.esaiasjarnegard.se)

**Fabrice Fitch** was born in France in 1967 and has a dual career as a composer and as a musicologist researching Renaissance polyphony. He has written for and been performed by ensembles such as Distractfold, Exaudi, Exposé, Fretwork, the Orlando Consort, the Kreutzer Quartet, Leones, and Trio Atem, and continues to work closely with Richard Craig on different projects. His work has been performed and broadcast in Canada and throughout Europe. He is currently Head of Graduate School at the Royal Northern College of Music (Manchester).

[www.fabricefitch.com](http://www.fabricefitch.com)

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**Richard Barrett** (b.1959, Swansea) is internationally active as composer and performer, and also teaches at the Institute of Sonology in Den Haag and at the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts at Leiden University. His work encompasses a range from free improvisation to intricately-notated scores, and from acoustic chamber music to innovative uses of digital technology. Recent large-scale works include *life-form* for cello and electronics and *close-up* for electroacoustic sextet, both of which continue long-term collaborations, with Arne Deforce and Ensemble Studio6 respectively; other ongoing collaborations include with Elision, Paul Obermayer (in FURT) and Evan Parker. Richard Barrett's principal composition teacher was Peter Wiegold, and he currently resides in Belgrade.

[www.richardbarrettmusic.com](http://www.richardbarrettmusic.com)

**John Croft** (b. 1971) studied philosophy and music at the Victoria University of Wellington, and composition and music cognition at the University of Sheffield. He also studied with John Casken at the University of Manchester, where he completed his doctorate. He is currently Reader in Music at Brunel University London.

[www.johncroft.eu](http://www.johncroft.eu)

**Brice Pauset** (b.1965, Besançon) started his musical education by learning the piano, violin and harpsichord before turning to composition. In 1994 he was awarded a grant by the Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet Foundation and became a student at Ircam from 1994 to 1996. He studied with Michel Philippot, Gérard Grisey and Alain Bancquart in Paris, and since then has pursued a dual career as a composer and performer of his own works as well as playing the early repertoire on the harpsichord and pianoforte and, occasionally, the modern piano.

In France, Brice Pauset regularly works with Ircam, the Festival d'Automne in Paris and the Accroche-Note ensemble, the Ars Musica festival in Belgium, Klangforum-Wien in Austria, and, in Germany, the SWR (Baden-Baden) and WDR (Köln) radios, the Musik-Biennale Berlin and the Recherche ensemble in Freiburg im Breisgau. On occasion his works call for musicians unexpected in the realm of contemporary music, such as his *Vanités* which was first sung by countertenor Gérard Lesne with Il Seminario Musicale at Royaumont, *Kontra-Sonate* based on Schubert's *Sonata op. 42 (D 845)*, which Andreas Staier performed in June 2001 in Hagen and Paris, and *Schlag-Kantilene* based on Beethoven's *violin concerto*, with David Grimal and the Philharmonic Orchestra of Radio-France, conducted by Peter Eötvös (2010). He also, among many other ensemble or chamber works, completed a six-symphonies cycle (2001 to 2009). Arditti String Quartet, together with WDR Choir and Orchestra, under Matthias Pintscher's baton, premiered *Das Dornröschen* (2012) in Köln Philharmony (Germany).

Since 2010, he has taught composition at Musikhochschule Freiburg-im-Breisgau and heads its New Music Department. In 2012, he was appointed as Chief Executive of the Ensemble Contrechamps in Geneva.

## The performers

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**Richard Craig** studied flute at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with Sheena Gordon and later with Richard Blake. After graduating with honours, he continued his studies at the Conservatoire de Strasbourg, France, with Mario Caroli.

