



Morning recorded 6 May 2006, Antenna Studios, Crystal Palace; engineer: Doug Hammond
Three Pieces recorded 14 October 2009, *Invention* and Postlude recorded 16 November 2010, Royal College of Music, London; engineer: Stephen Harrington
Sonata for Quartet recorded 1 December 2011, All Saints' Church, Upper Norwood; engineer: Stefan Ingles
Infinite Reminiscence recorded 3 March 2008, Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall, Royal College of Music; engineer: Stephen Harrington
Music for Dancers recorded 21 March 2010, St Paul's Boys' School, Hammersmith; engineer: Stefan Ingles
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Produced by David Braid and Stefan Ingles

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David BRAID

Chamber and Instrumental Music

Morning for soprano and string quartet
Three Pieces for solo piano
Invention for violin and piano
Sonata for Quartet
Infinite Reminiscence for two pianos
Music for Dancers for piano trio
Postlude for solo piano

Grace Davidson, soprano
Yuri Kalnits, violin
Peter Cigleris, clarinet
Sergei Podobedov, piano
Jelena Laković, piano
Tippett Quartet
Erato Piano Trio
Rossitza Stoycheva/Mikako Hori, piano duo

FIRST RECORDINGS

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

by David Braid

I didn't take the standard route to becoming a composer, but since music was a strong presence in my family when I was growing up, perhaps somehow it was inevitable. I was born in Wrexham on 13 June 1970 and grew up in Colwyn Bay on the North Wales coast. Although as a child I enjoyed music throughout the house thanks to my mother's piano-playing and my father's love of Beethoven, I wasn't obviously going to have a career as a composer: I was more interested in marine wildlife and dinosaurs. Still, my ability to sing back, in full, songs from my older sister's school plays after only attending them once did raise a few eyebrows in the family.

My earliest introduction to music was through piano lessons with my mother when I was around eight, then rather mechanical violin lessons with a local teacher which rather put me off practising for quite a while. Still, my father is an enthusiastic music-lover and has a very good record collection which got a lot of use from me and I continued to listen a good deal.

My interest in music was also rekindled by a new and charismatic nun from Ireland, Sister Annunciata, the headmistress at my school, St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary, who sang and played the accordion and guitar. Guitar lessons from her led to a strong connection with popular music, especially Elvis Presley and The Stray Cats, and to my starting various rock groups during my early teens. I also really loved the organ works of J. S. Bach – but I listened to them in secret in case my father thought I liked them and suggested I take more violin lessons. But I did continue to play the violin in secondary school, performing in a band for traditional Welsh folk-dancers – it earned me many trips away and all kinds of mad fun.

I left school at sixteen and took a Saturday job in a music-shop, later working at an accountant's office – where I spent all my time writing songs hidden under the desk. After about a year, now working at a newspaper by day and as a waiter in the evenings, I started to learn classical guitar very seriously, studying with a dedicated local teacher, Jonathan Richards, who luckily was up for a challenge. I explained that I could play the guitar reasonably well but had forgotten how to read music, had never played any classical guitar at all and that I wanted to go to music college in a year's time, take grade-8 guitar, grade-6 piano and the necessary

Rossitza Stoycheva and **Mikako Hori** have been performing together since 1996. They both studied at the Royal College of Music and their teachers include Phyllis Sellick, Gordon Fergus-Thompson and Valeria Szervanszky. Rossitza has won a number of prizes in competitions in France, Italy and the Czech Republic. In 1994, she was a finalist of the BBC Radio 3 Young Artist's Forum. Two years later she made her debut at Carnegie Weill Hall in New York and appeared with Sir Georg Solti at a gala concert in the presence of HRH Duchess of Kent. Mikako has likewise won several piano competitions including the Silver Medal of the Chappell Piano Competition at the Royal College of Music, and has given recitals in Germany, Japan and Switzerland. She has master's degrees in three different musical disciplines.

