

# Michael Finnissy

~Mississippi Hornpipes~  
*Music for Violin and Piano*

**Darragh Morgan**  
violin

**Mary Dullea**  
piano



# Michael Finnissy

1	Mississippi Hornpipes (1982)	9.49
2	Seterjentens Fridag (2003) *	8.04
3	Amphithéâtre des Sciences Mortes **	8.05
4	Jive (2006)	0.31
5	Molly House (2003-4) ***	12.45
Violin Sonata (2007)		21.31
6	I	10.57
7	II	11.33
Total Duration including pauses		61.57

**Darragh Morgan** violin

**Mary Dullea** piano

\* Michael Finnissy, second keyboard

\*\* Mary Dullea, prepared piano; Michael Finnissy, second keyboard

\*\*\* Darragh Morgan, household appliances; Michael Finnissy, detuned harpsichord

*Seterjentens Fridag*, *Molly House*, and  
*Violin Sonata* all published by Oxford University Press  
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I still fondly remember the very first time I met Michael Finnissy: during lunch outside at CoMA Summer School 2003 in Bretton Hall, Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Michael asked me was I "Darragh Morgan" as he wanted to thank me for my role in a then new recording of his work 'Lost Lands' on the Métier label by the group Topologies. Of course I had known of Michael and his music for some time, in particular through my work in the late 1990s with the pianist Ian Pace.

Following that first encounter in the autumn of that same year, Mary Dullea and I gave a performance of a version of Michael's *Seterjentens Fridag* to a small but illustrious audience that included Mark R Taylor, Andrew Poppy and James Weeks at the October Gallery, London. Mary and I then took a sabbatical year from London to South Africa. Whilst there, at the invitation of composer Michael Blake we performed a violin and piano recital of 20th/21st century music that included works by Michael at the New Music Indaba in Grahamstown. On returning to the UK Mary and I were determined to learn Michael's notoriously difficult *Mississippi Hornpipes* which we first learnt over a period of three months, very slowly and methodically for the Gaudeamus competition. On leaving Michael's home in Steyning after a rehearsal I recall him speaking slightly disparagingly about competitions in general – he was right!

Back at another CoMA Summer School in 2007, now in its new home outside Doncaster, backstage before a concert Michael and I were sharing, the idea of a *Violin Sonata* was first suggested by Michael. Not only was I excited at the idea of a new piece for me but was struck by the thought of a Finnissy work referring to such a classical subject matter. The Sonata received its premiere in The Great Hall, Derry during a visit by Michael whilst Mary and I were Artists-in-Residence at The University of Ulster in December 2007. Michael's presence alone had a profound effect on the students as did of course his music and teaching.

I often think there must be multiples of Michael Finnissy out there. Whether I'm in the Norfolk Broads performing Schubert's *Trout Quintet* (where Michael surprisingly appeared) or performing his music at festivals around the globe where everyone always seems to know him or have studied and been influenced by him. Of course this shouldn't be surprising with his never ending enthusiasm for such a wide variety of music making. Mary and I felt this most particularly during the special weekend we spent with Michael in 2008 recording the works for this album at Queen's University, Belfast.

**Darragh Morgan, 2014**

These pieces all seek to form musically interesting relationships between markedly different source-materials. The strategy: finding and assembling disparate elements, determining their meaningful succession, stems, I think, from the early influences on my work of cinema (particularly Brakhage, Pasolini, Jack Smith and Warhol) and the collages and assemblages of Robert Rauschenberg. Extracting variant shapes from one source approximating to the organic was something I learned about later.

At one level forming these relationships (continuities) can simply mean following sound with no sound, soft things with loud, active or busy sorts of textures with inactive ones. At another level it could be the formation of ideological or stylistic dialogue: folk-music and modernism, synchronized and unaligned, atonal and modal, quoted and invented. Unexpected and provocative juxtapositions can result, and – though not always dramatically – a disrupted, fractured type of continuity. The allusions to and quotations from older music could also have a deliberately satirical edge, given the current preoccupations of the media and music industry.

The works were all composed for specific people, friends, and only two of them to commission. *Mississippi Hornpipes* was composed for the violinist Roger Garland, with whom I had a duo for a number of years, touring the music-clubs, mostly with 19th century repertoire. It is a 'cut-up' (William Burroughs's term) of American folk-fiddle tunes, in which the two instruments play mostly in the same register. The typical speeds at which the original tunes move are frequently altered, and the violin and piano rarely have identical phrase lengths or matching tonalities.

