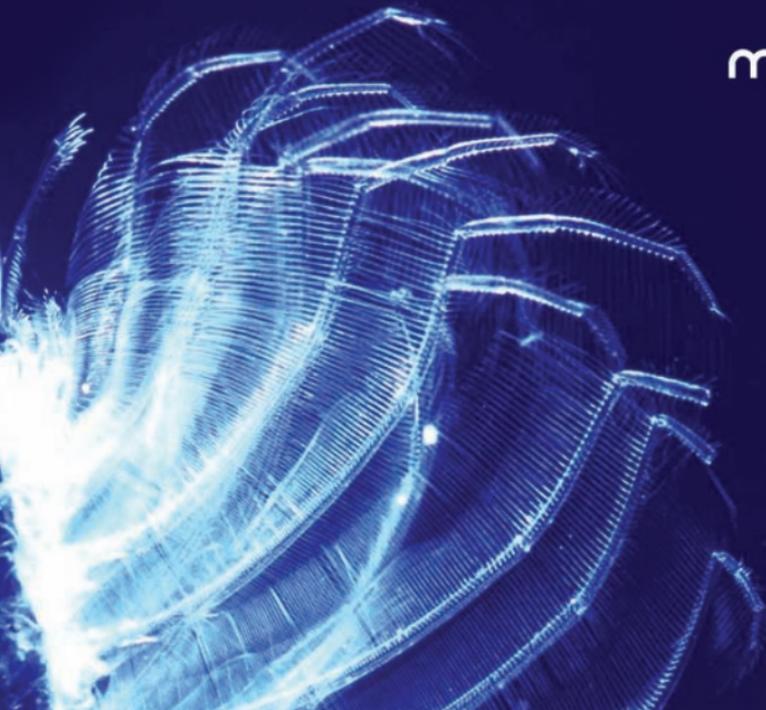


signum  
CLASSICS

john metcalfe

# constant filter

matthew  
barley  
cello



# CONSTANT FILTER

## JOHN METCALFE

<b>Tracing The Outline</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>Lonely Bay</b>	7.16
<b>1</b>	Movement 1			2.53
<b>2</b>	Movement 2		<b>14</b>	<b>As She Fell</b>
<b>3</b>	Movement 3			3.06
<b>4</b>	Movement 4			4.29
<b>5</b>	Movement 5		<b>15</b>	<b>The Appearance of Colour</b>
<b>6</b>	Movement 6			2.54
			Total Timings	58.14
<b>7</b>	<b>Constant Filter</b>			6.39
<b>Kite with Ashley Wass Piano</b>				
<b>8</b>	Appear			1.25
<b>9</b>	Land			2.25
<b>10</b>	Centre			1.08
<b>11</b>	Parsal			1.58
<b>12</b>	Tree			2.14

MATTHEW BARLEY  
SOLO CELLO & ELECTRONICS

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

### ARTIST'S NOTE

In 2006 I commissioned John Metcalfe to write a piece for cello and electronics for a UK tour – I hardly knew John, but had listened avidly to his first CD, *Scorching Bay*, and had been impressed. When a new piece arrived in the post I duly listened and was thrilled by what I heard. It was the title track, **Constant Filter**, and what struck me was that it had emotional impact in a way that was both honest and innovative: it was original, sophisticated and immediate – not an easy combination to find. In that track I especially love the combination of the acoustic cello sound and those other-worldly electronic pulses that hover and fly around the second half of the piece.

