

CHROMATIC FIELDS

a concert for the internet curated by
Duncan Bullen & Jamie Crofts

Jamie Crofts - Piano

Venue: SoundCloud website

Erik Satie

3 Gnossiennes (?1890)

Three of the most well known piano pieces by Erik Satie.

To understand how remarkable these pieces are we need only to know that composer of the High Romantic, Brahms, was still composing in the early 1890s. Their relative simplicity and clarity give them a rare intensity. Jamie has been performing them for over 30 years and they remain just as interesting to play.

Jamie Crofts

Chromatic Field 56

(see note on page 6)

John Cage

Four Walls (1944) Excerpt I

(see note on page 6)

Charles-Valentin Alkan

8 Short Preludes on the modes of plainchant (?1859)

Preludes 1, 3, 4 and 6

These short compositions, originally written for organ, work very well on the piano. In common with much of the music in this concert these pieces achieve a high level of expression through a beautifully handled simplicity. Fellow Parisians Alkan and Satie have much in common in terms of the individuality of their music but there is no known evidence that Satie had any knowledge of the music of Alkan (Alkan died in 1888 a recluse since the 1840s; Satie was born in 1866)

Jamie Crofts

Octonic Field 11 (2011)

(see note on page 6)

Josef Matthias Hauer

Studies in Resonance (1919)

With his fellow Austrian Arnold Schoenberg, Hauer invented a composition system which made use of all 12 musical notes equally (which he called

atonalemusik). This designed and strategically egalitarian music swayed and divided the culture of composed music for almost a century.

Echo 1: Jamie's Chromatic Fields which use all 12 notes

These Studies in Resonance were written before Hauer arrived at his 12 note method and include pitch systems hovering between the 7 note past and what would prove to be his 12 note future.

Echo 2: Jamie's Octonic Fields which use just 8 notes

The “resonance” of the title refers to both the internal resonance of the piano (pedal held down to exploit the resonance of vibrating strings) and the external resonance of the room (sounds left to echo, or not, depending on the room in which the music is heard).

Michael Parsons

Third Bagatelle (1991)

Resonance is also very important to this piece. Two notes are held down silently in order to catch vibration from the played pitches, creating a complex piece from simple elements.

The piece is dedicated to Jamie Crofts.

Jamie Crofts

Chromatic Field 58 (2010)

(see note on page 6)

Howard Skempton

A Roma (1992)

This composition has something in common with Michael Parsons' Bagatelle: A rhythm is established and maintained throughout the piece so that only changes of pitch create the composition.

Both Michael Parsons and Howard Skempton were involved with the Scratch Orchestra in the early 1970s.

FEDERICO MOMPOU
(1912, 1921)

ERIK SATIE
(?1890)

JOHN CAGE
(1944, 1962)

MICHAEL PARSONS
(1991)

MORTON FELDMAN
(1950, 1952)

HOWARD SKEMPTON
(1992, 1921)

CHARLES-VALENTIN ALKAN
(?1859)

JAMIE CROFTS
(2010, 2011)

JOSEF MATTHIAS HAUER
(1919)

ALL }

Morton Feldman

Intermission 1 (1950) and Intermission 4 (1952)

These two short pieces were created at the height of post WW2 abstraction based in and around New York City. Morton Feldman felt much more of an affinity with contemporary visual artists than with other music practitioners. They are best heard as abstract art works created using sounds.

Jamie Crofts

Octonic Field 12 (2011)

(see note on page 6)

Federico Mompou

Secrecy (1912)

Federico Mompou declared Satie as a great influence. He also declared, with fellow Catalan Manuel Blancafort, the aim to create “a maximum of expression with a minimum of means” perhaps making him one of the first true minimalists. The simplicity and clarity of this piece certainly puts us in mind of early Satie, including the Gnessiennes.

Howard Skempton

Reflection 8 (2001)

This is one of 11 Reflections written between 1999 and 2002. All 11 pieces are quite different from each other but in this one each event (two notes) is very simple in itself but these pairs of notes build up into complex harmonies.

John Cage

Four Walls (1944) Excerpt XI

(see note on page 6)

Jamie Crofts

Chromatic Field 59 (2010)

(see note on page 6)

Federico Mompou

Theme and Nocturne from 3 Variations (1921)

This Nocturne shows a style familiar to Mompou but one very different from Secrecy. The composer most associated with the Nocturne is Chopin. Here Mompou displays all the Romanticism, power of expression, and intensity of a Chopin Nocturne (maximum expression) through a simplicity and delicate handling of the melodic and harmonic material (minimum of means).

————— end —————

Jamie Crofts

Chromatic Fields 56, 58 and 59 (2010)

Both visually and sonically, these compositions form part of our Chromatic Fields collaborative book project, currently exhibited at Ian Rastrick Fine Art in St Albans. The majority of the compositions (including 51 to 59, represented here) make use of every one of the 88 notes of a standard piano. Jamie has written more than 80 compositions with this title, mostly for piano.

John Cage

Four Walls (1944) excerpts I and XI

This extended composition is from an early period when John Cage was writing about the importance of Erik Satie to music. He wrote: “it's not a question of Satie's relevance. He's indispensable” (“Erik Satie” published in his book Silence 1961). The composition is for solo piano with one short section for solo voice to words by Merce Cunningham. Life partners and collaborators John and Merce had only recently met.

Jamie Crofts

Octonic Fields 11 and 12 (2011)

Oct (eight) plus tonic (tone/note)

Since the late 19th century composers have made use of a musical scale which alternates full tones with half tones: The Octatonic Scale. In 2011 Jamie identified 5 more similar scales. These eight note scales (which Jamie refers to as Octonics) have an unusual character with perfectly balanced harmonic consonances and dissonances.

John Cage 100

This concert is in part a celebration of the centenary of John Cage's birth. We have included two excerpts from his **Four Walls**. We have, in addition to this, included a performance of *4'33" (No.2) (0'00")* composed 1962. In theory a composition of no duration to which no attention must be given. It is unlikely that you will have been aware of this part of the concert.

"It's not a question of Satie's relevance.
He's indispensable."

John Cage

Jamie Crofts/SOUNDkiosk
www.soundkiosk.com
www.soundcloud.com/jamie-crofts/sets
www.soundcloud.com/soundkiosk/sets

Duncan Bullen
www.duncanbullen.com

Ian Rastrick Fine Art
38 Holywell Hill
St Albans
www.ianrastrick.com