Their duo repertoire includes a wide range of works written for four hands and two pianos from the standard classical composers to the modern arrangements of popular classics. Rossitza and Mikako enjoy discovering new, original music. Bulgarian and Japanese composers are of particular interest, mirroring their respective cultural backgrounds. As a duo they have performed throughout the United Kingdom, including the Wooburn Festival, Netherhall Concert Series and St Andrews Young Artist Series. A concert tour of Bulgaria led to an appearance on Bulgarian National Television as part of the Apollonia Festival.

The pianist **Jelena Laković** was born in Podgorica, Montenegro, in 1979 and graduated from the Academy of Music there, having studied in the piano department with Vladimir Bockarjov. Thereafter she was a piano-teacher and accompanist at the music high school in Podgorica and piano accompanist in the Andre Navara School for the Musically Talented.

Since coming to London, she has been involved with the International Society for the Study of Tension in Performance, studying with the late Carola Grindea on how to help young musicians prevent physical injury and psychological problems during performance. She gained her master's degree in 2010, following studies with Andrew Zolinsky in London.

Jelena has participated in numerous competitions as a soloist, winning a number of awards. She has performed in the Oxford Philomusica International Piano Festival and as a soloist, chamber musician and piano accompanist in Montenegro, Serbia and the UK.

Minsk Symphony, Mozart Festival, New Philharmonic, Cologne, and the Novosibirsk Symphony and the London Musical Arts Ensemble.

Equally active as a chamber musician, he joined the Erato Piano Trio in 2010 and has since performed with the group across the UK. His recording, with Michael Csányi-Wills, of the first volume of Mieczysław Weinberg's violin sonatas for Toccata Classics was recently awarded a 'Diapason d'Or' in France.

In 2011 he was one of the organisers and a jury member for the London Gates Education Group String Project, a series of master-classes and competitions aiming to provide an opportunity for young players to obtain scholarships to leading European conservatoires.

Recently selected by the Concert Promoters' Network of 'Making Music' as featured artists for 2012–13, the **Erato Piano Trio** – Yuri Kalnits, violin, Julia Morneweg, cello, and John Paul Ekins, piano⁹ – is rapidly establishing a reputation as one of the UK's leading young ensembles and pursues a busy schedule of recitals around the UK and the European mainland. Its repertoire extends from the classical works of Haydn, Hummel and Mozart over the Romantic masterpieces to more recent music by Schnittke, Avner Dorman, Cecilia McDowall and Garrett Shatzer.

Formed at the Royal College of Music in 2005, the Erato Piano Trio was soon invited to perform across the UK and abroad, leading to debut performances at the Martinů Hall in Prague as well as the Tonhalle in Zurich, performing Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* with the distinguished Spanish clarinetist Joan Enric Lluna. They were selected for the Concordia Foundation Young Artists Scheme in 2008 and subsequently performed a series of recitals at prestigious London venues including St Martin-in-the-Fields. Their strong commitment to contemporary music recently led to a joint project with the composition faculty of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

The three young musicians have benefited from the guidance of Salvatore Accardo, John Barstow, Leonid Gorokhov, Ani Schnarch and the Chilingirian Quartet. They were also selected to perform in master-classes with Lewis Kaplan as well as with the legendary cellist Bernard Greenhouse, a founder of the Beaux Arts Trio. They are currently continuing their training at Chamber Studio King's Place with a number of distinguished musicians: Paul Watkins, Susan Tomes, Richard Ireland and Christoph Richter, kindly supported by Philip Carne.

⁹ John Paul Ekins plays on *Music for Dancers* and Sergei Podobedov on *Sonata for Quartet*; the pianist of the Erato Piano Trio is now Irina Botan.

theory exam. His natural response was that that perhaps four years might be more a more practicable aim. I duly ignored his entirely reasonable prognosis and practised for around nine hours a day, every day (really: you can do something like that when you're young) for around fourteen months, plus taking piano and theory lessons at a nearby private school on my evenings off and an A-level in philosophy from the local technical college (I had no A-levels from school, of course, having left at sixteen). It was enough to win me a place at the Royal College of Music from 1990. There I took guitar 'first study' (with Charles Ramirez) and piano 'second study' with Alisdair Graham, later switching to 'joint first study' of composition (with Edwin Roxburgh) and guitar.

