

[Boring Like A Drill. A Blog.](#)

[New music that stays new](#)

Monday 23 January 2017

I need to talk about some recent releases on Simon Reynell's [Another Timbre](#) label because I've got a small stack of them here and still more are due to come out in February already. There are over a hundred of these things now, all sharing a distinct aesthetic and sensibility while still exploring fresh terrain – last year's albums of [Jürg Frey's guitar music](#) and [Linda Catlin Smith's *Dirt Road*](#) are good examples of this fresh growth. The music ranges from composed to improvised, and sometimes from somewhere in between, with composers and musicians from Britain and abroad, both familiar and new.

The hundredth CD has a little bit of everything. [Seaside](#) was recorded over two days at the pianist John Tilbury's house, with the Palestinian oud player Dirar Kalash and composer John Lely on electronics. Group improvisations alternate with solo works by Lely and Christian Wolff. Instead of piano, Tilbury plays the clavichord; a very quiet instrument which is played unamplified throughout these recordings. Besides its delicacy, the sound is strange and exotic, aided by Tilbury making use of pitch bends and unusual intonations. The solo adaptations of two cyclical pieces Wolff wrote for Tilbury back in 1969-70 have a crystalline beauty. Kalash's oud blends well with the clavichord, while Lely's electronics are so discreet as to merge with the ambient sounds in and around the house. The group pieces effectively capture a moment, a place, but are less satisfying as coherent musical works. To my ears, at least; I have a problem with improvisation in general. My patience is tested.

I'm more comfortable talking about the two discs dedicated to composers, [Dante Boon](#) and [Giuliano d'Angiolini](#). It's fascinating to compare the two albums, particularly as each composer talks about their use of indeterminate means of organising their music. Both cite the influence of the "[New York School](#)" of composers who introduced indeterminacy to their music in the 1950s, with both of them placing particular emphasis on John Cage's last compositions in the 1980s and early 1990s. The disruptive anarchy of the Fifties and Sixties avant-garde didn't die away; a tradition emerged and evolved from it. It was largely unnoticed in the world of Serious Music, preoccupied as it was with certainties, whether proffered by Pierre Boulez or Philip Glass.

Cage found a peace between his philosophy and overtly "beautiful" music. Some twenty years later, Boon has assimilated Cage's ideas well enough to be confident of using them for what he describes as "classical, romantic European art". His album [Clarinet \(& Piano\)](#) features Jürg Frey as the soloist on all three works (Boon accompanies on piano on two). I've [mentioned before](#) how, as a composer, Frey has transcended the philosophical purity of his earlier Wandelweiser pieces to make music that more directly affects senses and sentiment without pandering to the listener. This trait becomes clear in his playing of music by others, too (and Boon discusses in more detail on the CD's website). Boon's music floats in that ambiguous realm of mood inhabited by Morton Feldman's late music and similar works at the more introspective end of minimal music. The indeterminate composition makes both musicians work together, outside of externally imposed measures of time. Like late Cage, it's simultaneously looser (as in more open to potential disruption, less claustrophobic) yet more impersonal (as in the way that nature is impersonal). It

shows those works from the late 1980s were not an endpoint.

Giuliano d'Angiolini also speaks of his admiration for Cage and Feldman, and laments that indeterminacy “has been to some extent pushed to the margins, ignored or misunderstood. Too often art is artificial, and too often the artist tries to surprise us or force an emotion upon us. Indeterminacy or chance put a brake on our will.” His CD *Cantilena* presents works for piano, string quartet, mixed ensemble and multi-tracked flutes. d'Angiolini describes the pieces as “simple compositional machines” but the simplicity of the materials (gamuts of notes, scales) and transparency of the few rules used to perform them yield a restrained lyricism that flows through the entire disc. The slow-motion single notes of the piano piece *Finale* contrast with the succession of frail chords in the highest register in *Allegretto 94.6*. The string quartet (*suoni della neve e del gelo*) employs Cage's flexible time-brackets to create a distinctive piece of short phrases and isolated sounds.

With both of these composers there's an emphasis on producing subtle music from the simplest material, organised by simple methods to produce combinations that are complex – in affect if not in surface texture. Great reliance is placed on the performers to interpret the notation, but not in ways that requires subjective inspiration. In all this they show a lot in common with the musical thinking of Christian Wolff – another former footnote to critics of Serious Music who has recently re-emerged as a guiding spirit in the present time.

Filed under: [Music](#), [Reviews](#) by **Ben.H**

Profile

[Sign in with Twitter](#) [Sign in with Facebook](#)

or

Comment

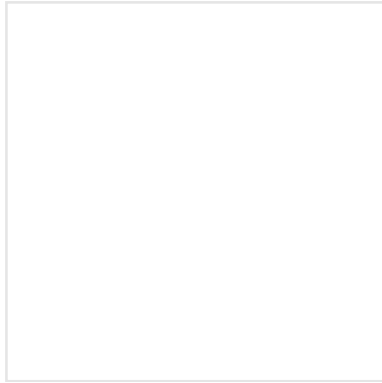
Name

Email Not published

Website

« [Brief footnote re Julius Eastman](#)

- [New album](#)