The opening piece on the CD, **Tracing The Outline**, was written in 2009 and is a suite of six movements exploring the interval of the fourth (think of the shift between the syllables in italics in Happy Birthday: Happy Birth- *day to* You). I think of this interval as open, simple and clear – it is one of the two so-called perfect intervals along with the fifth. It also has connotations of sacred music, and the outer movements of the piece have that quality. The intervals are almost always supplied by computer, so I play a cello line and computer processing adds a note a fourth

below – if I am playing two notes, it creates wonderful lush four-note chords. **Movement 1** is gentle and song-like and sets the atmosphere for the whole piece; **Movement 2** is dance-like using a lot of plucked notes, with the computer not only supplying the note a fourth lower, but delaying it by half a beat, creating plucked sequences that sound unplayable; **Movement 3** is an exuberant celebration of harmony and texture; **Movement 4** is almost funereal with a melody that climbs high up the cello before falling gently back to the pulse of the steps from the beginning; **Movement 5** (nicknamed Mission Impossible by John) is one of the hardest things I've had to play for a long time (most of John's music is either sight-readable or impossible): with each very fast beat divided into four, I have to play the first two notes of each beat, and the computer then plays them back (a fourth lower of course), and so on, but the pace of it makes it a mixture of exhilarating, confusing and exhausting to play. **Movement 6** echoes the serenity of the opening, and closes the suite with a sigh that vanishes into stillness.

Written this year, **Kite** is for cello and piano with a hint of electronics, and is in five movements: *Appear*, *Land*, *Centre*, *Parsal* and *Tree*. Like *Tracing The Outline*, it opens and closes with slow contemplative movements, while **Land** is another

one of John's deceptive on/off beat pieces. As soon as you think you know which instrument is on the beat, it changes, and it reminds me of certain optical illusions where you think you have understood what you are seeing, and you refocus your eyes and it changes. Do you hear it as two instruments playing alternating fast notes, or one instrument playing a single winding melody? **Centre**, for piano alone, is a little still oasis in the middle of the piece, and **Parsal** is full of virtuoso plucked cello melodies, with the piano insisting on its pattern throughout the movement. **Tree** takes the suite into a plane of almost disembodied sound, where you shouldn't even be sure if one of the sounds is a cello.

**Lonely Bay** with its evocative title was written for and commissioned by cellist Peter Gregson – it uses looping technology so that whatever I play comes back 40 seconds later. I have to place my notes, and then listen to see how and where to place subsequent entries. It feels like chamber music in this respect, and turns out radically different every time as you can never predict how the sounds will stack up.

Originally for solo piano, **As She Fell** is an elegy written for the death of John's mother.

**The Appearance of Colour** was composed for a performance in a Cathedral and is filled with the serene grandeur of those buildings. This extraordinary piece is essentially a chord of around 25 notes that takes 8 minutes to build up from a single slowly rocking A to G. Even recording it, painstakingly note by note, trying to find exactly the right colour and beginning for each sound in the chord, I was amazed by the simple power of musical harmony. The great skill in the composition of the piece is obviously the choice of notes, which could so easily make an incomprehensible soup, whereas the magnificence of the soundscape at the end seems to express something universal (the appearance of colour as light?) and beyond everyday human experience.

It is also all about vibration: from the tiniest – the bow hair exciting the string with its thousands of minute fibres, the vibration of vibrato on a single note; a two-note figure rocking backwards and forwards; all the differently shaded chords throughout the piece – to the huge seven-octave-span vibration at the end. Best enjoyed in a darkened and quiet room at a moment of the day when nothing at all is pressing on your mind.

### Acoustic v. Electronic?

Some people profess to like either acoustic or electronic music, thereby missing a wonderful world – that created by the blend of the two. This is the sound-world of most of this collection of pieces, and one which fascinates me. Electronic sound can often represent something machine-like and impersonal (even if intensely beautiful and expressive of other emotions), and there are few sounds so human as the cello – the mixture of these two worlds is one of the things I find so touching about John's music. It seems to speak from a human place in a technological world, and bring a warmth to the world of electronics.

