



ROGER REYNOLDS

Aspiration

Irvine Arditti

Paul Hembree

inauthentica

Mark Menzies

KAIROS



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ROGER REYNOLDS (*1934)

CD 1

- 1 Shifting/Drifting
for violin and real-time algorithmic
transformation (2015) 23:36
commissioned by UC San Diego ArtPower,
California Institute of the Arts, and
Stanford University

- 2 imAge/violin
imAge/violin
for solo violin (2015) 18:26

TT 42:04

CD 2

- 1 Aspiration
for solo violin and
chamber orchestra (2004/05) 29:47
commissioned by the
Oslo Sinfonietta and the
Nouvel Ensemble Moderne

- 2 Kokoro
for solo violin (1991/92) 25:07
commissioned by Irvine Arditti
with funds from the British Arts Council

TT 54:55

Irvine Arditti *violin*
Paul Hembree *computer musician*
inauthentica
Mark Menzies *conductor*

inauthentica

Irvine Arditti *solo violin*
Sarah Wass *flute*
Phil O'Connor *E♭ clarinet*
James Sullivan *bass clarinet*
Jonathan Stehney *bassoon*
Allen Fogle *horn*
Mike Davis *trumpet*
Matt Barbier *trombone*
James Waterman *percussion*
Richard Valitutto *piano*
Andrew Tholl, Mona Tian *violins*
Ben Hudson *viola*
Erika Duke-Kirkpatrick *cello*
Scott Worthington *bass*
Mark Menzies *conductor*

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CD2: 1 2 Oct 2015 2 25–26 Sept 2015

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UC San Diego 2 Conrad Prebys Concert Hall, UC San Diego
CD2: 1 Citrus College, Los Angeles 2 Conrad Prebys
Concert Hall, UC San Diego

Recording supervisor: Roger Reynolds

Recording engineer, editor: CD1: 1 Paul Hembree 2 Josef Kucera
CD2: 1 Nicolas Tipp 2 Josef Kucera

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CD2: 1 2 Mark Menzies, Irvine Arditti

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While composing the music that would become *Aspiration*, a title came into my mind as an inevitability. Perhaps because of Irvine's ways, perhaps because of my creative resolve, who knows? But one day it was *there*. I mentioned the title to Irvine in an email and he responded, "That's a strange name." Dedicated as he is to ideal outcomes, he was perhaps not at that moment considering that they are always uncertain, a sought-for result of the perilous act of "reaching further". He suggested calling this two-CD set *ASPIRATION*, and I immediately embraced the idea. I mean to honor, in a general way, the ideal and the practice of always doing everything one imagines one might in search of elevated outcomes.

Roger Reynolds

Reynolds — works for violin, written for and dedicated to Arditti 1992–2015

Mark Menzies in conversation with Roger Reynolds and Irvine Arditti

As we were completing the editing of *Aspiration*, a question arose: how to approach creating the liner notes for this collected release of Reynolds' works for violin.

Earlier, I had been asked to assist in the producing of the *Kokoro* recording. During that process I found myself suddenly in the middle of the palpable collaborative energy between Roger and Irvine – an extraordinary connection going back decades – and it immediately occurred to me that it was this, above all, that the liner notes had to document.

Their essential commitment to a refin(d)ing energy, evoked what I have always imagined an “other” greatly consequential composer-violinist collaboration to have been: Joachim and Brahms. I don't assert an exact parallel, or indeed an heroic replay, of a past model. Rather, I imagined that Brahms' notion of what the violin could express was manifestly suggested by Joachim's (virtuoso) ability and his greatly informed musical resourcefulness and empathy. Their interaction lasted decades, with the music that came out of it marking an evolution of possibility. This also sums up Roger and Irvine's collaboration perfectly.

It is certain that Brahms was inspired by the breadth of Joachim's performing repertoire choices – everything from the then almost completely unknown solo Bach repertoire, to string quartets, to the “never-performed” Beethoven concerto. Certainly I see an equivalent energy transfer in the case of Roger and Irvine.

Whatever: these preliminaries are but whimsy to prepare for Irvine and Roger saying how it goes in their own words. It was not without trepidation that I prepared questions for these two to get the conversation rolling: one fears, in the effort to be “probing”, that one does nothing more than “prodding”, and in the effort to be deferential, nothing but irritating. No doubt with much patience towards my preliminary literary skills, I find the resulting answers moving: mostly because it is so rare to read about people's motivations in collaborative art-making, particularly in view of the great success that both these wondrous artists enjoy.

Mark Menzies, Christchurch, New Zealand

Mark Menzies: Reflecting on the history of a long-term collaboration, and I am thinking of Brahms and Joachim: how did your collaboration start? Were there agendas on both of your minds, at the time? And, if so, have these agendas developed?

