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James WEEKS

(b. 1978)



James Weeks (*1978) is a composer, conductor and artistic director, based in the North of England.

His music typically explores pared-down musical syntaxes and systems, with particular interests in microtonality and Just Intonation, openness, haptic dimensions of sound and sound-making, and plain-speaking. He also often works with text and with found materials, particularly early music, including an ongoing preoccupation with the music and aesthetics of the Italian Renaissance. His most recent work has focused increasingly on a deeply embodied, phenomenological relationship with the natural world.

His music has been performed and broadcast worldwide, and six portrait discs have been released to date: *Summer* (another timbre 2021), *windfell* (another timbre 2019), *Mala punica* (Winter&Winter, 2017), *Signs of Occupation* (Métier 2016), *mural* (confront 2015) and *TIDE* (Métier 2013). His work also appears on the Wandelweiser, HCR and NMC labels.

Collaborators and other performers of his work have included Quatuor Bozzini, Explore Ensemble, London Sinfonietta, Royal Northern Sinfonia, BBC SSO, Ives Ensemble, Plus-Minus, An Assembly, Talea, EXAUDI, Ekmeles, CoMA,

Mira Benjamin, Saviet/Houston, Apartment House and Anton Lukoszevieze.

Awards include a British Composer Award (2018) for *Libro di fiammelle e ombre*, written for EXAUDI, and an Ivors Academy Composer Award (2019) for *Leafleoht*, written for Quatuor Bozzini.

In 2002 he founded EXAUDI (www.exaudi.org.uk) with soprano Juliet Fraser, now regarded as one of the world's leading vocal ensembles for new music. As well as maintaining a busy international touring and recording schedule with EXAUDI, he works regularly as a guest conductor, working regularly with instrumental ensembles and orchestras such as Royal Northern Sinfonia, BBC Singers, London Sinfonietta, musikFabrik, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and L'Instant Donné. He has also worked extensively with amateur musicians, both for CoMA (Contemporary Music for All) and in early music fora and summer schools around the UK. He was Musical Director of both New London Chamber Choir and Orlando Chamber Choir (London) from 2007-2011.

He is also active as a writer on new music, with published articles on Cassandra Miller and Christopher Fox, and a pair of chapters on Michael Finnissy in the Routledge Critical Perspectives volume (2019). He compiled and edited the *CoMA Partsongs Book*, a volume of new experimental music for small vocal groups, published in March 2018.

Previously an Organ Scholar at Queens' College Cambridge (1997-2000), he studied composition with Michael Finnissy privately and then at the University of Southampton, from where he was awarded a PhD in Composition in 2005.

He was Associate Head of Composition at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London from

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2012-17, and took up his present position as Assistant Professor of Composition at Durham University in October 2017.

For more information, see www.jamesweeks.org.

PRESS QUOTES

"Weeks, for my money, is one of the most inventive young composers and conductors out there: founder and director of the brilliant young vocal group EXAUDI, his own music is a vivid mix of the unpredictable and experimental, but there's always real refinement in his work, whether instrumental or vocal."

Tom Service, *The Guardian*

"The choral parts of this hour-long opus were premiered in 2009, but Weeks has now enclosed and interrupted his a cappella Latin sequence from the Song of Songs with meditations for the strange grouping of three strings and three low flutes. These he calls Walled Garden I-III, and the second aptly overlaps with the Hortus conclusus ('enclosed garden') setting, the cycle's grand centrepiece."

"The canonic writing explored by all eight choral movements reaches a zenith of complexity here: a truly thrilling excursion. Weeks's modal idiom, neither tonally regressive nor rebarbatively dissonant, seems at once timeless, personal and innovative, and the whole undertaking a triumph of audacity and originality: an enclosed garden of 21st-century art."

Paul Driver, *The Sunday Times*

"the overall impression is of a sensuousness maximally enriched both in its harmony and its choral fabric The result – intricate, subtle and often sonically ravishing – was superbly realised."

George Hall, *The Guardian* on Walled Garden and *Mala punica*

"The highlight of the evening...an innovative, impressive work, composed by James Weeks with his 'abiding interest in the bleak landscapes of the English coast' in mind."

Tempo, on *TIDE*

"Conveying a compositional rigour worthy of Ockeghem, Weeks builds a busy foliage (yet another nod to the flora imagery of the text) of canonical textures out of strikingly simple melodic gestures. Like the earlier man, Weeks directs these abstract procedures towards the expression of an emotional intensity that results both from the obvious pleasure that can be gained from the exercise of the discipline of musical grammar in itself, and from the poetical density that results from the careful shaping of that grammar into complex sonic events. And so it was the case here; the outwardly punctilious technique of composition gave way to fervency in procedure and affect."

musicalcriticism.com, on *Mala punica*

"Ravishing. In unfolding an extremely sparse series of rocking intervals between the two instruments it recalled Feldman but – and this seems like an odd thing to say about Feldman's music – with somehow less stodgy."

