



noctuary
raymond deane

hugh tinney piano

Raymond Deane (b. 1953)

Noctuary
Books 1 & 2 (2010-11)

Hugh Tinney *piano*

About Hugh Tinney:

'[the] performance was wonderful in its control of tone colour and in the patience with which Tinney allowed the music to unfold.'
Irish Times

'As well as the technical resources he displayed, he played with maturity and refinement'
The Guardian

Noctuary
Books 1 & 2 (2010-11)
12 night-pieces for solo piano

Book 1

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Minerva's Owl... | [4:18] |
| 2. Versipel | [2:18] |
| 3. Duskiss | [4:41] |
| 4. Nachtfalter | [2:37] |
| 5. Mezzotint | [5:20] |
| 6. ...hitherandthithering... | [3:37] |

Book 2

- | | |
|------------------------|---------|
| 7. Eine Trauerweide... | [3:19] |
| 8. Terzengang | [3:38] |
| 9. Night Watches | [5:21] |
| 10. Cereus | [5:19] |
| 11. Lunar Boogie | [2:47] |
| 12. Couchant | [4:03] |
| Total playing time | [47:25] |



Raymond Deane

Noctuary

Many composers keep a list of titles in their back pocket for works they may or may not get around to composing. I can't remember when I first came across the word *noctuary* – meaning a diary of the night – but I immediately knew that one day it would become the title of a large-scale work. That day arrived in 2010, when I plucked it out of obscurity as an appropriate title for the two books of “night pieces” that the Irish concert pianist Hugh Tinney commissioned from me (with funds from The Arts Council of Ireland/An Chomhairle Ealaíon).

Noctuary was composed over a period of some eleven months, mostly in a sound-proofed attic in Bavaria. This is relevant because, given the nature of the project and contrary to my usual practice, I had determined to work only at night. However, after the first three pieces this resolution wavered and I eventually reverted to my usual diurnal habits. Perhaps by then I was sufficiently permeated by the nocturnal spirit.

Hugh performed the first six pieces (Book I) in pairs in the three formidable recitals entitled “European Masterworks” that he presented in Dublin’s National Concert Hall

in 2011. Thus these relatively short nocturnes saw the light of day alongside such monsters of the repertoire as Beethoven’s *Hammerklavier* Sonata, Liszt’s B minor Sonata, and Ravel’s *Gaspard de la nuit* (the latter, perhaps, being particularly appropriate). Hugh gave the cycle of 12 pieces its first complete outing in Dublin’s Hugh Lane Gallery on 22nd September 2013.

The 12 pieces are “nocturnal” in various ways, but the title of No 1, ‘Minerva’s owl...’, hints at an overall philosophical concept: Hegel wrote that “the owl of Minerva takes flight only as twilight falls.” He meant (partly) that history can only be understood once it has passed, and this understanding is itself a part of history. *Noctuary* thus becomes the latest of my works to explore the sense of lateness, of “coming after”, characteristic of our time, e.g. *Epilogue* (1973), *Apreslude* (1979), *After-Pieces* (1989-90), *Apostille* (1993). Furthermore, the entire tradition of romantic and modern piano literature, particularly in its most nocturnal guise, is referenced in various ways in the course of the cycle: this music is written both within and upon that tradition.

Noctuary is dedicated to Hugh Tinney – the ultimate philosophical pianist.

BOOK ONE

I: Minerva's owl...

For me, because of my childhood fascination with Beethoven's "Moonlight" Sonata, the key of C# minor is the key of the night. In a sense this piece, while not "in" C# minor, is a meditation on that key in which scales are spread out across the keyboard, colliding and intersecting with brighter material focussed on the white notes.

II: Versipel

A "versipel" is any creature capable of changing its form, in particular by turning itself inside-out (e.g., a werewolf). This piece, a kind of *Scherzo*, playfully adapts and turns inside-out materials used more earnestly in my recent opera *The Alma Fetish* (2006-2012, first performed in the National Concert Hall just five days before the première of *Noctuary*), particularly in that work's final scene.

III: Duskick

The title, a Hiberno-English word from County Leitrim meaning "twilight" (perhaps: the kiss of dusk), was lent me by Mary Costello, wife of my colleague Roger Doyle. This piece is a true nocturne in which peacefully overlapping major and minor

thirds are briefly disturbed by a violent outburst constructed from the same intervals.

IV: Nachtfalter

The title means "moth(s)", but could be literally translated as "night folder(s)". This is a fleeting piece in which wispy patterns are folded and unfolded between the hands and between the black and white keys, interspersed with percussive outbursts and static moments evocative of the previous piece's harmonies.

V: Mezzotint

A mezzotint is an engraving created by scraping or burnishing a roughened surface to produce light and shade. *The Mezzotint* is also the title of a famous M. R. James story, in which a picture unfolds a ghostly tale of revenge before the eyes of its owner. While I haven't attempted to follow James's narrative, I think something of its obsessiveness has influenced the music's character. 'Mezzotint' is based on a recurrent 9-note figure that undergoes drastic transformations, and is the longest piece in the first Book.

VI: ...hitherandthithering...

The "hitherandthithering waters of. Night!" evoke that ultimate literary night-piece, James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. This piece alternates ostinato chords with rapid scale



Cereus II by Renata Debrun

and arpeggio patterns that fly over the entire keyboard. It brings the first book of *Noctuary* to an extrovert conclusion.

BOOK TWO

VII: Eine Trauerweide...