*Seterjentens Fridag* also draws on folk tradition. It was commissioned by the Ultima festival in Oslo, for a project exploring contemporary uses of the Hardanger-fiddle repertoire, and was composed for Liv Merete Kroken. Here again fragments of

traditional melodies and generic figuration are welded together, though intended to result in a lyrical, almost song-like, continuity. Liv's boyfriend and I were supposed to join the party as impromptu accompanists (reed-organ and piano), neither hymn-tune like part being strictly aligned with the violin. But at the first performance the piece was given as a solo. The Norwegian title translates, roughly, as “milkmaids' day off”.

The title *Amphithéâtre des Sciences Mortes* is from a novel by the Sar Peladan, Rosicrucian friend of Erik Satie. The music was written for Anders Førisdål, and first performed by him (accompanied by a group of toy pianos and spinets) on the guitar. There



are alternative solo parts for vibraphone, and this violin one made for Darragh Morgan. The four layers of discontinuous accompaniment are independent, except for their synchronous kick-offs roughly every thirty seconds.

*Jive* was written for Deedee and Elliott Schwartz as a joint birthday present. I rescued it from some sketches for a short piece I had started many years previously, originally intended for Roger Garland. Peter Sheppard Skaerved gave the first performance. Elliott had given me some excellent advice about composing: (i) march to your own drum, and (ii) almost any materials will fit together, best if driven by necessity, and tackled with flair and passion.

*Molly House* started out as another birthday present, for Molly Money on her eightieth, and grew as an ensemble commission from CoMA (Contemporary Music Making for Amateurs). It is presented as a large kit, which can be assembled in lots of different ways. The kit consists of a number of conventionally notated arias (imperfectly transcribed, with lacunae and alterations, from four operas by Handel: 'Deidamia', 'Lotario', 'Poro' and 'Silla') and other variously fixed, pitched and un-pitched, less conventional stuff – including sounds made by electronically operated domestic gadgets (here a hair dryer, a shaver and a vacuum cleaner). In eighteenth century London Molly-houses were homosexual brothels, in which fantasies could become realities: an exciting, secret, 'behind closed doors' world, and an irrepressible counter-culture. In twenty-first century London most hardcore contemporary music is behind closed-doors to the big-time commercial conglomerates and mainstream press, and, as Jean-Luc Godard implies, when culture makes the rules, it is the responsibility of Art to counteract them. This version recreates the first (private) performance of *Molly House* at which Ellie Blackshaw played the violin.

Having for various reasons declined to write anything called 'Sonata' until very recently, I decided to write a group of four pieces reviewing, maybe commenting on, this highly evolved, iconic, musical principle. The *Violin Sonata*, written for Darragh Morgan and Mary Dullea, takes Brahms as a model – and, specifically, the first movement of his String Quintet Op.88. What is most clearly taken from Brahms is a style of discourse and rhetoric (dialectical conversation or debate) and bits and pieces of material (first and second subject). Exploration, or development, of this ready-made (found) material is implicit from the start, effectively a set of ongoing variations for the duo punctuated by a, similarly varied, series of extended violin solos. This solo material is loosely rhapsodized from Beethoven's transcription of an Irish folk-song (*Oh! Thou hapless Soldier* – the tenth of his '20 Irische Lieder'). Standing, in itself, as a larger sort of dialectical opposition (spontaneous folk singing) to the more 'formalized' Brahms Quintet constructs. After the third solo, a second section (or movement) digests and fragments this initial Exposition, so that the entire structure could be perceived as a series of large-scale or moment-to-moment binary oppositions.

Darragh Morgan

Mary Dullea



Recorded at The Harty Room, Queen's University, Belfast in June 2008

Engineer and producer: Chris Corrigan

Executive Producers: Darragh Morgan, Mary Dullea & Michael Finnissy

Recorded with financial support from the RVW Trust and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

Cover and packaging design: Stephen Sutton

Sketch of the performers by Dermot Flynn

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**The performers wish to thank Professor Michael Alcorn and the School of Music and Sonic Arts, Queen's University Belfast, for the use of the Harty Room for this recording**