Johnson's Rambler, on *Wie soll ich meine Seele halten*

LIST OF WORKS OVERLEAF

LIST OF WORKS

LARGE ENSEMBLE (8 OR MORE PLAYERS)

Cornish String Music (2015) 15'
For any number of orchestral string instruments (at least 16).
First performance: CoMA Summer School participants, High Melton, Doncaster, 7th August 2015.
ISMN M 57036 679 8 performing score: £5.95
ISMN M 57036 680 4 set of 17 performing scores: £49.95

New Day (2006, rev. 2014) 10'
For piano and ensemble (open instrumentation, 10-15 players).
First performance: participants at CoMA Summer School, with Rolf Hind (piano), August 2014.
ISMN M 57036 594 4 parts: £28.95

Olympic Frieze (2014) variable
For any number of pitched instruments (minimum 12).
First performance: participants at CoMA Summer School, High Melton, Doncaster on 21st August 2014.
ISMN M 57036 569 8 performing score: £14.95

Saenredam (2003-4) 16'
For 2 alto flutes, 2 clarinets in A, oboe d'amore, guitar, vibraphone and chamber organ
Part I of *Schilderkonst*.
ISMN M 57036 572 2 score: £14.95
ISMN M 57036 573 6 parts: £29.95

Schilderkonst (2003-4) 55'
For chamber ensemble (2 alto flutes, 2 clarinets in A, oboe d'amore, guitar, vibraphone, chamber organ), string quartet and piano.
Dedicated to Michael Finnissy.
In three parts which may be performed separately: *Saenredam* for chamber ensemble, *Low Country* for string quartet and *Duinland* for solo piano.
ISMN M 57036 571 5 score: £29.95

SMALL ENSEMBLE (4-7 PLAYERS)

Looping Busker Music (2013) 13'
For violin, clarinet in Bb, accordion, acoustic guitar (all amplified) and tape
ISMN M 57036 451 0 4 performing scores: £17.95

Low Country (2004) 20'
For string quartet.
Part II of *Schilderkonst*.
ISMN M 57036 574 6 score: £9.95
ISMN M 57036 545 3 set of four performing scores: £39.95

Matsushima (2005) variable
For 1-4 pianos.
First performance: Andrew Melvin, Steyning, Sussex, 20th November 2005.
ISMN M 57036 565 4 performing score: £8.95

Stacking, Weaving, Building Joining (2006) variable
For any number of pitched instruments (minimum six)
First performance: the Hola with CoMA Sussex, Brighton, March 2007.
ISMN M 57036 566 1 performing score: £16.95

The Catford Harmony (2008, rev. 2014) 15'
For oboe, clarinet in Bb, alto saxophone, violin, cello and piano.
First performance: Uroboros Ensemble, The Warehouse, London, 10th April 2008.
ISMN M 57036 536 4 score: £10.95
ISMN M 57036 537 1 performing score and parts: £15.95

The Nunhead Harmony (2009) 15'
For clarinet in Bb, violin, viola and double bass.
First performance: Ensemble Scratch the Surface, King's Place, London, 10 May 2010.
ISMN M 57036 569 2 score: £14.95
ISMN M 57036 570 8 score: £29.95

Walled Garden (2015) 15'
For two alto flutes, bass flute, violin, viola and cello.
First performance: The Hortus Ensemble, Spitalfields Music Festival, London, 3 June 2015.
ISMN M 57036 663 7 set of performing scores: £35.95
ISMN M 57036 664 4 score: £14.95

SOLOS, DUOS AND TRIOS

Burnham Air (2008-9) 12'
For oboe d'amore.
First performance: Christopher Redgate, bmic's The Cutting Edge, London, November 2008.
May be performed with *Sky* and *Tide* as *Tide Trilogy*.
ISMN M 57036 367 4 performing score: £5.95

Digger (2010) 6'
For solo guitar.
First performance: Stephen Chase, Bank St Arts, Sheffield, 21 April 2010.
ISMN M 57036 563 0 performing score: £9.95

Duinland (2004) 19'
For solo piano with optional vibraphone.
Part III of *Schilderkonst*
ISMN M 57036 576 0 performing score: £14.95

Hanging on the old barbed wire (2014) 2'30"
For violin, cello and piano.
Commissioned by the Lawson Trio for their Echoes of World War One project and for Chamber Music 2000.
First performance to be by students from West London Free School, Kings Place, London, 6th December 2014.
ISMN M 57036 531 9 score and parts: £9.95

