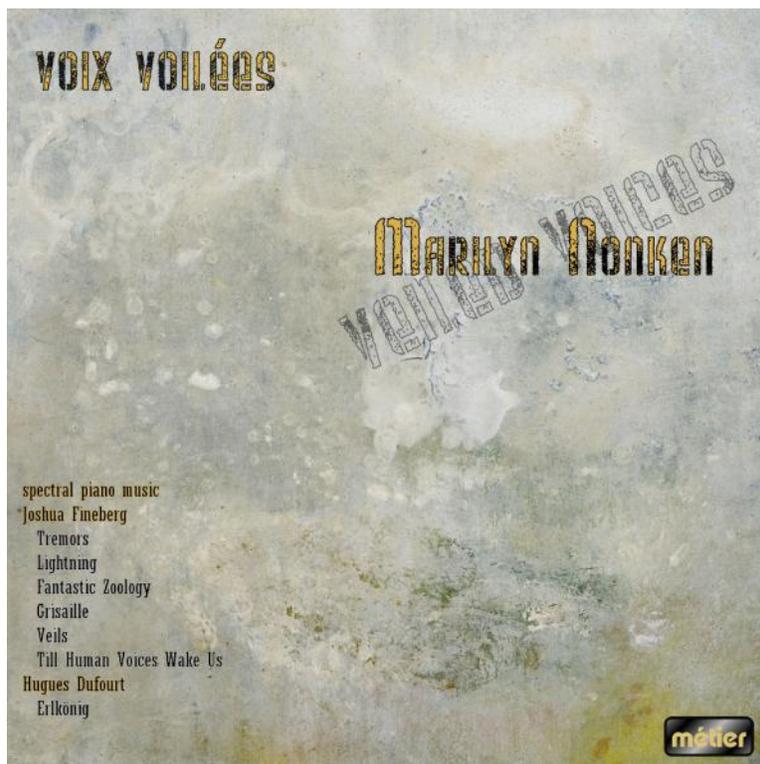




## New Release - Press Information



**ARTIST(S):** Marilyn Nonken

**COMPOSER(S):** Joshua Fineberg (b1969), Hugues Dufourt (b1943)

**TITLE:** Voix Voilées - Spectral Piano Music

**CATALOGUE NUMBER:** MSV28524 [Bar Code 0809730852428]

**RELEASE DATE:** 12<sup>th</sup> November 2012

**PRICE POINT:** Single CD/Full Price (UK Dealer £7.95)

### Track Listing:

Fineberg: Tremors; Lightning; Fantastic Zoology; Grisaille; Veils; Till Human Voices Wake Us; Dufourt: Erikönig

Total Playing Time: 73.07



## Repertoire/Product Information:

Spectralism, a compositional movement or “attitude” that emerged in the 1970s, offered breathtaking new perspectives not only on the compositional process but also on the processes of performers and listeners. Its first-generation composers, such as Tristan Murail, Gérard Grisey, and those associated with the Paris-based ensemble L’Itinéraire, explored the nature of the musical experience through the sophisticated examination of sound (via spectral analysis) and the study of human perception. They spoke openly of the unification of art and science, seeking to write a sensual music informed by understanding of the physical world and psychological reality. They encouraged their listeners and performers to engage, not primarily with the interpretation of thematic and motivic materials as formal determinants, but rather with the sound itself.

The American composer **Joshua Fineberg** (b. 1969) began his musical studies, which would include not only composition but also violin, guitar, piano, harpsichord and conducting, at age five. As an undergraduate, he studied at the Peabody Conservatory with Morris Moshe Cotel. In 1991, he moved to Paris and studied with Tristan Murail and, the following year, was selected by the IRCAM/Ensemble InterContemporain reading panel for the course in composition and musical technologies. In 1997, he returned to the United States to pursue a doctorate in musical composition at Columbia University, which he completed in 1999. In 2007, he assumed a professorship in composition and the directorship of the electronic music studios at Boston University; in 2012, he became the founding director of the Boston University Center for New Music.

*Tremors* (1997) features violent shocks, whose resonances are tempered by the appearance of tender, nearly inaudible individual tones. In long passages of decay, the tiniest utterances pull the vibration in different directions, only to be obliterated by tectonic blocks of sound.

*Lightning* (1991) is a work of vapor and electricity. Its fourteen phrases gradually form like stormclouds, gathering energy, intensifying, and ultimately destabilizing, bursting like lightning bolts into silence. An auditory afterimage of each explosion is caught in the dampers, raised and lowered the split-second of each phrase’s final attack.