Charles Ramirez was a first-rate teacher and helped me to become a musician who played the guitar rather than simply a guitarist – just as well, since I was such a late starter on the instrument that reliable, concert-standard virtuosity was always going to be out of reach, and so composition quickly became my main focus. Lessons with Edwin Roxburgh were comprehensive, inspiring love for a huge range of music. He seemed to be able to play almost anything on the piano from memory, from Sibelius' Seventh Symphony to Renaissance masses and works of Birtwistle. He is also a strong composer himself and a real craftsman, as well as being a virtuoso oboist, an excellent conductor and – rather heroically – a fox-hunt saboteur.

Also at the RCM, I attended the composition classes of George Benjamin, where he would analyse three or four major works over the course of a day. One of the most memorable of these days involved Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, followed by the Berg Violin Concerto, with an afternoon spent on passing notes – non-harmonic notes used to pass from one chord to another – which he began, as we came back from raiding his kitchen for lunch, by playing a hornpipe on the piano without any passing notes at all and asking us what was wrong with the piece. At the time George seemed to be the only 'younger' composer capable of immense beauty in his work, which opened my ears to the possibility that the ugliness that seemed to pervade so much contemporary music at the time could be avoided.

It was during my time at the College that I met many of the performers with whom I still work, not least the Russian pianist Sergei Podobedov, who taught me an enormous amount about piano technique and repertoire, as well as the violinist Yuri Kalnits and pianist Rossitza Stoycheva, all of whom feature on this disc.



Shortly after graduation I felt a strong pull to mainland Europe. Having initially intended to go to Germany, I chose Poland instead, since my then girlfriend was from there, and so I spent a year at the Kraków Academy of Music studying composition with the late Marek Stachowski¹ and also taking conducting classes. I spent a second year there going further into fugue studies with Zbigniew Bujarski – probably the best composer living in Poland at the time.²

During those two years (1995–97) I wrote a violin concerto and a work for chamber orchestra, *Cause and Reaction* (both since withdrawn). I found the polystylism then prevalent in Kraków musical circles rather antithetical and so kept my head down and worked. For me at the time contemporary Polish music was all about Lutosławski. He had the lot: harmony, form, melody, thematic line and development, and formal structures that worked amazingly well; he was also an astonishing orchestrator.

In 1997 I returned to the UK and took an M.Mus. back at the RCM. At the time I was hoping to start teaching composition as a ‘day job’ since it appeared to allow time to compose, but after yet further study (an M. Litt. with Robert Saxton at Oxford), I realised this route – for me at least – was potentially fatal for composition as the constant analysis and writing about music fatally dampened my enthusiasm, turning something I love into a mere job. I therefore decided on the alternative route of working in publishing (not music-publishing) as an editor and writing music on my own terms.

Through a chance encounter in 1999 I was commissioned to write a large-scale tutor and CD called *Play Classical Guitar*,³ which eventually went into three editions and also into Spanish translation. I enjoyed it very much but it was tough work. I wrote almost a hundred pieces, starting from using just one note, up to grade-8 works; it really made me think about how music is processed and learned.

¹ Stachowski (1936–2004) studied under Penderecki at the Academy of Music in Kraków (then called the State Higher School of Music) and began to attract international attention in the late 1960s as his works began to win a series of prizes. His music is clearly delineated and often structurally unusual, two of his best-known works being the *Sapphic Odes* for mezzo-soprano and orchestra (1985) and the String Quartet No. 4, *Quando resta l'estate* (2001). He first lectured at his *alma mater* in composition in 1967, becoming a full professor in 1981 and serving as Rector of the institution in 1993–99 and 2002–4.

