

Explore Ensemble

Friday 21 November, 7pm
Huddersfield Town Hall

Explore Ensemble:

Taylor MacLennan flutes

Alex Roberts clarinets

Sarah Park piano

Emma Purslow violin

Christine Anderson viola

Deni Teo cello

Nicholas Moroz sound

Rytis Mažulis (Lithuania, 1961)

Canon Mensurabilis (new version) (1998/2025) 15' **World Premiere**

When circumstances turned out so favorably and it became clear that Explore Ensemble would be performing my piece *Canon Mensurabilis* at this year's Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, I began to think

about a new version of this work. Written 25 years ago, *Canon Mensurabilis* is a typical example illustrating strict structural organisation and a complex network of interrelationships between the internal elements of the material. Paradoxically, this complexly constructed work sounds simple and transparent, and when listening to the music, we do not follow the complex structural processes, such as the system of inversions, transpositions, and permutations of quarter-tone series. "Where is the canon, we didn't hear it?" listeners sometimes ask, and I have to explain the connections with the mensural rhythm system and the proportions of different time durations. In addition, we revive the Renaissance concept of the canon as *regula compositoris* (composer's rule), presented in an enigmatic way (but not a piece of music based on melodic imitation, which was called a fugue – *fuga*).

Finally, after thinking long and hard about how to approach this abstract musical text, as if it were a "thing in itself," I created an electronic track using a reworked piano part, playing it at three different tempos without strict calculations, and distributing it chaotically and randomly in space, with this material sounding in electronic timbres. The juxtaposition and simultaneous interaction of digital and acoustic sound should create a striking dramatic effect. In fact, this would be a new interpretation of the same musical material.

I would like to sincerely thank Nicholas Moroz, the director of Explore Ensemble, for his productive creative collaboration and technical assistance in preparing a new version of the work for performance.

© **Rytis Mažulis**

Bryn Harrison (UK, 1969)

The spectre...is always already a figure of that which is to come (2025) 40'
World Premiere

The title of this work comes from Jonathan Boulter's *Posthuman Space in Samuel Beckett's Short Prose* (2019). Drawing on Derrida, Boulter makes the interesting claim that the characters we encounter in Beckett's prose, although disfigured or disembodied, are nonetheless still located within the world. Over the past six years I have begun to consider how we might think of recordings made by musicians as being a bit like spectres – sounds from the past that are now disembodied and removed from their original location, yet still able to communicate in the present. I am reminded of what the composer Morton Feldman said about his piece *Three Voices* (1982), in which the solo singer is accompanied by two recordings of their own voice played back through speakers, one to the left and one to the right. Feldman described the relationship between the live soloist and the two speakers as being “tomb-stoney”.

This is the fourth piece I have written in which pre-recorded versions of the events that are performed live are incorporated into musical works as part of the real-time experience. As with another recent piece, *Towards a slowing of the past* (2023), the recorded material heard during the performance is often presented in reverse, and sometimes pitch-shifted, or speed-adjusted. In the case of this new work, live and recorded materials are often heard simultaneously, or slightly ahead of or behind one another. It is the complexity and the friction that arises from, on the one hand, the fixed/representative aspects of recordings, and on the other, their live presence, that I find to be perceptually compelling. The piece was commissioned by Explore Ensemble and Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and is dedicated to Explore Ensemble.

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***Canon Mensurabilis (revised version)* is commissioned by hcmf//**

***The spectre...is always already a figure of that which is to come* is co-commissioned by Explore Ensemble (with the support of the Vaughan Williams Foundation and the Radcliffe Trust) and hcmf//**