Richard has performed with groups such as ELISION, Musikfabrik, Klangforum Wien, The Estonian Radio Choir, the RTÉ Orchestra and Das Experimentalstudio Ensemble, which has taken him to international festivals such as Maerzmusik Berlin, Wittener Tage für Neue Musik, the Venice Biennale, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, the Festival D'Automne in Paris and the Lincoln Center Festival New York. Equally active as a soloist, Richard has given recitals throughout the world, performing new work and presenting his collaborations. As a chamber musician, Richard has performed alongside Rohan de Saram, Roberto Fabbriciani and has worked with the SMASH ensemble, and Distractfold Ensemble.

Richard has recorded for the BBC, WDR Cologne, YLE Finland, Radio France, Radio Nacional de España, Métier, RTÉ, Swedish Radio, ARTE, Icelandic RUV, Wergo and Another Timbre. As an improviser he has performed with Barry Guy, the Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra and recorded with the group alongside Evan Parker. He is also active as a performer of his own compositions. Teaching is an important part of his career and he has given masterclasses and seminars in University of Maryland Baltimore, Huddersfield University, St Andrews University, Aberdeen University, the Royal Northern College of Music, the Royal Scottish Conservatoire, Lawrence University Wisconsin, and was appointed as a Visiting Fellow in Performance at Aberdeen University 2009-11.

From 2012-2014 he was a visiting lecturer on the Post-Graduate performance course at Huddersfield University, and further to this he was appointed as Honorary Research Fellow at the same University (2014-16). In October 2015 he became of Head of Performance at Bangor University, Wales.

[www.richardcraig.net](http://www.richardcraig.net)

**Cora Schmeiser** is a versatile vocalist. Her voice moves effortlessly between medieval, baroque, classical and contemporary styles. During her performances she uses her sophisticated voice and virtuosity with expressive contrasts and subtle mimicking to create an intimate atmosphere that captivates the listener. Theatrical but completely natural, she studied singing in the Royal Academy of the Hague in the Netherlands. There she specialised in early music, especially the medieval music and being a member of the Dutch Vocaallaboratorium/Silbersee where she developed her experience and love for modern music.

In her CD recording “Hier und dort” Cora found a way to merge both of her fascinations, of the music of the middle ages and of our time. With Lunyala Trio (with Lucia Mense and Dietmar Bonnen) and ensemble Nu:n she collaborates in the same field with musicians from such different musical backgrounds as jazz and electronic music. Since its founding in 2004, she has been a regular member of the Cologne *Frauenschola Ars Choralis* Coeln.

[www.coraschmeiser.nl](http://www.coraschmeiser.nl)

**Distractfold Ensemble**, formed in Manchester, specialise in performing instrumental, electro-acoustic and mixed chamber music. In 2014, the ensemble was awarded the Kranichstein Prize for Performance at the International Summer Courses for New Music Darmstadt. The ensemble’s past seasons include concerts at *Le Bruit de la Musique* Festival, International *Poznań Spring* New Music Festival, Gdańsk, Łódź, IGNM concert series at Gare du Nord in Basel and Klang Festival in Copenhagen, amongst others. The group has been in residence at the University of Huddersfield and Brunel University in London, holds a quarterly residence at the International Anthony Burgess Foundation and is ensemble in residence of the Architectural Association Interprofessional Studio. This past season (2016) the group was in residence at Harvard University and presented concerts in New York and Chicago. In Darmstadt 2016 Distractfold performed two programmes of music at the Centralstation and curated a CD featuring remixes and reworking based on the festival’s 70-year archives. In 2016-17 the group will be in residence at Stanford University and will be featured at Luxembourg’s Rainy Days Festival. Distractfold will also curate the 2017 Cut and Splice Festival, taking place in Manchester for the first time since the festival’s inception.