² Bujarski, born in 1933, studied under Stanisław Wiechowicz in Kraków (where he himself has taught since 1972) and was in the vanguard of Polish modernism that emerged in the 1950s. Bujarski's music stands out among Polish composers of his generation as being highly lyrical and somewhat consonant, while avoiding the simplistic populism of Górecki *et al.* His *Concerto per archi II* for cello solo and string orchestra (1992) is one of many outstanding works that have won acclaim from critics, the public and musicians alike.

³ Backbeat Books, London, 2001.

Sergei is a graduate of The Moscow Central School of Music, The Tchaikovsky Conservatoire and The Royal College of Music. In 1990 he was the first-ever recipient of a Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother Scholarship at the RCM and was also the youngest-ever winner of the Edward Boyle Award in London. In 1991 he performed and collaborated with Sir John Gielgud at Windsor Castle at the Queen Mother's special invitation. Sergei's concert appearances since then have taken him to the Wigmore Hall in London, the Tchaikovsky Hall and the Bolshoi Hall of The Moscow Conservatory, the Herbst Theater in San Francisco and many others.

Sergei's growing discography includes, in addition to a CD of music by the Russian composer Boris Goltz (on Music & Arts), a live recording of Haydn, Prokofiev, Schumann and Lyadov on the Cristofori label and Hovhannes' Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra and other works on Sanctuary Records.

Yuri Kalnits was born in Moscow into a musical family, receiving his first violin lessons from his father and going on to become a pupil first at the Central Music School and then the Gnessin Music School for Gifted Children. At sixteen he began studying at the Royal College of Music with Itzhak Rashkovsky, winning several major prizes, inside the College and further afield. Upon graduation he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother Scholarship for postgraduate studies there. He completed his training with Yfrah Neaman at the Guildhall School of Music and Vasko Vassiliev at Trinity College of Music while receiving further artistic guidance from such eminent musicians as Valentin Berlinsky, Sergei Fatkulline, Edward Grach, Shlomo Mintz, Igor Oistrakh, Sylvia Rosenberg and Abram Shtern.

Yuri has participated in a large number of festivals, among them the Festival Musicales Internationales Guil-Durance (France), the Young Artist Peninsula Music Festival (USA), Festival Cziffra (France), Waterford International Music Festival (Ireland), Irina Kandinskaya and Friends (Russia), Pharos Trust Festival (Cyprus), Musica da Camera (Germany), Festival International Ciudad de Ubeda (Spain) and the Loch Shiel Spring Festival (Scotland); the venues at which he has played include The Purcell Room, St John's, Smith Square, the Barbican and St Martin-in-the-Fields in London, the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire, the Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center in New York and Suntory Hall in Tokyo. Tours have taken him to Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Russia, Spain, Switzerland and the USA.

The orchestras with which he has appeared as a concerto soloist include the Arpeggione Chamber, Kazan Chamber Orchestra 'La Primavera', London Festival, London Soloist Chamber,

The **Tippett Quartet** – the violinists John Mills and Jeremy Isaacs, violist Maxine Moore⁸ and cellist Bozidar Vukotic – was formed in the week in 1998 when Sir Michael Tippett died; he was such an inspirational musician that they decided to take his name. Like their eponymous composer, the Quartet draws inspiration from the past and future alike: they are committed to combining mainstream repertoire with contemporary works.

The Quartet made its Wigmore Hall debut in 1998 and has since performed at the BBC Proms, Cheltenham Festival, Three Choirs Festival, Chichester Festivities, Presteigne Festival, Spitalfields Festival, Dartington International Summer School and Lincoln International Festival. They have also performed at King's Place, The Purcell Room and Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, Bridgewater Hall in Manchester and The Sage, Gateshead, and they regularly return to the Wigmore Hall. The Quartet frequently appears on BBC Radio 3 and has broadcast live from Novi Sad in Serbia and on Sveriges Radio as well as featuring on ABC in Australia, Radio New Zealand, WNYC Radio in New York, Lyric FM in Ireland and Radio France.