Roger Reynolds: Irvine and I first encountered one another at the Huddersfield Festival in 1982. Graham Hayter, then Promotions Manager at Peters Edition in London, had picked me up at Heathrow. Unexpectedly, he proposed that we drive north from London for a weekend New Music Festival at which a young

string quartet was performing an all-Xenakis program. Graham was eager for me to hear this remarkable group. They performed in a dreary recital space of the music department of Huddersfield University, not a proper concert space at all, but a large room that featured a wall of windows looking out onto a grey and rainy day. The concert started at 11.15. The members of the quartet performed Iannis' solo and small string ensemble works. Every performance had an intensely focused character; each was electrifying.

After the program, Graham introduced me to Irvine, and we shared a meal at an Indian restaurant. Irvine and I came to an agreement, on the spot. I would write them a new quartet, and, as the group had no funds for commissioning, Irvine promised that they would perform the new work multiple times, and eventually record it. I agreed. They did.

At that time, I had not yet developed relationships with many performers, and it was immediately clear – it didn't require an analytic process – that these musicians possessed the kind of dedication to what they did that I felt in regard to my own composing. So, from my perspective, there was no “calculation” of any kind about what would, or could, result from working with Irvine. There was, rather, an immediate “recognition” of a kindred soul.

In the following years, as a result of various performances (in London, in Brussels, in the States ...) we came to know one another. I was back in the UK, perhaps for the premiere of *Coconino ... a shattered landscape* at the Almeida Theater, and Irvine offered a bed at his Golders Green home in London. I came to know

him (and Jenny and their sons) in a way that could not have happened in the normal “professional” contexts. As I think back on these years now, I wonder whether he invited *everyone* into his home or that this gesture was unusual.

I was not then, and am not now, a “carouser” who cultivates late nights out, but, as the quartet's pattern was to eat and drink with relish after their concerts, I was drawn into their mix, in a collegial embrace. And by all the members of the quartet, not only Irvine. It was a heady pleasure: the general banter, Irvine's edgy dynamism, and the philosophical musings of cellist Rohan de Saram. The years pass. Karen and I welcome Irvine and Hilda into our Del Mar home and we enjoy our deck overlooking the Pacific. When I (or we) are in London, either Hilda or I cook something for us all, and the evenings glow. These times together, whether 2, 3, or 4 attend, are occasions to treasure. They nourish our lives.

MM: Brahms sought to comprehend the potential of the romantic violin through his evolving connection with Joachim (who also led an eponymous quartet ...) – did you find a similar opportunity with Irvine, in this case regarding what the “contemporary” violin could mean to you?

RR: Let me begin a response from a more general perspective. Of course I had heard and admired great violinists such as Heifetz and Oistrakh. And also, in the context of their performances of contemporary repertoire: Menuhin (who played my teacher's [Ross Lee Finney] solo sonata for violin) and Yfrah Neaman (who performed music by my other mentor, Roberto

Gerhard). I noticed the range of individual approaches, from, say, the Olympian objectivity of Heifetz, through the ingrained romanticism of Oistrakh, to the occasional sentimentality of Menuhin. But it was less the style of playing – strongly focused on the lyrical linearity associated with the 19th-century tonal repertoire – and more the nature of the music that they chose to play that struck me. It had an almost “singular” character, as though there were only one way music could respond to the world.

And as the 20th century stumbled along, the nature of music, perhaps more accurately the “space” that music could interestingly inhabit, was changing. Not only during its first half with, say, the “brutalism” of early Prokofiev and Bartok, but then much more radically after the World War II. Different attitudes emerged regarding what could serve as musical materials – that is, altered attitudes regarding the acceptability of unconventional sounds themselves – (Cage, Nancarrow, Lachenmann) and also about the organization of such new materials (Webern, Cage, Xenakis, Boulez, Feldman). The fact that “objectivity” was a requisite attitude in shaping post-WW II serialism caused a sharp curtailment of what traditionally oriented instrumentalists would formerly have categorized as “expressive license”. In those times (1950s and 60s), there was an effort to organize objectively (even to *serialize*) the nuances of pitch, time, dynamics, and timbre formerly a part of an individual performer’s expressivity. So string players, in particular, because of their instrument’s “vocal character”, had, suddenly, to play with improbable precision, executing irrational rhythms and intricate metrical changes *non vibrato*, and with dynamic patterns involving

very rapid alternations in forcefulness. Precision and objectivity became imperative if one were to represent a mid-20th-century musical score in all its hyper-detailed specificity.