[www.distractfold.co.uk](http://www.distractfold.co.uk)



**Cora Schmeiser**





**I would like to thank:**

**John Croft for his expertise and advice throughout this project, John Hails for his introduction to the disc, also to Ian and Ecce Scott for their support. Finally, sincere thanks to Emma, Linda and Alice of Distractfold and Cora Schmeiser.**

***Richard Craig***

Track 2 (Järnegard PSALM) recorded on 10 November 2011 at Elentstudion, Brewhouse, Göteborg, Sweden. Recording engineer: Linus Anderson

All other tracks recorded at Middleholms, Langholm, Scotland on 1-9 September 2014 (tracks 1,4 & 7); 22 November 2014 (tracks 5 & 6) and 8-9 July 2016 (track 3)  
Recorded and mastered by John Croft

Järnegard Recording supported by Föreningen Svenska Tonsättare  
Album supported by Lottery Funding through Creative Scotland

Cover image: aerial view of Delavine, Strathdon, Abderdeenshire

Cover design: John Croft

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Original French text from Jean Tardieu (*Malédiction d'une furie* from *Poèmes à jouer, Théâtre II*) Paris 1969) printed by kind permission of the publishers, Éditions Gallimard. English translation by Colin Duckworth

Photo of Richard Craig: Alexander Craig

Photo of Cora Schmeiser: Peter Hölscher (from colour original)

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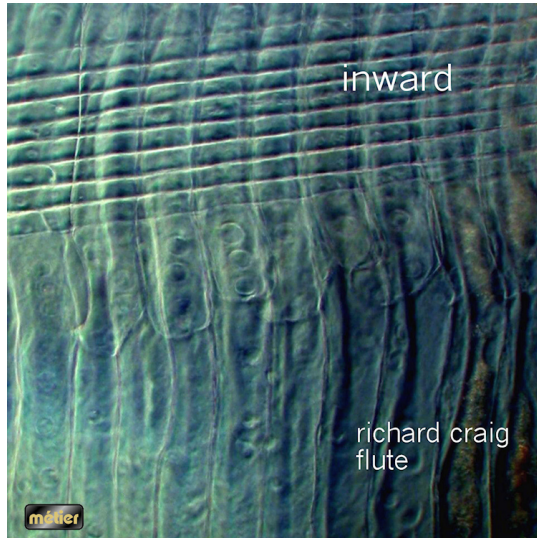
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The full score of Richard Barrett's *Vale* may be downloaded at

<http://richardbarrettmusic.com/s099%20vale%20v1.1.pdf>

## Richard Craig: **Inward**



Dominik Karski:  
**streamforms**  
Brian Ferneyhough:  
**unity capsule**  
Evan Johnson:  
**l'art de toucher le clavecin, 2**  
Malin Bång:  
**alpha waves**  
Salvatore Sciarrino:  
**venere che le grazie la fioriscono**  
John Croft:  
**..ne l'aura che trema**  
Richard Barrett:  
**inward**

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“There is a conviction and enthusiasm in his playing that holds your attention and promotes the idiom as well as anyone else can. Anyone who has an interest in the avant-garde will find reward in the playing and selections here.” – Todd Gorman (American Record Guide)



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# Vale

- |    |                                                                                        |         |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. | Evan Johnson<br><i>émoi</i> (2010) for solo bass flute                                 | 11:49   |
| 2. | Esaias Järnegard<br><i>Psalm</i> (2011) for voice and contrabass flute                 | 6:22    |
| 3. | Fabrice Fitch<br><i>Agricola IX</i> (2013) for flute and string trio                   | 9:00    |
| 4. | Richard Barrett<br><i>Vale</i> (2006-12) for solo flute                                | 13:06   |
|    | John Croft<br><i>Deux méditations d'une furie</i> (2011-13) for soprano and bass flute | [10:12] |
| 5. | I. par cette vie infirme et vacillante                                                 | 6:35    |
| 6. | II. ô phosphorescence                                                                  | 3:38    |
| 7. | Brice Pauset<br><i>Eurydice</i> (1998) for solo flute                                  | 10:21   |

Richard Craig, flutes

Cora Schmeiser, soprano (tracks 2, 5, & 6)

Distractfold Ensemble (track 3):

Linda Jankowska (violin), Emma Richards (viola), Alice Purton (cello)

All tracks are world première recordings