The Tippett Quartet has premiered music by John Adams, Howard Goodall and Simon Holt, among others, and has worked closely with Peter Maxwell Davies and Anthony Payne. The Tippetts' partnership with Stephen Dodgson led to the release of his complete chamber music on four CDs from Dutton Epoch, for whom they also recorded a disc of the complete Arnell string quartets. The Quartet followed up its complete recording of the Tippett quartets for Naxos with a disc of piano quintets by Bax and Bridge with Ashley Wass, and made the first recording of string quartets by Donald Tovey for Guild. It has also recorded for EMI Classics, Classic FM and for Peter Gabriel's Real World label. The musicians with whom the Quartet has worked include Julian Bliss, Simon Crawford-Phillips, Phillip Dukes, Craig Ogden, David Owen Norris, Lawrence Power, Katherine Stott, Melvyn Tan and Matthew Trusler.

The Russian-born pianist **Sergei Podobedov** was described by the conductor Gennady Rozhdestvensky as 'a magnificent pianist who possesses outstanding virtuosic skills combined with true musicality and a refined sense of style'. Since making his orchestral debut at the age of twelve in Chopin's Second Piano Concerto, he has toured throughout the world performing the major concert repertoire and new works. In recent years, he has begun to perform fully improvised solo recitals, usually consisting of two large works.

⁸ Maxine Moore plays on this recording; the violist of the Tippett Quartet is now Julia O'Riordan.

In 2001 I was chosen for the Society for the Promotion of New Music's composer shortlist, awarded for *Cause and Reaction*, as a result of which a new work for string orchestra, *Prose and Parallel Invention*, was premiered in Manchester the following year. Also in 2001 I had my Southbank debut at The Purcell Room, with a work for violin and piano (similarly named), *Parallel Invention*, premiered by Fiona McNaught and Daniel Tong. I organised a number of performances of my works in Kraków during the 2000s: even though I was living back in London by then, they were easier to organise than concerts in Britain – there is value, it appears, in being a foreigner. In November 2007 I was fortunate to be chosen as one of the Courvoisier/*Observer's* 'Future 500' – a list of up-and-coming 'outstanding people in their field'. In July 2008 came the UK premiere, at the Wigmore Hall, of *Morning* with the soprano Grace Davidson and the Tippett Quartet, the musicians who perform it on this CD.⁴ Steve Reich, to whom a mutual friend gave the recording, wrote of it: 'Integration of voice with string quartet beautifully done – particularly first entrance. Writing for instruments is solid and sounds very good to me. Very honest stuff'.⁵ In 2010 the string-orchestra version of *Morning* was given its world premiere in Moscow, conducted by Roman Belyshev. I have also had works played in Denmark and Sweden, including a setting of *The Snow Queen* by Hans Christian Andersen for soprano and ensemble. Those concerts were set up through the activities of the Danish guitarist Mikkel Andersen, a good friend who in 2011 also gave the Latin American premiere of one of my solo-guitar works, *Variations*, in Paraguay. Over the last few years I've been fortunate to have had my work played in the United States, Germany and Russia as well as having a short guitar piece, *Melodia*, published in the Japanese guitar journal, *Gendai Guitar*.⁶ Even further afield, *Morning* was broadcast on Australian radio in summer 2011.

I'm occasionally asked who the main influences on my music might be. A composer I'm quite fond of is that arch-modernist of astonishing complexity, Brian Ferneyhough, but listening to him is like listening to an abstraction of music – a distillation from what is already an abstract phenomenon. Still, much though I enjoy it, his hairy-chested modernism is light years from what I do. Others I admire are Ligeti, possibly the greatest of his generation, as also Messiaen, another

⁴ The world premiere had taken place in Kraków on 18 February 2007.

⁵ E-mail from Steve Reich to Morris Glassman, 10 November 2010.