Honey Celebration (2005) 10'
For violin, cello and piano.
Commissioned by the Bloomsbury Trio.
First performed by them in the Church of St Magnus the Martyr, London, 22nd November 2005.
ISMN M 57036 359 9 performing score: £7.95

Joy (2016) 10'
For 2 violin and percussion.
Commissioned by the inaugural Brundibár Arts Festival.
First performed by Alexandra Raikhline and Gordon Bragg (violins) and Jan Bradley (percussion) at the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle University, on 2nd February 2016.
ISMN M 57036 714 6 performing scores: £19.95

Matsushima (2005) variable
See Small Ensemble (4-7 Players)

Narrow Path (2012) 5'
For solo flute.
To Reiko Manabe.
ISMN M 57036 450 3 performing score: £5.95

Signs of Occupation (2016) 13'
For solo clarinet in Bb and speaking voice.
To be premiered by the Plus-minus Ensemble, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, 24th June 2016.
ISMN M 57036 716 0 performing score: £14.95

Sky (2010) 30'
For solo clarinet in Bb and electronics.
First performance: Andrew Sparling (cl), with Paul Archbold (elec), Flowers East Gallery, London, 21 June 2010.
May be performed with *Burnham Air* and *Tide* as *Tide Trilogy*.
ISMN M 57036 368 1 performing score: £5.95

Three Trios (2010-11) 24'
For piano trio with 1-3 portable PA systems.
Three Trios comprises:
July '10 8'
For piano trio with 1 portable PA system. First performance: Kürbis, University of Coventry, 30th March 2011.
February '11 8' 20"
For piano trio with 3 portable PA systems. Commissioned and first performed by: Phoenix Piano Trio, The Forge, Camden, 13th April 2011.
November '11 7'
For piano trio with 2 portable PA systems. First performance: Kürbis, University of Durham, 4th February 2013.
First complete performance:
ISMN M 57036 411 4 study score: £7.95

Tide (2007) 10'
For solo cello with BACH bow.
First performance: Anton Lukoszevieve, Spitalfields Winter Festival, January 2009.
May be performed with *Burnham Air* and *Sky* as *Tide Trilogy*.
ISMN M 57036 362 9 performing score: £5.95

Sacred Muses (2005) 4'
For trumpet and organ.
Written at the request of Alison Balsom.
ISMN M 57036 564 7 two performing scores: £9.95

Two Perscriptions (2002-4) 12'30"
For solo piano.
Written at the request of Alison Balsom.
ISMN M 57036 562 6 performing score: £11.95

Siciliano (2003) 3'30"
For solo piano.
ISMN M 57036 578 4 performing score: £6.95

Softest Numbers (2014) 3'30"
For violin and piano.
Written for the Ives Song transcription project at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London: Ives' *Cradle Song* (1919) is used as source material.
First performed there on 23rd November 2014 by Amarins Wierdsma (violin) and Aaron Burrows (piano).
ISMN M 57036 595 1 two performing scores: £7.95

Wie soll ich meine Seele halten (2005) 13'
 For violin and piano.
 First performance: Sophie Appleton (violin) & James Weeks (piano), London, 1 November 2006.
 First performance of revised version: Darragh Morgan (violin) & Mary Dullea (piano), London, 5th February 2009.
 ISMN M 57036 363 6 2 performing scores: £8.95

VOICE, AND 0-3 INSTRUMENTS

Come Away (2008) 12'
 For soprano, piano, violin and cello.
 First performance: Kürbis Ensemble (Juliet Fraser soprano, Sophie Appleton violin, Ken Ichinose cello, James Weeks piano), Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, 10th February 2008.
 ISMN M 57036 567 8 performing score: £7.95
 ISMN M 57036 568 5 four performing scores: £29.95

VOICE, UNACCOMPANIED

Complainte (2007) 8'
 For solo soprano.
 Text: Mary, Queen of Scots.
 Commissioned by Swaledale Festival.
 First performance: Julia Doyle, Aysgarth, May 2007.
 ISMN M 57036 360 5 performing score: £6.95

Nakedness (2012) 7'
 For solo soprano.
 First performance: Juliet Fraser, Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Darmstadt, 23rd July 2012.
 ISMN M 57036 407 7 performing score: £5.95

The World in tune (2013) 8'
 For solo soprano.
 Commissioned by Irene Kurka, first performed by her at Klangraum, Düsseldorf, 27th August 2013.
 ISMN M 57036 493 0 performing score: £5.95

CHOIR, UNACCOMPANIED

Glossa (2010) 3'
 For ATB choir.
 Text: Anonymous medieval.
 First performance: Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, directed by Andrew Nethsingha, 30th June 2010.
 ISMN M 57036 357 5 choral score: £2.99