### Recording Constant Filter

Over 10 years ago I decided to record something at home, because I was so drawn to music technology and its creative possibilities for sound manipulation. I bought some equipment and the plan was to collect some repertoire, maybe improvise a little, and build up a collection of tracks. Of course I never made the time to do this, as life has always been too busy, and the years went by until I started to build a repertoire of pieces by John. It was the ideal project for me to record at home, and it was very exciting to finally begin – three

equipment upgrades later – at the start of 2010. It was a vertiginously steep learning curve. I was engineer, producer, editor, and computer sound-designer – not to mention cellist. Logic 8 was the software of choice (with its insomniac-cure manual of over 1000 pages). While committing to a project was the only way I was ever going to carve the time to get this dream going, it was incredibly difficult at times as I had so much to do for a recording where the timescale was cast in stone. There were many late nights, abandoned family members, moments of techno-despair and empty brain, but also a wonderful sense of exploration and the joy of working with music I loved, learning new skills, and being right in the middle of creating a whole world of sound and colour. From choosing the right gear and learning impenetrable audio terminology from [tweakheadz.com](http://tweakheadz.com) (very amusing), to handing over files for mastering, took seven weeks.

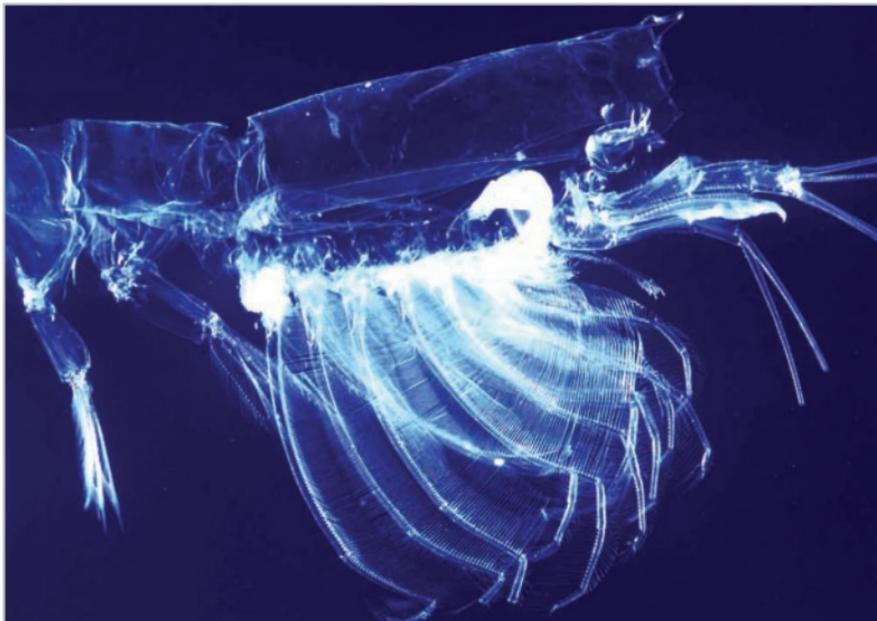
Firstly, my thanks go to my family for being quiet in the house for days on end, and giving me time and space. And I would like to thank Mike Hatch for his advice and patience, and Alex Foster for the same, as well as Steve Long and the crew at Signum. Of course huge thanks go to John Metcalfe for writing this amazing music, and always

being on the end of the phone when nothing was working. Thanks too, to Peter Gregson for introducing me to the reverb – from the Indian tomb of Gol Gumpaz – that I used on Lonely Bay – ‘the richest reverb in the world’. I would like to dedicate the disc to the Yawanawa people of

Brazil who – along with their frogs – taught me some valuable lessons just before I recorded.

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





I chose this photo for the cover because it is beautiful, because it is a filter (the filtration system of the Antarctic Krill to be exact), and because the amazing technology required to take this kind of underwater photo of nature reminds me of the mixture of natural and electronic sound

on the CD. Thanks to Dr. Uwe Kils for permission to use it.

Matthew Barley

---

## BIOGRAPHIES

---

### MATTHEW BARLEY

*“I wish more people would think about music the way Matthew Barley does”*

The Times (London)

*“One of the most talented young cellists I’ve ever heard”*

Leonard Bernstein

Matthew Barley is internationally known as cellist, improviser, arranger, music amateur, and Artistic Director of Between The Notes. His musical world is focused on projects that connect people in different ways, blurring the boundaries that never really existed between genres and people.

