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# Caerulean

Carl Rosman

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# Caerulean

Carl Rosman **clarinets**

Mark Knoop **piano (Flechtwerk)**

<b>1</b>	Rebecca Saunders	<b>Caerulean</b> (2010-11) [bass clarinet]	<b>18'44"</b>
<b>2</b>	Georges Aperghis	<b>Damespiel</b> (2011) [bass clarinet]	<b>7'21"</b>
<b>3</b>	Aaron Cassidy	<b>The wreck of former boundaries</b> (2016) [clarinet in B flat]	<b>7'41"</b>
<b>4</b>	Richard Barrett	<b>Flechtwerk</b> (2002-6) [clarinet in A and piano]	<b>17'28"</b>
<b>5-9</b>	Chikako Morishita	<b>Skin, Gelatine, Soot</b> (2013) [bass clarinet]	<b>19'23"</b>
		<b>I 4'22"</b>	
		<b>II 4'01"</b>	
		<b>III 2'20"</b>	
		<b>IV 1'26"</b>	
		<b>V 7'13"</b>	
<b>10,11</b>	Mauricio Kagel	<b>Elegie para clarinete solo</b> (1956) [clarinet in B flat]	<b>38"</b>
		<b>Pieza para clarinete solo</b> (1957) [clarinet in B flat]	<b>1'51"</b>

**Recording venue:** Studio des Ensemble Musikfabrik, Köln, July-August 2016

**Recording producer/mastering:** Stephan Schmidt

**Production assistance:** Rebecca Saunders (1) Sarah Saviet (2)  
Aaron Cassidy (3,10,11) Mark Knoop (4)  
Chikako Morishita (5-9)

**Additional editing:** Aaron Cassidy (3)

**Design:** Mike Spikin

**Booklet notes:** Carl Rosman

**Cover photograph:** © Dudarev Mikhail

**Project Management:** Matthew Sergeant, CeReNeM,  
for Huddersfield Contemporary Records  
[www.hud.ac.uk/hcr](http://www.hud.ac.uk/hcr)

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Dedicated to Richard Toop, with thanks for years of inspiration, friendship and encouragement.  
Deepest thanks to the composers and to Mark for their continuing collaboration and trust.

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*Damespiel* was commissioned by Ensemble Musikfabrik with the support of the Ministry for  
Family, Children, Youth, Culture and Sport of the State of Nordrhein-Westfalen

*The wreck of former boundaries* was commissioned for the 30th anniversary celebrations of  
the ELISION Ensemble

*Flechtwerk* was commissioned by Mark Knoop and Carl Rosman

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There are collaborations and collaborations. Sometimes performer and composer work closely on every detail of a piece, developing its tonal palette together, trying out preliminary versions over months or years, the composer remaining involved in the tiniest parameters of timing, tone production or rubato, constantly adjusting details up to the premiere and beyond (recording sessions certainly not excluded). But sometimes the fact that a trusted performer on a well-known instrument wants a solo piece is sufficient stimulus on its own: a piece can also simply arrive and go out into the world without any need for working sessions, the composer leaving the finer details of sonic and temporal realisation to the performer. It goes without saying that neither extreme of the spectrum, nor indeed any point along it, either guarantees or has a monopoly in the creation of musically fulfilling solo works.

Rebecca Saunders's *Caerulean* falls very much into the former category. Rebecca and I first met in 2003, to work on materials for the dance project *insideout* (with Ensemble Musikfabrik and Sasha Waltz's dance company). The question of whether a performer has a favourite area of instrumental technique is a fairly standard one. In this case the answer was a particular category of multiphonics featuring two clear pitches in relatively close intervals, obtained by opening a hole high on the tube while leaving most of the other holes closed, giving a high fundamental pitch in combination with a low pitch in the first overblown register. (Those sounds found their way not only into *insideout* but into the chamber piece *Stirrings Still*, recorded on WERGO 66942.) Over the following years we had several sessions working towards other Ensemble Musikfabrik projects, and with the idea of a bass clarinet solo regularly in the back of our minds. The question