Beethoven (again!) inscribed the *Adagio* of his first Rasumovsky Quartet with the mysterious words “Eine Trauerweide oder Akazienbaum aufs Grab meines Bruders” – “A weeping willow or acacia on my brother’s grave”. This piece is dedicated to the memory of my brother Declan, who died during its composition, and represents the cycle’s deepest descent into the ultimate night. Intertwining, almost Scriabin-esque patterns are interrupted by dynamically extreme trills that seem determined on bringing the music’s – perhaps all music’s – flow to a definitive halt.

VIII: Terzengang

The title means “a run (or progression) of thirds”. While superimposed major and minor thirds formed the basis of the gentle *Duskiss*, here a similar structure is put to much more strenuous use. Indeed the piece, one of the most extended and technically demanding in the cycle, is a kind of study in thirds.

IX: Night Watches

The title is a mild pun – the piece evokes the idea (so dear to Ligeti) of clocks (or watches) going out of synch with one another. Like its predecessor, this develops into another extended and technically demanding study.

X: Cereus

The *Cereus* is a cactus one short-lived genus of which (the Nightblooming *Cereus* – *Selenicereus grandiflorus*) has given rise to the myth that it flowers on only one night of the year. This piece accepts the poetic truth of that myth. Velvety darkness is evoked by the opening section in which deep chords are penetrated by a plaintive, medium-high G-B flat dyad (those thirds again). The blossoming of the *Cereus* emerges as a kind of ecstasy disappearing into the ether, leaving the darkness and the plaintiveness intact.

XI: Lunar Boogie

A short, demented piece of great technical difficulty in which the “fetishised” interval is, for once, the perfect fifth. The anticipated thunderous conclusion is sidestepped, and the piece ends quietly.

XII: Couchant

In heraldry, a lion couchant is lying down

with its head raised. In modern French, the word refers to the sunset. However, here it is the moon that is setting: the night itself is lying down. After a rippling opening that evokes Debussy and Ravel, the piece – and *Noctuary* – reaches a peaceful conclusion in which C major is evoked alongside the C sharp (now Dflat) minor of the cycle’s opening.

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Hugh Tinney

Since winning first prize at both the 1983 Pozzoli and 1984 Paloma O'Shea piano competitions in Italy and Spain, Hugh Tinney has performed in more than 30 countries throughout Europe, the USA, Latin America and the Far East. Festival engagements have taken him across the globe and he has broadcast in more than 15 countries.

A prize in the 1987 Leeds Piano Competition earned him a busy career in Great Britain performing with many major orchestras including the London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, Philharmonia, Royal Liverpool, Royal Scottish and BBC National of Wales. He has made a major contribution to Irish concert life for over 30 years, including multiple solo recital series ("Chopin Plus" and "Schubert & Beethoven" at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in the 1990s, and "European Piano Masterworks" at the National Concert Hall, Dublin in 2011), chamber series as curator and performer (at the Royal Dublin Society in 2008, and "European Masterworks" at the National Concert Hall in 2013) and regular concertos with the RTE National Symphony Orchestra from 1978 to the present. He has collaborated with the Borodin, Tokyo,

RtÉ Vanbrugh, Vogler and Con Tempo Quartets, Ensemble Wien, Steven Isserlis, Catherine Leonard, the Chieftains and the late Bernadette Greevy. In 2012 and 2013, he toured China with the Academy Chamber Ensemble. He has recorded solo, chamber and concerto repertoire for Decca, Naxos, RTÉ lyric fm and several other CD labels.

From 2000 to 2006 Hugh Tinney was Artistic Director of the Music in Great Irish Houses festival. He has taught at the Royal Irish Academy of Music since 1995 and has been a jury member at several international piano competitions. He was awarded a two-year bursary in 2006 by the Arts Council of Ireland to work on contemporary music, and he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Music by the National University of Ireland in 2007.

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Hugh Tinney
(Photo by Colm Hogan at Castletown House, Celbridge)

Raymond Deane

Composer, author and political activist Raymond Deane was brought up on Achill Island, off the west coast of Ireland

After graduation from University College Dublin in 1974, he studied composition in Bale, Switzerland, with Gerald Bennett, in Cologne, West Germany, with Karlheinz Stockhausen, and in West Berlin with Isang Yun. He was elected to Aosdána – the Irish government-sponsored academy of artists – in 1987. His works have been commissioned and performed by many Irish and international ensembles and soloists, e.g. the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, the Vanbrugh, Callino and Arditti String Quartets, the Concorde Ensemble, the Danish Nordlys Ensemble, the Schubert Ensemble of London, the pianists Hugh Tinney and Ian Pace, etc. Two chamber operas – *The Poet and his Double* (1991) and *The Wall of Cloud* (1997) – were commissioned and toured by Opera Theatre Company. His full-scale opera *The Alma Fetish* (2006 – 2012) was premiered by Wide Open Opera in Dublin in September 2013.

He was artistic director of the first two

RtÉ Festivals of Living Music, in 2002 and 2004. In 2005 he was awarded a Doctorate in Musical Composition by the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. CDs entirely devoted to his music have appeared on the Black Box, Naxos/Marco Polo, and RTÉ labels.

Raymond Deane has so far produced over 100 compositions in every genre, as well as a novel (*Death of a Medium*, Odell & Adair 1992) and a memoir (*In My Own Light*, Liffey Press, 2014). He lives in central Dublin, and spends part of the year in Fürth, Bavaria.

www.raymonddeane.com

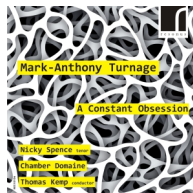


Cereus III by Renata Debrun



Hugh Tinney with Raymond Deane, October 2012
(Photography by Renate Debrun)

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