## The Performers

Irish violinist **Darragh Morgan** has a hugely diverse career. Concerto highlights include working closely with Arvo Part, performing his *Tabula Rasa* at the RTE Living Music Festival, followed by over 20 performances with London Musici/Rambert Dance Company. Regular solo appearances with the Ulster Orchestra include the world premiere of Sir John Tavener's *Hymn of Dawn* which he also performed with the Istanbul Symphony Orchestra, Dallapiccola's *Tartiniana Seconda*, the world premiere of Bill Campbell's *Swim* for Violin & Orchestra, live on BBC Radio 3 from Sonorities Festival and Samuel Barber's *Violin Concerto* of which Darragh also gave the South African premiere with the KZN Philharmonic Orchestra. He has recorded Donnacha Dennehy's *Elastic Harmonic* with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, with whom he has also premiered Brian Irvine's *A Mon Seul Desir* and gave the world premiere of Andrew Poppy's Darwin's *Sin Draw* with the Crash Ensemble. Other concerto appearances include Koln Kammer Orchester, Camerata Tinta Barocca Cape Town and Cyprus Symphony Orchestra.

As a chamber musician and soloist Darragh has performed at many International Festivals including Warsaw Autumn, Wien Modern, Ars Musica Brussels, Maerz Musik Berlin, Festival d'Automne Paris, Klangspuren Schwaz, Osterfestival Tirol, Dubrovnik Summer Festival, Lucerne Festival, National Arts Festival South Africa, BBC Proms Chamber Music, Aldeburgh, Spitalfields, Cheltenham, Brighton, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, ICMC, Ether Festival, City of London Festival and St Magnus International Festival. He is violinist and founding member of the Fidelio Trio with whom he has appeared at the Wigmore Hall, Shanghai Oriental Arts Centre, Symphony Space New York, Casa da Musica Porto, Johannesburg Musical Society and recorded Michael Nyman's complete piano trios for MN Records. They are currently Artists-in-Residence at St Patrick's College, Dublin. Previously as violinist with The Smith Quartet Darragh performed and recorded with as diverse artists as Philip Glass, Louis Andriessen, Gavin Bryars and Steve Reich. They appeared internationally at Seoul Arts Centre, Bang on a Can Marathon New York, The Phillips Collection, Washington D.C. and made an acclaimed recording of Philip Glass' complete string quartets on Signum Records.

World-class international groups Darragh has led include Ensemble Modern, London Sinfonietta, Musik Fabrik, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Remix Ensemble, Athelas Sinfonietta and Red Note Ensemble, working with conductors such as Pierre Boulez, Oliver Knussen and Heinz Holliger. He has been invited to lead the Macau Orchestra, Les Siecles, Opus 20, English Touring Opera, BBC 2's Genius of Beethoven series, English Session Orchestra and throughout the 2004 season was Artistic Director of Baroque 2000 in South Africa.

Darragh has recorded over 50 CDs for labels including Mode, NMC, Black Box, Altarus, Naxos, Nimbus, Signum and Delphian. He broadcasts regularly on BBC Radio 3, NPR, CBC, WQXR, RTE and WDR.

Darragh is currently professor of violin at The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, guest violin lecturer at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and previously Director of The Junior Guildhall String Ensemble. Darragh is Course Director of Pro Corda Violin Course. He has taught chamber music and contemporary music performance at the Royal College of Music, Trinity Laban Conservatoire, Britten-Pears Young Artists Programme and Apple Hill Centre for Chamber Music. He has been invited to give masterclasses at Stellenbosch Conservatorium, Busk Aid Soweto, Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts and Birmingham Conservatoire. In 2010 Darragh curated The Irish-American Series at Kings Place, London and has been Artistic Director of CoMA's Open Score project and Music @ Drumcliffe in Ireland. Darragh has appeared as a mentor on the RTE series Classic Jam, working with a young string quartet and also as mentor to Katie Derham in the Sky Arts production, 'First Love'.

Darragh has premiered music by Johannes Maria Staud, Michael Nyman, Arvo Part, John Tavener, Gavin Bryars, Kevin Volans, Howard Skempton, Yannis Kryakides, Emmanuel Nunes, Gerald Barry, Graham Fitkin, Mira Calix and Stephen Montague. Composers who have dedicated works to him include Michael Finnissy, Chris Newman, Donnacha Dennehy, Joseph Phibbs, Richard Causton, Joe Cutler, Deirdre Gribbin, Ed Bennett, Micheal O Suilleabhain, Piers Hellawell, Andrew Poppy, Morgan Hayes, Dmitri Smirnov, Christopher Fox, Lukas Ligeti, Jonty Harrison and Simon Emmerson. He has collaborated with a wide range of artists including Rokia Traore, Thomas Ades, Emmanuel Pahud, John Tilbury, Joanna MacGregor, writer Alexander McCall Smith, French Horn player Richard Watkins and Jazz saxophonist Peter King.