Carl Rosman and Rebecca Saunders  
Photo credit: Klaus Rudolph

often surfaced of the feasibility of finding close-interval dyads for bass clarinet similar to those used on the clarinet in A for *Stirrings Still*. The relatively sparse selection available on the bass clarinet seemed a problem (since the tone-holes are so much larger, it is more difficult to ‘confuse’ the air column into vibrating in two modes at once) until it was augmented by other dyads obtained by aiming ‘between’ the second and third registers. The result is a series of major sixths of subtly different intonations – the effect is acoustically predictable but musically attractive, and responsible both in its euphony and its necessarily restrained dynamic profile for a large part of *Caerulean’s* sound-world, especially when combined in trills, double trills and a pivotal ‘double double trill’ (a trill between two double trills) which recurs throughout the piece. Equally important was Rebecca’s question of what happens when these sounds, only stable in pianissimo, are pushed into fortissimo – ultimately, it was perhaps the answer to this question that provided Rebecca with the necessary stimulus to turn the sounds into a piece.

Georges Aperghis’s *Damespiel* came into being in a quite different situation. I performed and recorded his chamber concerto *Babil* with Ensemble Musikfabrik in 2005 and we met the following year when I performed his Trio for clarinet, cello and piano with ensemble ascolta at the Darmstadt Ferienkurse. We eventually discussed the possibility of a solo piece (which would be far from his first clarinet solo – he had previously collaborated fruitfully with such legendary clarinettists as Michel Portal and Armand Angster); he suggested working on the piece in the ‘cracks’ between major projects, but the opportunity for a commission soon arose and it was not long before a piece arrived in the post. There were no specific discussions of performance techniques – he had already written copiously for the clarinet, and heard me play his existing music for it. We did not even work directly on the piece prior to its first performance: the plan was to do so directly before the premiere, which at the last minute he could not attend. And yet the piece is for me as personal as any, with its particular technical challenges (most notably extended passages in the altissimo register) requiring very individual solutions.

The first work by Aaron Cassidy I premiered was not written for me – *Metallic dust* (since recorded on a NEOS portrait CD) was composed some time before we met. (Indeed

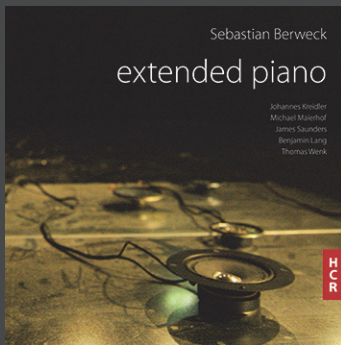
neither was the second - the vocal work *I, purples, spat blood, laugh of beautiful lips*, recorded on the same CD, with a video easily found online). A prime concern of Aaron's work for many years has been the decoupling of the parameters of instrumental performance – leading in many pieces to a notation renouncing explicit reference to pitch entirely, instead focussing on the actions of the performers' bodies in intricate tablature processes. From our earliest discussions of this solo, though, Aaron expressed a desire to write *notes* – a significant departure from his notational concerns of the previous several years. The decoupling is still there, in the superposition of embouchure and articulative layers; the multiphonic and microtonal sequences obtained by combining open holes at the top of the instrument with closed holes along most of the remainder of its length hint at typical results of decoupling procedures (while also resulting in some of the same dyads Rebecca Saunders used in *Stirrings Still* and Richard Barrett used in *Flechtwerk*). The careful investigation of the resulting pitches, on the other hand, makes explicit a concern not only with the dismantling of parameters but with how they might usefully be reassembled.

Like Georges Aperghis, Richard Barrett had already composed clarinet solo works for other performers by the time *Flechtwerk* came into being. Indeed he had also composed a solo work for me (*interference*, for contrabass clarinet with voice and pedal bass drum, since released on CD by both ELISION and Ensemble Musikfabrik). Mark Knoop and I had already given a number of concerts together as a duo and wanted to rectify the relative lack of substantial recent works for the combination. As often with Richard, *Flechtwerk* takes the instrumentation itself as a primary stimulus for its material, exhaustively exploring not only the instruments' areas of common ground but their many incompatibilities – appropriately the title refers to weaving, but also to lichens (*Flechte* in German) which normally grow together but whose green and white components can be separated in a laboratory to grow independently. It begins with the two instruments very much functioning as a unit, with similar textures in the same pitch range (the piano part mostly written on a single stave). The instruments soon begin to pursue divergent obsessions, even going their own way in extended solo passages (the piano finally playing across its full range in characteristic chordal textures; the clarinet