• On Twitter



Ben.Harper

@cookylamoo

Excuse me it clearly says Fritz you uncultured Easterner GOOD NIGHT MADAM

4h

• Categories

- [Art](#) (163)
- [Filler By Proxy](#) (83)
- [Film](#) (41)
- [Journalism](#) (51)
- [London](#) (96)
- [Music](#) (618)
- [Please Mister Please](#) (148)
- [Reviews](#) (58)
- [Self-promotion](#) (136)
- [Stupidity](#) (206)
- [Television](#) (51)
- [The Bunker](#) (55)
- [Travel](#) (57)
- [Writing](#) (114)

• More Kulchur

- [Antboy \(Will Guthrie\)](#)
- [Anthony Pateras](#)
- [Bus](#)
- [Conical](#)
- [Dalkey Archive](#)
- [David Tudor](#)
- [Grey Area Art Space](#)

- [Haiku Review](#)
- [Hearing Organised Sound](#)
- [John Cage](#)
- [Magic 1278](#)
- [Michael Graeve](#)
- [Morton Feldman](#)
- [Natasha Anderson](#)
- [NMA Publications](#)
- [Other Minds Archive](#)
- [Penultimate Press](#)
- [PostClassic](#)
- [Renewable Music](#)
- [Robin Fox](#)
- [Slave Pianos / Rohan Drape](#)
- [The Rambler](#)
- [Victorian Trugo Association](#)
- [West Space](#)

• Archives

- [January 2017](#)
- [December 2016](#)
- [November 2016](#)
- [October 2016](#)
- [September 2016](#)
- [August 2016](#)
- [July 2016](#)
- [June 2016](#)
- [May 2016](#)
- [April 2016](#)
- [March 2016](#)
- [February 2016](#)
- [January 2016](#)
- [December 2015](#)
- [November 2015](#)
- [October 2015](#)
- [September 2015](#)
- [August 2015](#)
- [July 2015](#)
- [June 2015](#)
- [May 2015](#)
- [April 2015](#)
- [March 2015](#)
- [February 2015](#)
- [January 2015](#)
- [December 2014](#)
- [November 2014](#)
- [October 2014](#)

- [September 2014](#)
- [August 2014](#)
- [July 2014](#)
- [June 2014](#)
- [May 2014](#)
- [April 2014](#)
- [March 2014](#)
- [February 2014](#)
- [January 2014](#)
- [December 2013](#)
- [November 2013](#)
- [October 2013](#)
- [September 2013](#)
- [August 2013](#)
- [July 2013](#)
- [June 2013](#)
- [May 2013](#)
- [April 2013](#)
- [March 2013](#)
- [February 2013](#)
- [January 2013](#)
- [December 2012](#)
- [November 2012](#)
- [October 2012](#)
- [September 2012](#)
- [August 2012](#)
- [July 2012](#)
- [June 2012](#)
- [May 2012](#)
- [April 2012](#)
- [March 2012](#)
- [February 2012](#)
- [January 2012](#)
- [December 2011](#)
- [November 2011](#)
- [October 2011](#)
- [September 2011](#)
- [August 2011](#)
- [July 2011](#)
- [June 2011](#)
- [May 2011](#)
- [April 2011](#)
- [March 2011](#)
- [February 2011](#)
- [January 2011](#)
- [December 2010](#)
- [November 2010](#)
- [October 2010](#)
- [September 2010](#)

- [August 2010](#)
- [July 2010](#)
- [June 2010](#)
- [May 2010](#)
- [April 2010](#)
- [March 2010](#)
- [February 2010](#)
- [January 2010](#)
- [December 2009](#)
- [November 2009](#)
- [October 2009](#)
- [September 2009](#)
- [August 2009](#)
- [July 2009](#)
- [June 2009](#)
- [May 2009](#)
- [April 2009](#)
- [March 2009](#)
- [February 2009](#)
- [January 2009](#)
- [December 2008](#)
- [November 2008](#)
- [October 2008](#)
- [September 2008](#)
- [August 2008](#)
- [July 2008](#)
- [June 2008](#)
- [May 2008](#)
- [April 2008](#)
- [March 2008](#)
- [February 2008](#)
- [January 2008](#)
- [December 2007](#)
- [November 2007](#)
- [October 2007](#)
- [September 2007](#)
- [August 2007](#)
- [July 2007](#)
- [June 2007](#)
- [May 2007](#)
- [April 2007](#)
- [March 2007](#)
- [February 2007](#)
- [January 2007](#)
- [December 2006](#)
- [November 2006](#)
- [October 2006](#)
- [September 2006](#)
- [August 2006](#)

- [July 2006](#)
- [June 2006](#)
- [May 2006](#)
- [April 2006](#)
- [March 2006](#)
- [February 2006](#)
- [January 2006](#)
- [December 2005](#)
- [November 2005](#)
- [October 2005](#)
- [September 2005](#)
- [August 2005](#)
- [July 2005](#)
- [June 2005](#)
- [May 2005](#)
- [April 2005](#)
- [March 2005](#)
- [February 2005](#)
- [January 2005](#)
- [December 2004](#)
- [November 2004](#)
- [October 2004](#)
- [September 2004](#)
- [August 2004](#)



[Ben Harper](#)

[Music](#)

[On Bandcamp](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Capitalists Inc.](#)

[Art](#)

[Writing](#)

[Boring Like A Drill](#)

- [About](#)
- [Music Shop](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Soundcloud](#)
- [Youtube](#)
- [Subscribe \(RSS\)](#)
- [Email](#)

Copyright © [Boring Like A Drill](#) 2004-2016. A [Cooky La Moo](#) production.