As a soloist and chamber musician he has performed in over 50 countries, including appearances with the BBC Scottish and Philharmonic (Hazlewood), the Melbourne Symphony (Tortelier), New Zealand Symphony (Tan Dun), Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Czech Philharmonic, Zagreb Soloists, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National (Alsop), and London Chamber Orchestra. He has performed



© Nick White

at festivals in Lucerne, Hong Kong, Lanaudiere, Abu Dhabi, Krakow, City of London and in recent seasons has performed at some of the world’s great concert halls: London’s Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Royal Albert Hall, Kumho Hall in Korea, Pablo Casals Hall in Tokyo, The Rudolfinum In Prague, and the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. A key aspect of his recitals is mixing repertoire

in unusual ways, pairing Bach suites with jazz, electronica and improvisation and he is particularly interested in music for cello and electronics. Recently he toured Brett Dean's ballet score *One of the Kind* (for solo-on-stage-cello and electronics) with the Netherlands Dance Theatre, and recently developed a work with DJ Bee for cello and laptop, both played by Matthew.

Collaboration – whether chamber music or with different styles of music – is an enduring passion, and Matthew has worked with Matthias Goerne, Martin Frost, Viviane Hagner, Thomas Larcher, Kit Armstrong, Amjad Ali Khan, Julian Joseph, Django Bates, Talvin Singh, Jon Lord, Sultan Khan, Kathryn Tickell and Nitin Sawhney. Another passion is improvisation: he recently appeared at the Wigmore's prestigious BBC Radio 3 lunchtime series in a programme of Bach preludes, interspersed with improvisations on his electric cello.

In 1997 Matthew Barley founded *Between The Notes*, a performance and education group that has appeared at the Sydney Opera House, the Royal Opera House (with the Royal Ballet) and the International Symposium of Contemporary Music in Hong Kong. In 2005 the group took the lead role in a devised work, *Invisible Lines*, which culminated in a live-television performance at the

Royal Albert Hall for the BBC Proms, alongside players from the BBC Symphony Orchestra. More recently BTN took centre stage for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Köln Philharmonie as soloists with the Gürzenich Orchestra under Markus Stenz.

Future plans include orchestral projects with the Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra, The Metropole Jazz Orchestra and a return trip to the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, a residency at the prestigious new venue Kings Place in London, and a major new project with his wife, Russian violinist Viktoria Mullova. He will be artist in residence at the Spitalfields Festival in 2011.

2007 saw Matthew's debut on television as the Music Director of BBC 2's widely acclaimed 'Classical Star'.

This is Matthew's second release for Signum Records, following *The Dance of The Three Legged Elephants*, which garnered a 5 Star review from BBC Music Magazine.

## JOHN METCALFE

On this project with Matthew Barley, John Metcalfe writes: *"I was so flattered when Matthew first approached me for a commission. I had been a huge fan of his extraordinary musicianship for some time and conversations with him revealed a kindred spirit of musical adventure coupled with such soul and amazing energy! This CD was a wonderful opportunity to explore with Matthew a sound-world that merges the deeply human voice of the cello with the 'other-world' emotions that electronics can provide. Matthew understands the role of both implicitly and imbues his performances with a beautiful clarity and passion."*

From his early days in New Zealand listening to his father sing opera, John Metcalfe has become one of the most exciting and versatile musicians working in the UK today. From giving string quartet recitals in prestigious venues world-wide to composing for radio and TV, penning strings for no.1 UK pop hits and releasing his own genre-defying music, Metcalfe has gained wide recognition for his unique brand of music-making.

Moving to England he took up the viola aged 10 and joined his first band at school playing drums. Raised on a dual-mono diet of Kraftwerk



and Joy Division this band influenced his move north-west where he joined cult band The Durutti Column on Manchester's legendary Factory label. He stayed for three years adding his own unique sound and flavour to the enigmatic style of guitarist Vini Reilly.