Darragh studied with Detlef Hahn at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London. He has received chamber music coaching from The Amadeus & Takacs String Quartets, and participated in masterclasses with Sidney Griller, Yehudi Menuhin, Mauricio Fuks, Paul Zukofsky, Pinchas Zukerman, Yfrah Neaman and Pierre Amoyal. He plays a fine 19th Century Italian violin made by Domenico Corbucci and an Irish violin made by Thomas Perry in 1768.

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

As soloist and chamber musician, Irish pianist **Mary Dullea** performs internationally at venues including London's Wigmore Hall, Casa da Musica (Porto), Shanghai Oriental Arts Centre, Phillips Collection Washington D.C., Symphony Space New York City, Palazzo Albrizzi Venice (Italy), Johannesburg Musical Society and National Concert Hall Dublin. Festival appearances include City of London, Cheltenham, St. Magnus International Festival, Belfast International Chamber Music Festival, Brighton, Huddersfield, Corsham, Aldeburgh, Fuse Leeds and Sound Scotland as well as Belfast Festival at Queens, West Cork Music, Reggello International Festival, Lodi Festival (Italy), TRANSIT Festival (Leuven) and National Arts Festival (South Africa). Her frequent broadcasts include BBC Radio 3, Radio 4, RTHK, RTE Lyric FM, WNYC, Radio New Zealand and Sky Arts, Irish, French, Austrian and Italian television. She was the Irish representative at EU 12 and 15 Piano Extravaganza Concerts in Salle Pleyel Paris, Palais des Beaux-Arts Brussels and in Luxembourg. Concerto appearances include RTE Concert Orchestra, KZN Philharmonic Orchestra and the BBC commissioned and broadcast piano concerto by Rob Keeley with Lontano.

A sought-after interpreter of new music, Mary's expansive repertoire covers the standard piano literature as well as an ever-increasing amount of 20th- and 21st- century compositions, many of which are dedicated to her. She has commissioned and premiered works from composers as varied as Michael Finnissy, Johannes Maria Staud, Michael Nyman, Donnacha Dennehy and Gerald Barry – notably with her piano trio, The Fidelio Trio and with violinist, Darragh Morgan.

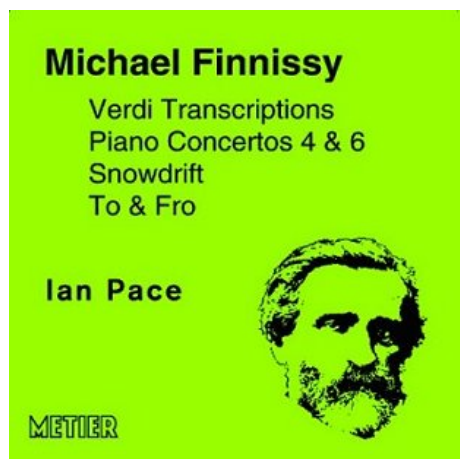
Mary's CD releases include on labels NMC, Delphian Records, Altarus, Col Legno, MNR, Naxos, Convivium, Lorelt and Divine Art/Metier. Since 2008 she has been the curator of Soundings (an annual UK/Austrian collaborative new music festival) at the Austrian Cultural Forum London. She is currently Artist-in-Residence at St. Patrick's College Drumcondra, Dublin City University with The Fidelio Trio. In February 2015 she will serve on the jury of 'Schubert und die Musik der Moderne' International Chamber Music Competition in Graz, Austria.

Mary studied at The Royal College of Music, London on the Edith Best Scholarship with Yonty Solomon. She holds a MMus in Contemporary Music Studies from Goldsmiths University of London and a PhD in Performance from The University of Ulster which focused on repertoire incorporating the use of the inside and the outside of the piano.