⁶ Vol. 3, No. 510, March 2007, pp. 80–81.



giant. But my strongest lessons, points of reference, even technique, especially in the sense of pacing and form, all come from earlier music. Sibelius is probably my favourite composer: his logic, his unusual way of building up themes, his directness and joyful sweep of sound make him – for me – the greatest composer of the twentieth century. I also love John Dowland: it's amazing how with only a lute, or lute and voice, he can encapsulate such a range of experience. Shostakovich is another favourite – he touches me deeply as a human being, while also being fascinating as a composer. His string quartets are especially strong, some of them perhaps on a par with the giants of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Another thing that strongly influences how and what I write is performance and interpretation. I love Glenn Gould's recordings: although he is best known for his Bach records, his Beethoven 'Pathétique' is extremely convincing – so clear, with very little pedal; it is also 'dangerous', exciting playing. Such performers, as well as earlier ones like the harpsichordist Wanda Landowska and especially the English pianist Solomon (who incidentally was good friends with my great-uncle in the 1950s) have an intelligent approach to phrasing that has at least as much influence on me as any composer. There are many others: Julian Bream, Andres Segovia, János Starker, Vadim Repin, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Django Reinhardt, as well as a whole new generation that, refreshingly, seem to be more willing to play as they want rather than what is expected of them. All these people teach me much about composition, even just from listening to their sense of timing.

This CD covers some of the chamber music I've written over the last eleven years. I've focused on this genre specifically for quite a while as I find large groups of instruments unnecessary – at least for the moment. More and more, I find excitement in groups of fewer players because of the intimacy and flexibility they bring, and also the chance for the personality of each player to be heard. I have written a lot of other works over the years: six orchestral pieces, solo instrumental works and numerous song-cycles and other settings. In addition to the Pablo Neruda setting on this disc, I've set texts by Polish poets, including the late Wysława Szymborska and Ewa Sonnenberg (in dual-language versions, since I speak Polish 'sort of reasonably'), as well as Kafka, Thomas Heywood, Tolstoy, Antoine Exupéry, Hans Christian Andersen, James Joyce and Douglas Adams, as well as a double-choir setting of the Agnus Dei. These settings range from simply voice and guitar or piano, to large ensemble

which dates from 2009 and so pre-dates the *Sonata for Quartet* by around a year. The dancers are in the mind of the listener: all the rhythms are potentially danceable, but it is a piece of chamber music, not an accompaniment to dance. The piece is divided into three main areas: a duo between violin and cello with interjected piano solos; a middle section where all three instruments work together, but with cello to the fore; and a final section where the violin becomes the dominant soloist. The listener can imagine his own choreography or simply listen to the piece as music.

Postlude for piano, Op. 10

Written for the pianist Jelena Laković in 2010, this brief Postlude [9] is based on a three-note motif which returns constantly during the first part of the work and, to a lesser degree, later on. The challenge I set myself here was to see how far I could grow away from this motif while keeping the work entirely unified. The title aims to suggest its place in a programme, so that it can serve as a conclusion to a performance of other works.

The English soprano **Grace Davidson** was born in London and pursued undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music, winning the Early Music and English Song competitions, as well as being a finalist in the London Handel Competition. Grace has sung with all the leading British vocal ensembles and is now becoming recognised as a popular soloist with a particular affinity to the Baroque and Renaissance periods. She has performed the 'Pie Jesu' from Fauré's Requiem on the popular BBC TV series *Sacred Music* series with The Sixteen and Harry Christophers, and recorded Handel's *Dixit Dominus* as well as Monteverdi's *Selva morale e spirituale* on The Sixteen's label (Coro).

Other recordings include Bach's *St Matthew Passion* for Ex Cathedra (Orchid), Allegri's *Miserere* for both The Sixteen (Universal) and for Tenebrae (Signum Records), singing the high soprano part. She appears regularly with the saxophonist Christian Forshaw and features on his albums *Renouncement* and *Midwinter*. Grace is also the soprano soloist on Eric Whitacre's bestselling *Light and Gold* album (Decca). Grace also records for many movie soundtracks, often working with prominent composers and labels. Grace will be recording a solo album on the Coro label next year to include *Neun Deutsche Arien* by Handel and the recently discovered Handel *Gloria*.