There were other forces at work as well. After his seminal intersection with Japanese pianist/composer, Yuji Takahashi (who inspired and premiered the immensely improbable solo work *Herma*), Xenakis proceeded to employ, increasingly, a hitherto unthinkable athleticism in his scores. He presented performers with tasks that were at the least Herculean challenges and at their most extreme, literally “unplayable” (I think of his 1973 piano work, *Evrjali*, that often prescribes densities far greater than two human hands could possibly realize.). So virtuosity of a new sort, outside the boundaries of what had been thought “idiomatic” to instruments now become an accepted musical dimension.

In yet another context, Cage’s music produced similar performative “impossibilities” from the perspective of extrapolated chance procedures (the distribution of events by chance rather than by intention) as well as newly conceived responsibilities that required performers to work out for themselves the implications of graphic scores and *koan*-like instructions such as “The performance will last an agreed upon length of time.”

For me, this meant that string instruments offered the ideal medium for realizing the use of a new flexibility and detail of specification, where pitch (through continuous glissandi), timbre (through modifications of bow placement), extreme discontinuities in

linear contour (through the use of natural and artificial harmonics as well as open strings), both dynamic forcefulness and reserve (employing extreme overpressure to wispy circular bowing), felt “entirely reasonable”. [In regard to detailed notational specification, I remember sending a score of *Quick Are the Mouths of Earth* to composer/conductor Larry Austin in the 1960s, and receiving a long letter back from him. In it, I later realized, I had mis-read his “fussy” for “fuzzy”, assuming that he thought I had not been detailed enough. That was the nature of those times.]

Among all of the string soloists or ensembles I heard, Irvine and his quartet were quite simply peerless. He *defined* musical potential, addressing challenge after challenge in a way that felt definitive. But his playing also fixed in my aural imagination exactly what a given musical gesture, notated, could sound like when realized properly. Irvine became quite literally my “door to plausible potential”.

MM: Irvine, how does (or has) your solo career fit into your evolution as a performer?

I don’t mean just pragmatically, but also in your gradual realization of the immense authority you enjoy as one of the preeminent violinists of our time?

Irvine Ardit: I must say that I have just been getting on with the favourite hobby of my life ...

I suppose this began many years ago when I was 18 and went to Paris to discuss and play Xenakis’ first solo violin work *Mikka* for him. There were some unplayable parts and I wanted to clarify what he meant.

I suppose this was my first experience of working with a composer as it preceded the first concert with the quartet. Xenakis never explained how I was to tackle these sections of the piece but put the responsibility firmly on my shoulders by saying, “you will find a way”. Of course I found many ways, and some years later Xenakis wrote his work *Dox-Orkh* (violin and orchestra) for me. As well as wishing to write a violin concerto for me, I think *Dox-Orkh* was Xenakis’ way of thanking me for my support as a significant string player, not only taking his music seriously but adoring it, and him, as we got to know each other. The concept of the piece was *Dox* = David and *Orkh* = Goliath. Myself, a lone string player, against the massive forces of a large orchestra.

I had a few years sitting at the front of the London Symphony orchestra. Great soloists were within reach and I remember vividly one performance where, as concert master, I was accompanying Isaac Stern who played three concertos. I had learned well from orchestral colleagues that when accompanying a string concerto one should play with bow slightly turned and with perhaps two or three hairs. A full string section playing *piano* the way a quartet member might, would be a serious conflict for a solo instrument.

When we beam forward to the 20th century, (there was no 21st then) we see orchestral or ensemble players playing real dynamics to accompany solo strings. It is as though composers have had very little concept of balance and imagine that a standing soloist can cut through anything. Of course we can achieve this with a sound system and a re-balancing of priorities. I took it on as my duty to inform Xenakis and Roger of this

when they came to write for me. Xenakis solved the problem by making a large portion of the piece a dialog between David and his oversized partner.

When the quartet took full flight I considered it as my main occupation. If I had encouraged too much of a solo career then I would have been neglecting my responsibilities to my three colleagues and as primaries to the quartet that bears my name. My solo career has been the icing on top of the cake. I have allowed a few composers into my private club but have now accumulated several important works. (Ferneyhough: *Terrain*, Harvey: *Scena*, Francesconi: *Riti Neurali*, Dillon: *Vernal Showers*, Pauset: *Vita Nova*, Sciarrino: *Le Stagioni Artificiali*, Paredes: *Señales*, and of course Reynolds: *Aspiration*)

MM: Has your ongoing collaboration with Roger had a place in that evolution?

JA: Roger and I have had a “lifelong” relationship over the best part of four decades. What began as an occasional professional interaction developed over the years into a more wide-ranging friendship. Perhaps the reason for such a successful and fruitful relationship was because we got on so well both professionally and as friends. Our interactions were not restricted to music, as tennis and Roger’s cooking also played their part in the way we connect. Roger would usually stay with us when he visited London. In the early days, when I was living with my first wife Jenny, Roger would slot in almost as a family member, certainly an honorary one. He knew my three sons well and even assisted with a science school project of my eldest son Ben, by building with him an anemometer to take to school.