with a passage employing tablature techniques, influenced by the circular-breathed solos of saxophonist Evan Parker). They eventually reunite in perhaps more unexpected tonal correspondences (piano notes on muted strings with clarinet slap-tongue; piano and clarinet combining in overtone playing). The clarinet is finally given two short passages of two-part polyphony, a texture rather more often associated with the piano – enabled by the same collection of dyads I showed Rebecca Saunders at around the same time, although while Rebecca’s use of them gives the illusion of a chorale, Richard makes use of notes in common between them to create the illusion of two separate lines.

In April 2013 I performed a solo concert at the University of Huddersfield, as part of a brief residency. As is normal on such occasions, the concert programme included two new works by senior students, of whom Chikako Morishita was one. It is also normal on such occasions for works to arrive relatively close to the deadline. At the beginning of February a modest 14-bar draft version arrived but Chikako would eventually discard this completely, and what arrived about two weeks before the concert was an epic solo work in five movements, full of cross-references, with a duration at the premiere of 18 minutes – at the time as long as any solo work in my repertoire. The title of *Skin, Gelatine, Soot* springs from the image of Japanese calligraphy on skin, Chikako speculating on what memories the animal- and vegetable-derived substances involved in the process might bring with them from their former existences.

I was lucky enough to work with Kagel on several occasions towards the end of his life – many classic Kagel *bons mots* are still quoted on a regular basis at Ensemble Musikfabrik. These tiny fragments, presented here as a ‘bonus’ coda to this collection, date from before his move from Argentina to Europe – I premiered them in a memorial concert in 2011. I played various solo and chamber works with him present but never had (or made) the chance to work with him in detail on such pieces as *Schattenklänge* or *Atem*. I did at least have the pleasure of playing the former work in his presence, as well as *Unguis incarnatus est*, in which the silence after my final offstage scream was broken not at first by applause but by an unmistakably Argentinian-accented growl of “Mein Gott!”.



extended piano  
2009, HCR01



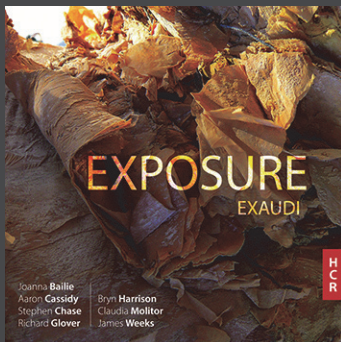
transference  
2010, HCR02



strange forces  
2010, HCR03



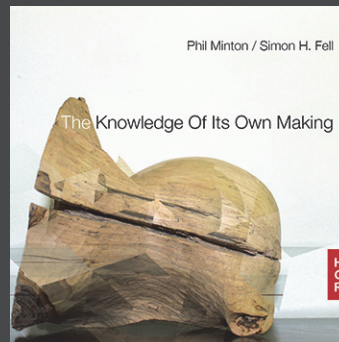
In Search of the  
Miraculous, 2011  
HCR05



EXPOSURE  
2013, HCR06



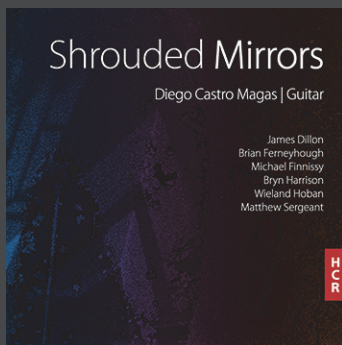
ZETA POTENTIAL  
2013, HCR07



The Knowledge Of  
Its Own Making, 2014  
HCR08



πτελέα | Ptelea  
2015, HCR09



Shrouded Mirrors  
2015, HCR10



Beat Generation  
Ballads, 2015  
HCR11

# Catalogue

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**5-9** Chikako Morishita **Skin, Gelatine, Soot**

**10,11** Mauricio Kagel **Elegie, Pieza**

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