

DANIELE VENTURI

LUMEN



LISA CELLA
MARK MENZIES
FABIANA CIAMPI

FLUTES
VIOLIN
HARPSICHORD



DANIELE VENTURI (1971)

1. **Lumen** (2010-2011) for soprano flute 11'22"
2. **Arlia** (2006-2008) * for soprano flute and violin 09'14"
3. **Trois très triste** (2007) for soprano flute 05'17"
4. **Le chant del nane Periòt** (2008) for alto flute and live electronics ad libitum 12'49"
5. **Shooting stars Night** (2008) for bass flute 11'44"
6. **Double** (2010) for soprano flute 01'25"
7. **Radi** (2009) ** for soprano flute and harpsichord 02'10"
8. **Lux** (2011) for soprano flute 02'13"
9. **Spettri** (2012) second version for bass flute 06'16"

LISA CELLA flutes
MARK MENZIES violin *
FABIANA CIAMPI harpsichord **

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Sound engineer recordings tracks 1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9

Aaron Crawford

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Sound engineer recordings track 2

John Baffa

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Lumen:

Works for and with Flute by Daniele Venturi

The flute, it could be argued, is integral to the evolution of musical modernism.

After all, the unofficial but often accepted birth of modern music, 1894's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* by Claude Debussy, begins with a solo for this ultra-ancient instrument. Debussy later wrote a piece for solo flute, *Syrinx*, and his younger colleague Edgard Varèse wrote one, too, *Density 21.5*, indeed the latter for Georges Barrère, the same man who, as an 18-year-old, had been the first to play Debussy's *Prélude*. *Syrinx* and *Density 21.5* constitute an essential part of any living flutist's accoutrements, even those who otherwise tend toward less-exacting corners of the repertoire.

From the 1950s onward, as composers' demands on instrumentalists became more and more stringent, the support of willing interpreters became essential. What historians refer to rather narrowly as the *Darmstadt School* had, for instance, Severino Gazzelloni; Brian Ferneyhough had Pierre-Yves Artaud; Aldo Clementi, Luigi Nono and Salvatore Sciarrino had Roberto Fabbriciani, and Sciarrino later had Mario Caroli; and countless others, including Robert Aitken in Canada and Harvey Sollberger in the USA, are both composers in their own right and have been the recipients of countless new works written with their skills in mind.

One result of this close link between composer and performer has been an irrevocable forward rush in terms of what is possible – a wild idea is suddenly more than an abstract notion on a page. A generation's most demanding techniques become commonplace for the next one, and by now, several generations after Gazzelloni, the flute seems almost boundless with the variety of sounds, pitched and otherwise, that it can produce.

Another result of this synergistic relationship between composer and performer, and thus between an instrumentalist and his or her instruments, is the diversification of the broader flute family, with an ever-growing catalogue of works exploring the timbral possibilities of piccolo, alto flute, bass flute, contrabass flute – and in more recent years, flutes that are even lower in register.

This basic, and by nature somewhat simplistic recapitulation works only as a means of placing the heritage to which Daniele Venturi clearly aligns himself, the flute as a timeless yet modern instrument, indeed a *timelessly modern* one, more a source of careful and thorough exploration than a harbinger of pastoral melody.

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The present recording compiles nine works for and with flutes of various sorts, six solos, one solo with optional live electronics and two duos (violin and harpsichord, respectively), and they showcase aspects of the composer's thinking from 2006-15.

Similarities and disparities are at play within these nine scores, but the overall tendency towards slowness and dynamics finely distinguished among the quieter ends of the spectrum prevails in each piece, as does a tempo that seldom if ever fluctuates. The composer's taxonomy is vast, and the means of articulation and sound production are calibrated accordingly, between lip vibrato and diaphragm vibrato, for instance, with occasional use of notes meant to recall a jazz improviser. Every note is assigned a different dynamic marking and notes of exact pitch are played in alternation with pitch-bends of between one-sixth and one-third of a tone, both ways of increasing the available possibilities and stepping beyond the smooth *legato* sound commonly associated with the flute family.

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Lumen for flute, the work that lends its title to the overall collection, dates from 2010-11 and finds the composer's aesthetics caught somewhere between the heavy reality of pitch and the airless expanse of multiphonics. An essay in duration and proportion, one with a static and even stoic trajectory, it juxtaposes purposeful rests with flurries of activity, its dynamic range generally quieter rather than louder, though extending from *pppp* to *fff* until a surprise ending that pushes far beyond.

Its structure is tripartite. Its opening and closing passages are both marked **Largo**; in the former (bb. 1–27), the core vocabulary of the work is presented; in the latter (bb. 74–109), the palette of techniques expands. On either side is a slow (indeed, only marginally faster

than either **Largo**) but substantial passage marked **Danza incessante** in 5/16 time (bb. 28–73). It is not terpsichorean in any standard sense, resembling much more a measured meander through an array of effects sublimated into a continuous, homogeneous texture.