*Fantastic Zoology* (2009) is a series of three interconnected miniatures inspired by movements from Robert Schumann’s *Carnaval*: “Papillons,” “Coquette,” and “Réplique.” Its title pays homage to Jorge Luis Borges’ *Anthology of Fantastic Zoology*, and Fineberg’s treatment of Schumann’s material is similarly whimsical and macabre.

*Grisaille* (2011) The term “grisaille” refers to a type of monochromatic painting, often associated with Renaissance and Early Dutch painters such as Giotto, Jan van Eyck, and Peter Brueghel the Elder, although Picasso’s *Guernica* is a rare modern example. A grisaille would often serve as an underpainting or an engraver’s model. Far from monochromatic, this work exhibits exotic colors, lush textures, and Fineberg’s most uninhibited use of virtuosity.

*Veils* (2001) According to Tibetan Buddhist belief, true reality, for the unenlightened, is obscured by a series of veils. Metaphorically, the piano can be seen as an instrument whose true reality (its resonance) is often obscured by the “veil” of passagework and thematic materials: notatable elements in common practice considered to be the “stuff” of music. In *Veils*, Fineberg explores this metaphor, from philosophical and formal perspectives. Many aspects of the composition, such as pacing and proportion, are derived from recordings of Tibetan rituals, and



its very sounds evoke the timbres of gongs, cymbals, and drums. This performance is dedicated to the composer Jonathan Harvey.

*Till Human Voices Wake Us* (1995), a memorial to composer Dominique Troncin (1961-1994), references in its title the final line of T.S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. Within this miniature, a single decrescendo is punctured by harshly articulated dyads. It is a single breath, in the course of which we become attuned to the life and death of the sound.

The French composer and philosopher **Hugues Dufourt** (b. 1943) received his musical training at the Geneva Conservatory of Music, where he studied piano with Louis Hiltbrand (1961–68) and composition and electroacoustics with Jacques Guyonnet (1965–70). He was a member of the pioneering ensemble L'itinéraire, which he also co-led from 1976 to 1981. In 1977, he founded the Collectif de Recherche Instrumentale et de Synthèse Sonore (Instrumental and Sound Synthesis Research Collective). From 1982 to 1998, he headed the music information and documentation centre Recherche Musicale at the CNRS, which was to become a mixed research unit of the CNRS, the École Normale Supérieure, and IRCAM. He founded a doctoral program for 20th-century music and musicology in which the École Normale Supérieure and IRCAM are also involved, and which he oversaw until 1999.

*Erlkönig* (2006) is the grandest of four meditations written by Dufourt on Schubert's settings of Goethe. Much in this work evokes Schubert's lied, which dramatizes the desperate race of a father and his young son against death, whom they seek to outrun on horseback. Dufourt's writing for piano is extraordinarily aggressive. While *Erlkönig* features episodes of fantasy and delirium, these are ultimately overshadowed by relentless cascades of sound, and the pianist faces page upon page of dense, mercilessly virtuosic writing. More than in any other work in this collection, one senses in this music the strain on the body of the performer, the physicality of the instrument, and the desire to transcend the inevitability of decay. *Erlkönig* conveys what Dufourt describes as "constant obsessive emotion" (*une constante émotion obsessionnelle*), yet it is an intense expression conveyed without Romanticism, sentimentality, or nostalgia.

### **Artist Information:**

Marilyn Nonken is one of the most celebrated champions of the modern repertoire of her generation, known for performances that explore transcendent virtuosity and extremes of musical expression. Upon her 1993 New York debut, she was heralded as "a determined protector of important music" (New York Times), and she has been recognized as "one of the greatest interpreters of new music" (American Record Guide).

Composers who have written for her include Drew Baker (Stress Position), Pascal Dusapin (Préludes), Jason Eckardt (Trespass), Joshua Fineberg (Grisaille), Michael Finnissy (North American Spirituals), Liza Lim (The Four Seasons: After Cy Twombly), and Tristan Murail (Les travaux et les jours). Solo recordings include American Spiritual (a CD of works written for her), Morton Feldman: Triadic Memories, Tristan Murail: The Complete Piano Music, and Stress Position: The Complete Piano Music of Drew Baker. As a chamber musician, she has recorded with Ensemble 21, and her recording of Olivier Messiaen's Visions de l'Amen, with Sarah Rothenberg, was released in 2011.

### **Additional Details & Marketing:**

The CD will be fully serviced to all UK classical music press and radio. Advertising will include major classical music magazines and publications. For more details, and to request a review sample, please contact John Cronin at Music & Media Consulting Limited.