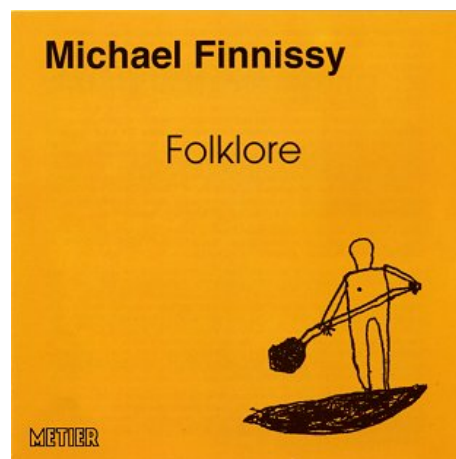
Mary is the Director of Performance at The University of Sheffield and is also on the teaching staff of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

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

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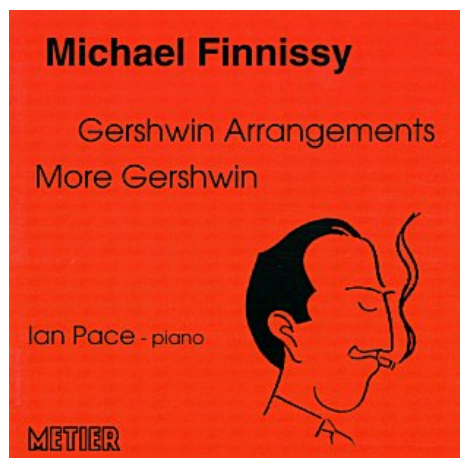
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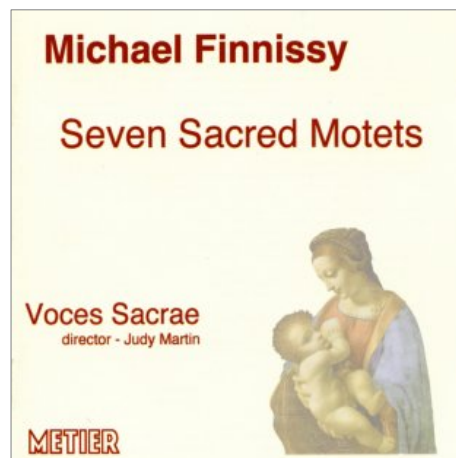
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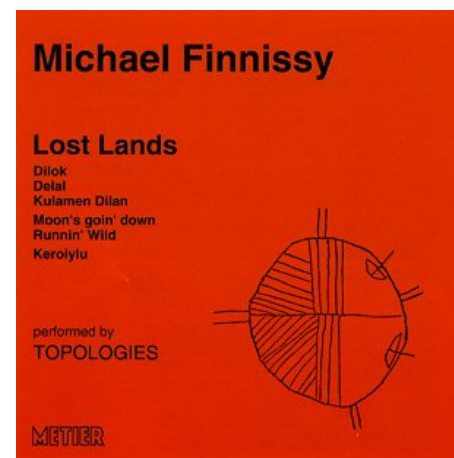
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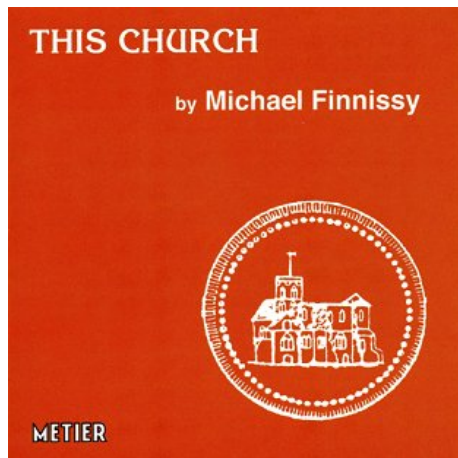


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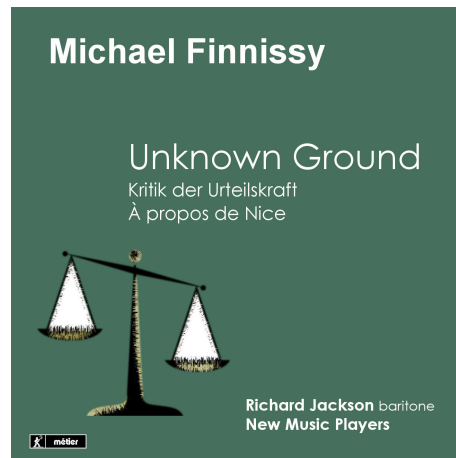