Hard classical study continued along with hard dancing at the now defunct Hacienda and scholarships took him to London and Berlin (studying with Italian maestro Bruno Giuranna) to finish his training. His distaste for classical

recording industry practices led him to persuade Factory boss Tony Wilson to launch the groundbreaking Factory Classical label aimed at bringing young British talent and music to a truly new audience.

Metcalfe's talents at A+R led to debuts for now major artists such as Rolf Hind, Steve Martland and his own Duke Quartet. In the meantime Metcalfe's strength as a string composer for bands came to the fore.

Since his work on Morrissey's no.1 solo album Viva Hate he has become one of the UK's top arrangers working for artists such as Simple Minds, The Corrs, Blur and Catatonia. He provided all the strings for the Concert for Linda at the Albert Hall, working with George Michael, Johnny Marr and Tom Jones. After hearing his arrangement of Angel in The Morning for the Friends soundtrack, the Pretender's Chrissie Hynde asked John to arrange some of her most famous songs for the Isle of View album which featured John's string quartet, the Duke.

In addition he is one of the major curators at Kings Place with outstanding sell out events throughout last year. His most recent, 'Beyond the Loop', featured some of the most influential and innovative classical and electronic artists from the

last 30 years such as Plaid, The Duke Quartet and the Durutti Column. The event concluded with the astounding Bays/Heritage Orchestra collaboration featuring live composing from Metcalfe himself and Toni award winner Simon Hale.

Metcalfe made his first steps as a composer nearly a decade ago. His debut CD 'The Inner Line' received glowing reviews. Billboard magazine described it as '... a solo debut that crosses all manner of boundaries. Melding avant-pop and electronica, film music and contemporary classical The Inner Line is the ideal item for classical fans wanting to investigate a pop-leaning, contemporary sound world or for electronica fans who crave far more musicality than they're used to getting.'

February 2010 saw the release of 'Scratch My Back', an album of covers by legendary performer Peter Gabriel. Metcalfe was closely involved in helping Mr. Gabriel re-interpret twelve covers of major artists ranging from David Bowie to Paul Simon using only orchestral instruments. Mojo magazine called it "A profound re-imagining made manifest in an orchestral soundworld as rich and thrilling as ever recorded at Air, the studio founded by George Martin". Concerts followed at major venues including Radio City in New York and the Hollywood Bowl.

Metcalfe's most recent album 'A Darker Sunset' epitomizes music currently dissolving boundaries between electronic and modern classical styles. 2010 also sees the release of his second solo album.

[www.john-metcalfe.co.uk](http://www.john-metcalfe.co.uk)

## ASHLEY WASS

Described by Gramophone Magazine as a *'thoroughbred who possesses the enviable gift to turn almost anything he plays into pure gold'*, Ashley Wass is firmly established as one of the leading performers of his generation. Only the second British pianist in 20 years to reach the finals of the Leeds Piano Competition (2000), he is also the only British pianist to have won First Prize at the London International Piano Competition (1997). He is also a former BBC New Generation Artist and made his BBC Prom debut performing Vaughan Williams Piano Concerto with the BBC Philharmonic. In the 2009 BBC Proms Ashley performed in three concerts and gave the world premiere of a BBC commission for solo piano by John McCabe.

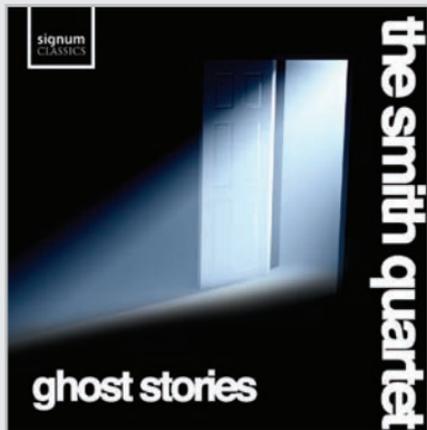
Ashley Wass has given recitals at most of the UK's major venues and also appeared in a gala concert at Buckingham Palace to mark the Queen's Golden