Throughout the work, multiphonics are deployed to disorient standard pitches and thereby lend a sense of otherness to the proceedings, such as the use of two pizzicato effects, one meant to imitate the bass guitar. Such flights of fancy recur in other works, as if the composer wished the wind instrument of yore to grow strings.

The first duo is *Arlia* for flute and violin, composed in 2006–08. Calling it a duo short-changes it, in fact, as the dialogue between the two performers is almost constant, with only a respite for literal and figurative breathing; indeed, these caesurae recall a natural stream whose flow occasionally tapers off. Interwoven and interlocked to the extent of beginning to assume qualities of each other's instrument without ever shearing themselves of their own identities, the flutist and the violinist could almost be interpreted as a single organism, but one with elements of parasitism and symbiosis: are they in harmony with each other, or resigned to their conjoined fate? The tempo never wavers and the marking remains **Calmo**; so it is, the exhalation and inhalation of gentleness and anxiety.

Trois très triste for flute dates from 2007. As befits its alliterative title, it is an unbroken **Larghissimo** and it contains many more elements of a traditional, indeed almost melodic, nature. Despite a few peaks at *ff*, and in line with the composer's general outlook, the score is overwhelmingly nearer to *p* and *mp*, and it ultimately ebbs away; its most salient feature is an expressive use of trills, lending it character despite its brief duration.

Keeping the sustained **Larghissimo** marking but switching to alto flute for *Le chant del nane Periòt*, written in 2008, the composer initially keeps the instrument in its middle register. As the alto flute fans above and below (mostly above, in fact), he adds optional live electronics whose low sounds fade in and out and whenever present they add an almost imperceptible shadow to the main discourse.

Also dating from 2008 is *Shooting stars night* for bass flute. Its form is a short opening and

long closing surrounding two faster sections. Marked **Adagio** (bb. 1–10), but at a faster tempo than any of the other pieces, the outset oscillates emphatic single notes with cascades of notes until the unmistakable **Danzando** section (bb. 11–28) heralds an uptick in activity. The revels peter out, but a new section, **Con grande slancio** (bb. 29–50), is true to its marking and shows the instrument to be as agile as any other. The aeolian sounds of the **Largo cantabile** (bb. 51–109), that round off the work, reinforce the primordial nature of the mankind.

The brief *Double* for flute, composed in 2010, is literal: its first section, “**Uomo**” (bb. 1–8), is marked **Con brio**; the second one, “**Uoma**” (bb. 9–19), is marked **Largo**. Rather than the baroque usage of the term, here the composer quickly segues from one disparate material to another.

Baroque inferences are more apparent in the collection’s second duo, 2009’s *Radi* for flute and harpsichord, though a guitar plectrum, as well as many other objects, like feathers and fingernails, inside the harpsichord remind us of which century they inhabit. Except for a cadenza of a sort in bb. 8–9 and a brief duet in bb. 10–11, the two instruments remain poles apart and soon cave into silence.

Lux for flute is from 2011 and is marked **Molto Adagio**. Another miniature, but not imbued only with light, it commemorates the birth of a son to two of the composer’s friends.

The origins of *Spettri* date to 2012, when it was written for tenor recorder. The version performed here is the composer’s own arrangement for bass flute, made in 2015. Despite the change of register, the airiness of the original instrument is intact. Its course takes it seamlessly through five sections, **Adagio cantabile** (bb. 1–29), **Con slancio** (bb. 30–49), **Adagio** (bb. 50–63), **Moderato** (bb. 64–83), and **Molto adagio** (bb. 84–105).

Dan Albertson



Mark Menzies © Freddie Gash

Introduction to my compositional techniques and poetics

This CD records a journey that was both spiritual and musical. Symbolism and psychology have played a big part. Symbolism has dictated the order of the pieces. There are nine pieces, and this number stands for completeness. It has the power of all preceding numbers. In various traditions of Indian philosophy (Hinduism, for example), it symbolizes generation and incarnation. It is equal to three squared, *tempus perfectum* in *Musica Mensurabilis*.

According to Aristotle, it denotes the unity of musical measurement, allowing us to measure sound as the movement of the heavens allows us to measure time, and it is also the sum of two and seven. Two represents the division of unity, it symbolizes separation. From a theological perspective, unity is one and only one. According to the *Jewish cabala*, seven is the number of knowledge and wisdom. Nine is also a number that has its own effects. It is the number of gestation months.