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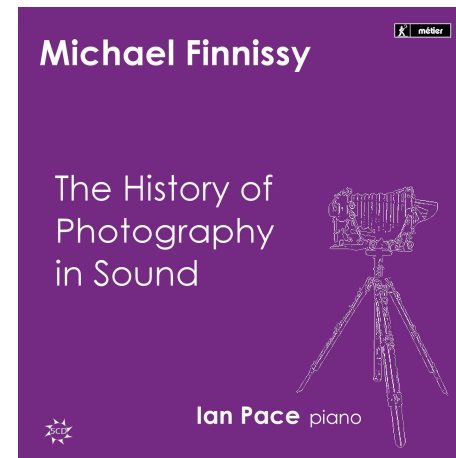




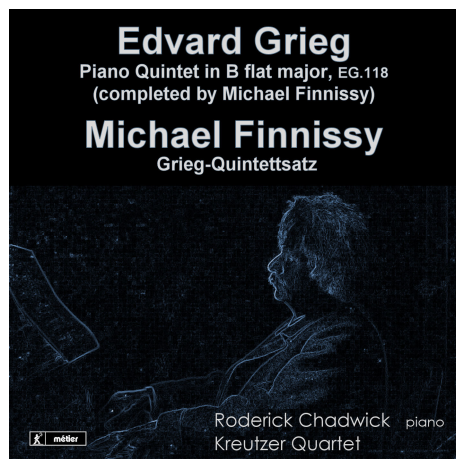
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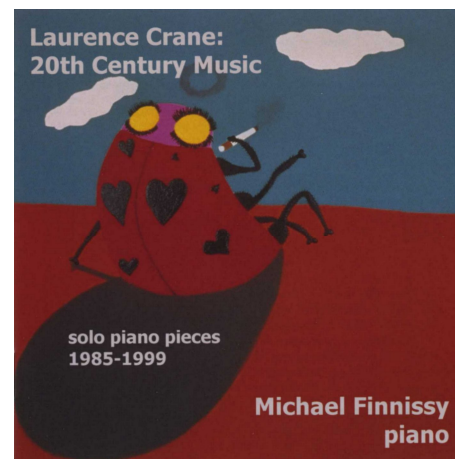
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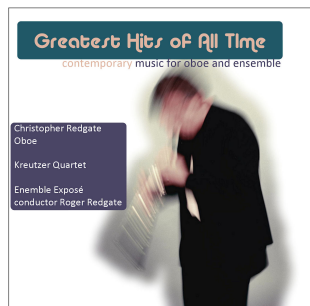
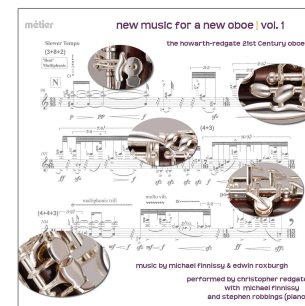
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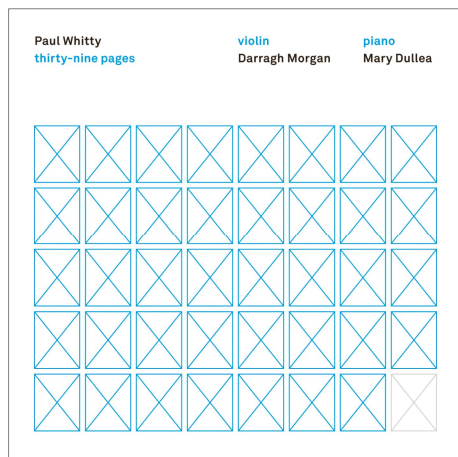


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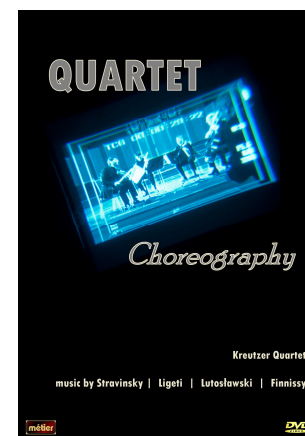
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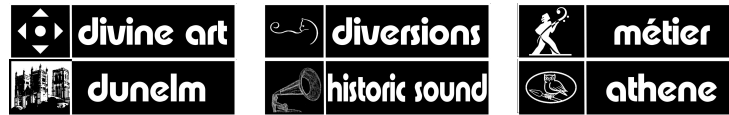
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“Thirty-nine pages”, by Paul Whitty

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**Michael Finnissy**