Grace lives in London with her husband, the conductor Nigel Short, and their two children.

piano *Invention* written just earlier, it returns to relative simplicity, sustaining interest from its formal structure – an extension of the episodic form used in the *Invention*, which uses varying tempi, together with a more complex, overlapping use of soloists – and different types of counterpoint. Starting pulseless or ‘out of time’, the piece gradually progresses via a series of episodes to a driving conclusion, ending with an intense fugue; this coming-together and ‘densification’ is the natural goal of the development from the transparent, ethereal opening. To work out each episode fully – all based on the fugue subject, with some consisting of multi-layered canons – required a longish, through-composed piece.

Infinite Reminiscence, for two pianos, Op. 4

Written in 2007 for the piano duo of Rossitza Stoycheva and Mikako Hori, *Infinite Reminiscence* [7] makes much use of the independence that two players provide. The work can be played four-hands on one piano, but the opportunity to use two pianos (as in this recording) allowed for both more resonance and freedom for the players. Instead of doing the obvious thing of having loads of notes because I had twenty fingers available, I thought it would be more interesting to keep a simple surface-texture and make use of the luxury of two independent players to write music that consists of two ‘streams’. The two parts start out very dissimilar and gradually merge into one. The overall aesthetic is one of reminiscence – a wet, late afternoon in a moribund café, perhaps. There is a cycle of harmony that repeats throughout the piece, so that although the playing style and texture change, it continuously returns to the same harmonic point; this loop is designed to give the impression that the piece is not directional but rather ‘infinite’ instead.

Music for Dancers, Op. 9

Stanisław Lem wrote a fascinating book called *A Perfect Vacuum* (1971) which consisted of reviews of non-existent books – many of which I would love to read (if only they were real). I thought it might be interesting to do the same with music and write a piece for non-existent dancers. Hence *Music for Dancers* [8], also written for the Erato Piano Trio,

with two soloists. I’ve withdrawn many of my pieces, for either revision or, more usually, destruction, since they either seemed to have good ideas that didn’t work or they worked as pieces but weren’t very interesting. I’ve twice written film scores – for the Anglo-Polish short film *Compartment* (2005) and the recently completed Polish animation *Blask* (‘Illumination’; 2010) – which I found interesting but sufficiently limiting to know that it wasn’t a direction for me. But I would love to write a score for an epic science-fiction film, especially one involving time-travel: the structural possibilities would be challenging but interesting. My worklist, as it currently stands, can be found at www.davidbraid.net.

I still use pencil and paper to compose, as I have for about 25 years, although I do try things out on the piano or guitar. I recently used a computer for about a year to see if it was any use, but I found the playback function can badly affect one’s imagination and can also be misleading. Another advantage of pencil and paper is that, by keeping the pieces in my mind rather than in my computer, I can work pretty well anywhere and most days I usually do – on the train, in the park, and so on. I also write out my scores and parts by hand, unless it’s impractical – with a large orchestral score, for example. I enjoy calligraphy immensely: it is very calming. Outside composition, my interests are playing the Renaissance lute, learning more about sharks (my marine wildlife interest never faded) and reading science fiction.

I’ve lived in Crystal Palace since 1997, with my son, Albert, and an enormous black cat called Crotchet.

Morning for soprano and string quartet, Op. 3

This 2006 setting of Pablo Neruda’s ‘Mañana’ for soprano and string quartet [1] is based on a two-note falling interval of B flat to E, over a C in the bass; these three notes set the mood for the entire piece. I was moving away from an earlier, dense, modernist style (arguably now a conservative norm) and found a new route by revisiting counterpoint and how it determines harmonic motion.

The use of Neruda’s text was fortuitous. I wanted an intimate, personal text with universal appeal; considering the mountain of literature around, it was surprisingly hard to find. I found ‘Mañana’ by chance in the Oxfam bookshop in Ealing (I was in there to buy sci-fi as usual). As soon as I read the first three lines, I knew it would work: I had already written the first two

minutes of music, with an outline voice-part (with no words) and the text fitted the vocal line I had written with no alteration necessary. The setting is largely in the English translation, swapping to the original Spanish for part of the piece.