Jubilee, a performance broadcast live to millions of viewers around the world. Concerto performances have included collaborations with Sir Simon Rattle and the CBSO, London Mozart Players, Philharmonia, Bournemouth Symphony, BBC Symphony, BBC NOW, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony, BBC Concert, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lille and the Hong Kong Philharmonic. Ashley is also much in demand as a chamber musician and has toured the USA and Europe with violinist Sarah Chang appearing at venues such as Philadelphia's Kimmel Center and Carnegie Hall in New York. He has appeared in the 'Rising Stars' series at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago and spent three summers as a participant at the Marlboro Music Festival.

His discography includes the Vaughan Williams Piano Concerto, which was Gramophone 'Editor's Choice' and also reached No1 in the Naxos charts. Bax *Symphonic Variations* was BBC Music Magazine Choice in May 2009 and awarded the benchmark version of this work.

In 2007 Ashley was appointed Artistic Director of the Lincolnshire International Chamber Music Festival. He joined the piano faculty of the Royal College of Music in September 2008.

# ALSO AVAILABLE ON SIGNUMCLASSICS



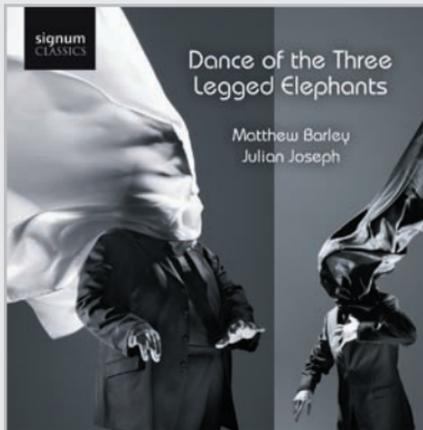
## Ghost Stories The Smith Quartet

SIGCD088

Britain's leading contemporary string ensemble, The Smith Quartet, perform the works of five diverse British composers. The music is inspired by the ancient English landscape, 9<sup>th</sup> century Irish poetry, 20<sup>th</sup> century human tragedy and the passing of friends. Includes works by **Tim Souster, Michael Alcorn, Gavin Bryars, James MacMillan & Stephen Montague.**

*"As versatile as the Kronos Quartet, and smoother than the Brodskys, The Smith Quartet have edged ahead of their competitors in contemporary chamber music"*

**The Independent on Sunday**



## Dance of the Three Legged Elephants Matthew Barley & Julian Joseph

SIGCD171

Dazzling yet intimate, this set of tracks is the work of two brilliant and internationally renowned musicians who are also close friends, and their friendship pours from the music with passion, intensity, humour and inspiring energy. The central focus here is 'collaboration' – the musical collaboration of Barley and Joseph and the traditions from which they have individually evolved, and their combined collaboration with other composers in a series of imaginative arrangements.

*"Barley's execution and quality of invention are exceptional."*  
**Jazzwise Magazine**

All tracks recorded by Matthew Barley at The Home Studio  
Produced by Raphaël Mouterde, edited by Matthew Barley and Raphaël Mouterde  
Mixed by Matthew Barley and Mike Hatch, mastered by Mike Hatch

Photos of Matthew Barley - © Nick White  
Cover Image - © Uwe Kils  
Cover Concept - Matthew Barley  
Design and Artwork - Woven Design  
[www.wovendesign.co.uk](http://www.wovendesign.co.uk)

© 2010 The copyright in this recording is owned by Signum Records Ltd.

© 2010 The copyright in this CD booklet, notes and design is owned by Signum Records Ltd.

Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording of Signum Compact Discs constitutes an infringement of copyright and will render the infringer liable to an action by law. Licences for public performances or broadcasting may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this booklet may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission from Signum Records Ltd.

SignumClassics, Signum Records Ltd., Suite 14, 21 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, Middx UB6 7JD, UK.  
+44 (0) 20 8997 4000 E-mail: [info@signumrecords.com](mailto:info@signumrecords.com)

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