In “Double”, the Chinese conception of *Yin* (black / night) and *Yang* (white / day) comes into play, for example. They represent both opposed and complementary forces. The piece has two formal areas representing male and female. At the same time, the style is clearly antithetical, just as one complements the other. Gérard Grisey, one of my teachers, said at our first meeting that my music, then in an embryonic state, had feminine characteristics, although I used “masculine” forms in the structure of my pieces. At first, I did not believe it, but now I think he had identified a key feature of my musical language – *lirismo materico*. A constant flow of lyrical elements is present at the heart of the piece, resulting in a sort of “song without end”.

The search for a utopian and hypnotic eradication of time springs from a desire to create a transcendent musical language with clear links to Indian and non-European music. The intent is to give the music a mystical character. Untuned pitches help free the listener from classical and “contemporary light” music.

Many of the pieces are based on mathematical concepts with regard to their form, rhythm and pitches. Most of the pieces employ a thirty-six-pitch scale. Each of these is divided

into three – waning, tuned and rising. The chromatic scale of twelve notes is also enriched by twenty-four microtones. If the total number of pitches (36) is divided by 9 the result is 4. If 3 is subtracted from 4 the result is 1 – absolute unity.

What is it that unifies these pieces?

Essentially, this is the modification of timbre by means of a chiseled compositional technique. The guiding thread (*fil rouge*) is the transformation of the flutes (soprano, alto, bass) into something different. Sometimes this is an imagined sound, sometimes the sound of different instruments, such as percussion or brass ensembles. For these reasons, in the pieces for flute (whether solo or accompanied) the player is required to sing into the instrument, to produce continuous nuances of timbre.

In “Radi” I treat the harpsichord in the same way. When the player plays on the tailpiece (tapping, pinching, or rubbing on the strings) the instrument is transformed. It sometimes becomes a sort of *Indian cymbalom*, sometimes a group of glass harmonicas. This occurs especially when the two instruments are combined. It must be stressed that each modification pursues a poetic purpose. So, even the use of mutes, achieved by various means such as tin foil, paper, felt, etc. The aim is to achieve, with respect to every instrument, a complete change of pitch and timbre. Other alterations to the instrument that have comparable effects are lengthenings of the instrument, cork mutes, etc. The instruments are given a range beyond the normal extension and become different instruments, such as panpipes, alphorns, bells, etc. Similarly, it happens with the violin. In “Arlia” the timbre of the sound is altered without the instrument being prepared.

There is a continuous alternation between the violin’s normal timbre and the timbre of the natural harmonics as well as a great richness in the points of contact between the bow hair, the wood and the strings. The result is a significant variety in the sounds produced by the bow. These can range from the sound of a keyboard as much as the sound created by playing on the tailpiece. The aim is to make a violin sound the same as the flute and vice-versa. The search has always concerned a single, imaginary instrument, created by a fusion of violin and flute timbres. There is an element of superstition in this piece. “L’Arlia” is a

dialect word. It is now obsolete but in the past it was used in the Bolognese Apennines to indicate a spirit taking possession of an animal or a human. This resulted in a state of anxiety or unease. The listener will hear why this was the inspiration for the piece.

The first performance was in Baltimore in 2016. It was repeated in San Diego New Music in 2016 and 2017. All performances were extraordinarily successful. Many of the audience thought they had been on a journey through space and time. They even thought that they had been hypnotised.

My choice of these pieces was governed by two considerations. First, all nine pieces are experimental, secondly, all are interchangeable. Therefore, the CD is a piece of unified theatre which contains certain features I have borrowed from *Nō* theatre. This refined form of theatre originated in Japan in the 14th century and made much use of masks whose action was notably predetermined.

Each title reveals the internal poetics of the piece as well as the semantics that characterizes each composition. These nine pieces represent a spiritual journey to “the inside”, whose chief characteristic is light, the inspiration for so many religions and philosophies. I have made particular use of *chiaroscuro*, which has opened the way to various shades of light and dark. This technique has strong links with other arts such as painting, sculpture, engraving, poetry, etc. I have frequently used mosaic, or rather an old pictorial technique based on the deployment of material fragments.

I have also used spectral techniques such as additive synthesis. With this technique, the opposite of subtractive synthesis, it is possible to create special timbres and complex waveforms by adding together single sound waves. These are usually sinusoidal.

Much of my music has been influenced by my work as a singer and transcriber of popular (folk) songs. Even here we can find untuned pitches and interesting forms of voice production. I have always been fascinated by the idea of creating new musical forms, especially unconventional ones, although I have retained classical tempo indications, such as *Adagio Cantabile*, *Largo* and *Moderato*.

Daniele Venturi

(English translation by Paul Kenyon and Gabriele Vighi)



Lisa Cella © Mike Olliver



Lisa Cella

A champion of contemporary music, Lisa Cella has performed throughout the United States and abroad. She is a founding member of NOISE, the resident ensemble of San Diego New Music. With NOISE she has performed the works of young composers all around the world including at the Acousmania Festival in Bucharest, Romania, the Pacific Rim Festival at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and as ensemble-in-residence at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. NOISE also presents a three-day festival of modern music entitled soundON. Lisa performs with Jane Rigler and Carrie Rose in the flute collective inHALE, a group dedicated to developing challenging and experimental repertoire for two or three flutes.