Mala punica (2008-9) 35'
 Eight canonic motets for SSAATTBB soli.
 Text: Song of Songs (Latin).
 Commissioned by EXAUDI.
 Individual works first performance: EXAUDI, Salisbury Festival, May 2008 (Descendi); Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, November 2008 (Hortus conclusus); Bangor New Music Festival, March 2009 (Quae est ista); Britten Studio, Snape, May 2009 (Veni in hortum meum).
 First complete performance: Great Hall, Dartington, August 2009.
 ISMN M 57036 358 2 choral score: £19.95

Orlando Tenebrae (2007-11) 25'
 For SATB choir.
 Text: Latin motets/texts by Adonis (from 'The Desert'), 'Love' by Visar Zhiti, 'The True Prison' (by permission of Ayeibia Publishing Ltd), 'The Agreement' by Dinyar Godrej.

O vos omnes was commissioned by the Rev. Toddy Hoare for the exhibition of his series of sculptures, *The Stations of the Cross*. First performed by Chantage, directed by James Davey, in St Dunstan-in-the-West, London, 24th January 2007.

Ecce quomodo moritur justus was commissioned by Orlando Chamber Choir, with funding from the BBC Performing Arts Fund, and first performed by them in St Mary Aldermary, London, 24th July 2010.

The complete *Orlando Tenebrae* was commissioned by Orlando Chamber Choir and first performed by them, conducted by the composer, in St Andrew, Holborn, London, 17th March 2011.

ISMN M 57036 457 2 choral score: £4.50

CHOIR, ACCOMPANIED

A tear (2014) 9'
 For mixed voice choir and organ
 Text: 14th century anonymous English poem.
 Commissioned by The Organ Project, Union Chapel.
 First performed by Eclectic Voices (Scott Stroman, director), Union Chapel, London, 18th April 2014.
 ISMN M 57036 511 1 choral score: £2.25

The Freedom of the Earth (2011) 29'
 For chorus (SATB) and ensemble (clar in Bb, alto sax (dbl sop), ten sax, bass clar, vln, vla, vlc, db (amplified strings), amplified guitar, piano).
 Text: Gerrard Winstanley.
 Commissioned by the New London Chamber Choir & Spitalfields Music.
 First performed by the New London Chamber Choir & the London Sinfonietta, conducted by the composer, at the Spitalfields Music Summer Festival, Shoreditch Church, London, on 13th June 2011.
 ISMN M 57036 361 2 score: £21.95
 ISMN M 57036 366 7 parts available to hire

MULTIPLE VOICES, UNACCOMPANIED

Freehand Etude (2013) variable

For three performers, drawing and vocalising.

In memoriam John Cage.

ISMN M 57036 449 7

performing score: £5.95

MURAL (2014) variable

For one or more SATB quartets.

Text: Fernando Pessoa, Vermeer, John Cage.

First performed by EXAUDI as part of a music+video installation by James Weeks & Sam Belinfante at Lime Wharf, London, Spitalfields Music Summer Festival, 8th June 2014.

The project was made possible by generous funding from The Hinrichsen Foundation.

ISMN M 57036 504 3

performing score: £7.95

Radical Road (2014) 20'-30'

For 30 or more singers with stones.

Text: Thomas Paine.

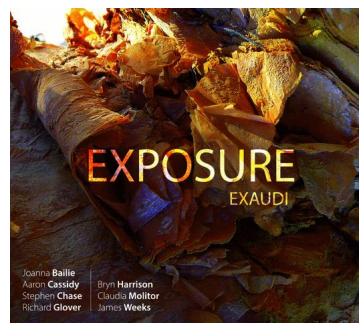
Written for the BBCSSO's Tectonics Festival, directed by Ilan Volkov.

First performance: singers from Glasgow Chamber Choir (Michael Bawtree, director) and Glasgow University Chapel Choir (James Grossmith, director), scheduled for 11th May 2014.

ISMN M 57036 503 6

choral score: £4.95

SELECTED COMPACT DISCS



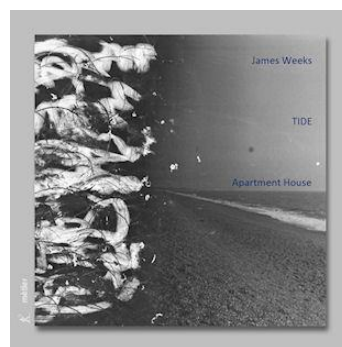
Exposure

Includes: *Nakedness*

Performed by Juliet Fraser (soprano).

Label: Huddersfield Contemporary Records HCR06

Released 2013



James Weeks: Tide

Includes: *Tide Trilogy – Burnham Air, Sky, Tide*

Performed by Apartment House

Andrew Sparling (clarinet), Christopher Redgate (oboe d'amore), Anton Lukoszevics (cello)

Label: MSV 28532 (2 CDs for the price of 1)

Released 2013