The score stipulates that the work is for 'Baroque/Early' soprano, my ideal being the vibrato-less, clear, line that has a sense of transcendence about it. Combining this with the 'earthy' quality of strings, the two aspects of 'real' life and the morning blur of a partial dream state (as in the text) are amplified.

Grace Davidson was my first choice of soprano for both the UK premiere in the Wigmore Hall and for this recording.

1

Mañana

Desnuda eres tan simple como una de tus manos,
lisa, terrestre, mínima, redonda, transparente,
tienes líneas de luna, caminos de manzana,
desnuda eres delgada como el trigo desnudo.

Desnuda eres azul como la noche en Cuba,
tienes enredaderas y estrellas en el pelo,
desnuda eres enorme y amarilla
como el verano en una iglesia de oro.

Desnuda eres pequeña como una de tus uñas,
curva, sutil, rosada hasta que nace el día
y te metes en el subterráneo del mundo

como en un largo túnel de trajes y trabajos:
tu claridad se apaga, se viste, se deshoja
y otra vez vuelve a ser una mano desnuda.

*Morning*⁷

Naked, you are simple as one of your hands,
Smooth, earthy, small, transparent, round:
You have moon-lines, apple-pathways:
Naked, you are slender as a naked grain of wheat.

Naked, you are blue as a night in Cuba;
You have vines and stars in your hair;
Naked, you are spacious and yellow
As summer in a golden church.

Naked you are tiny as one of your nails –
Curved, subtle, rosy till the day is born
And you withdraw to the underground world,

As if down a long tunnel of clothing and of chores;
Your clear light dims, gets dressed – drops it leaves –
And becomes a naked hand again.

Three Pieces for Solo Piano, Op. 8

These works were written in 2008 for Sergei Podobedov with the initial idea being that they would serve as miniatures which can be dropped into a programme here and there, or

⁷ From 100 Love Sonnets: Cien Sonetos de Amor by Pablo Neruda, translated by Stephen Tapscott; © Pablo Neruda, 1959, and Fundación Pablo Neruda; © The University of Texas Press, 1986. By permission of The University of Texas Press.

even used as an encore; they also work together as a group, functioning as a larger piece. The first, 'Lyrical Toccata' [2], makes use of a simple system of ratios (as is often the case in my work) between the number of consecutive notes in each hand. For example, the right hand has a line of five notes, where the left has a single note sustaining throughout; the piece then moves to having six notes against the one, then seven and so on, up to thirteen. It then returns back down again until it reaches 1:1, at which point the left-hand note number starts growing. This process provides a gradually mutating formal framework for free composition. The second piece [3] is a simple collection of melodic lines, called 'Aria' because it is vocal in style. The form here results from differing phrase-lengths, the piece being short enough for this simple structural device to be effective. The third piece [4] is simply what its title states, a three-part invention. The three parts are all in the same rhythmical relationship of 1:1:1 and are strongly melodic, so that although the movement is of steady vertical unity, the listener hears three separate lines that occur simultaneously.

Invention for violin and piano, Op. 11

Written in 2010 for the performers on this disc, Yuri Kalnits and Sergei Podobedov, this one-movement work [5] is an extension of some of the musical ideas and principles used a year earlier in *Music for Dancers*, such as rapid alterations in tempo, high-speed unison parts and virtuosic writing. Both parts are equally important: the piano is in no sense merely an accompaniment. The structure of the work is episodic, with one of the two instruments taking the lead in each episode, before reaching a point in the piece where they play in parallel. To go beyond this 'ultimate' unity the two players then split apart entirely – this penultimate episode requiring no synchronisation between the players – before they come together again for a final, slow coda.

Sonata for Quartet, Op. 13

Composed in 2011 for the Erato Piano Trio and clarinettist Peter Cigleris, the *Sonata for Quartet* [6] is the most recent work on the disc. In partial reaction to the violin-and-