She is a faculty member of the Soundscape Festival of Contemporary Music in Cesena, Italy and Nief-Norf in Knoxville, TN. She has taught at the Festival Internacional Cervantino in Guanajuato, Mexico and presented workshops and recitals at the Mid-Atlantic Flute Fair in Reston, VA and at the National Flute Association Convention.

Her undergraduate work was completed at Syracuse University under the tutelage of John Oberbrunner, she received a Master of Music degree and a Graduate Performance Diploma from Peabody Conservatory with Robert Willoughby, and received a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in contemporary flute performance under John Fonville at the University of California, San Diego. She is an Full Professor of Music at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Mark Menzies

A virtuoso violinist, violist, pianist, conductor, and composer, Mark Menzies enjoys an active international career in several capacities as a performer, facilitator, and educator. Averse to being called a specialist, Menzies has embraced many periods and styles of music, from medieval to contemporary works, including various crossover projects. Menzies made his debut in 1988 at the International Festival of the Arts in Wellington, New Zealand, performing Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor on television with Maxim Shostakovich conducting the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. His appearances have taken him from New Zealand to the United Kingdom and the United States, with performances of Berg's Violin Concerto, Brahms' Double Concerto, and Vivaldi's Four Seasons as major vehicles. He has also been a frequent guest at music festivals, including the Lutoslawski Festival in

London, the Ojai Festival in California, the Dartington Festival in the United Kingdom and the BIFEM Festival in Bendigo, Australia. Since the late 1990s, Menzies has devoted considerable energy to performing music of our time, particularly as leader of the New York-based Ensemble Sospeso, and including chamber music with the Formalist Quartet as violinist and violist. Menzies is well known for playing the challenging contemporary repertoire by prominent composers such as Rand Steiger, Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Finnissy, Sofia Gubaidulina, Sylvano Bussotti, Helmut Lachenmann, Peter Maxwell Davies, Liza Lim, Elliott Carter, and Roger Reynolds, among others. From 1999 to 2016, Menzies was professor of violin and viola, and the coordinator of conducting studies and ensembles at the California Institute of the Arts. He became a professor of music at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand in 2016. Honored as an associate of the Royal Academy of Music in London in 2014, Menzies divides his time between New Zealand and the United States.

Artist Biography by Blair Sanderson

Fabiana Ciampi

Organist, pianist and harpsichord, has obtained a scholarship to continue her studies in London at the Royal Academy of Music and subsequently to specialize at the Royal College of Music, getting a degree in Early Music Studies with honour. Since then she has attended masterclasses with many renowned artists, in particular for the organ, courses given by Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini, Guy Bovet and Monika Henking. She has been invited to perform in various festivals both as a soloist or in ensemble (Bologna, Ferrara, Mantova, Pistoia, Como, Piacenza, Verona, Senigallia, Cagliari, Berlin, London, Edinburgh and Las Palmas). In 2004 she has won 2nd prize (first unassigned) at the International Baroque Singing Competition (Naples – Pietà dei Turchini – A. Florio). She has collaborated with Giorgio Piombini at the realization of the Organ festival Organ Itineraries in the Province of Bologna (XXXII edition). As president of Arsarmonica Association, founded with the aim of safeguarding the precious heritage of ancient organs in Bologna's area she worked to spread music culture in the provincial territory. She graduated brilliantly at the Conservatory G.B. Martini in Bologna with a thesis on the XVII century popular arias and dances in transcripts for keyboard instruments (2009). She continued her studies in Geneva following the teachings of Prof. Etienne Darbellay (Ph. D.) while collaborating with Paul Kenyon on the critical edition of Keyboard Ercole Pasquini (Suvini-Zerboni publisher, Milan, 2015). She edited the output of the volume I suoni ritrovati Conference Acts (Monzuno, 2008) published by LIM

(2016). She has also been recorded by regional and national Rai 3 for concerts and interviews, from the BBC and from private broadcasters. Also she has recorded some CDs for Tactus, Bongiovanni, Stradivarius recording labels (her last issue is a CD named Ruzìr). She has taught Music Theory, Musical Acoustics, Tonal Composition I, Ear Training and Semiography in Cagliari, Piacenza, Pesaro and Parma Conservatories.

In 2019 as artistic director she has organized the VOXANIMAE Festival (choirs and organists) in the most beautiful churches of the region Emilia-Romagna dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Currently she teaches at "G. Rossini" Conservatoire in Pesaro.

www.danieleventuri.com



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