Roger continues to come, and for many years now we have shared many a gourmet evening at the hands of Roger’s culinary talents or my present wife Hilda’s.

MM: One of the realities of Joachim’s relationship to Brahms was that the performance practice of that music was largely “set” by that violinist’s preferences; his preferences and manner(isms) of playing later became synonymous with a rather opaque notion of what constituted the “romantic manner”. Many later-20th-century violinists (and violists, cellists ...) who are specialists in contemporary music defined themselves in opposition to that well-established ideal. It doesn’t seem you do that, Irvine. In fact, when I assisted in producing your recording of *Kokoro* for this CD set, it was palpable to me how much your view of that piece has changed over time. To what degree are you aware of altering your outlook on this or other works, and why might it have happened?

JA: *Kokoro* is the oldest work recorded here and dates back to 1992. It was interesting that Roger could not attend the premiere in Brussels in early 1993 and we did not rehearse together prior to the premiere. In a way, my interpretation became more “open” and flexible, unlike the case with other works written for me when I worked together with the composer from the beginning. Not long after the premiere of *Kokoro*, I recorded it at UCSD in a series of recordings that also contained all Roger’s quartets to date. This was released on Disques Montaine in the mid-90s. Roger has since worked with several violinists on the piece including yourself. Coming back to it recently, after sending Roger a recording of a concert where I had performed it, I received the following response:

“The most distinctive quality of *Kokoro* for a listener should be the variety of ways in which the music speaks. But this comes about not only because of the objective differences from section to section, but because of *subjective* distinctions (of mood, if you will). The most striking – indeed breathtaking – shift of mood that you achieve in this performance is in the final bar, when an implacable fire melts – in a moment – into an affective tenderness. If that kind of change could be managed between the 12 sections, you would really have something (and, come to think of it, so would I). It is the many aspects of meaning for the word “kokoro” that sparked me, and that’s why I used titles for each section.”

This was the most detailed and illuminating response I think I have received from any composer, ever. There is a clarity in the wording that makes his wishes unmistakable.

His letter then goes on to pinpoint, in detail, his priorities for execution in every movement. I have never been the recipient of such clear thoughts from a composer on how they would like their music to be played.

It is interesting that, now, many years on, Roger has the wish to experiment with the time frame of *Kokoro*, making a more expansive version.

MM: Please comment on the performance practice of “contemporary music”, as you’ve observed it throughout your career: has the practice evolved in positive

ways over recent decades? If you feel that there has been an evolution in performance practice, what are the central changes you’ve experienced?

JA: I am not sure I have changed my methods of approach to learning and performing music since my beginnings except to say I have certainly got more efficient at it. There is a certain *dedication* necessary in bringing to life music that was hitherto unheard. What has changed is less me than the things around me. We are in a very different time now 40 or so years later. Ideas, practices, that were at the front then have now receded. I am less a pioneer now. I don’t mean to open a “can of worms” (as Morty Feldman would have said) about where music is, now. Possibly because of what I have achieved, other performers have benefited from my vision of what performance could be, and from the large repertoire that has been created for me, and are taking up the fruits of my efforts.

But, as I have said, the Reynolds-Arditti relationship has born much fruit and covers a lifetime of intellectual and heartfelt music making. After *Kokoro*, being the dedicatee of *Aspiration*, and more recently the two *imAgE* pieces and *Shifting/Drifting* has been a thoroughly rewarding experience.

For the more recent pieces, I felt like I was really involved in the creation process. What happened was something new for me even with all my years of collaboration with many composers.

Roger first asked me which of the solo pieces or concertos that had been written for me I thought were successful, and why. He must have reflected on this

and after a while would send me fragments or exercises of material for my comments. These were examples of the sort of material he wanted to write, still at a very preliminary stage. Usually, they would be virtuoso fragments that needed to fall under my fingers to work. I would explain what register would be best and perhaps suggest the inclusion of certain open strings in fast moving passages that included a mixture of techniques like *balzato* and left hand *pizzicato* to facilitate easier access to his proposed material. I would make comments in this way, and gradually more substantial material began arriving, and over time grew into the work as it is now. I would deter the writing of anything that was un-violinistic or unfriendly to a “normal” classical violinist’s way of thinking. Roger actually said he wanted the experience of performing it to be pleasurable for me. Prior to this occasion, many pieces had landed in my lap, written by composers who had no concern whatsoever as to whether I experienced any pleasure in playing their music or suffered any injuries from their pyrotechnics or large stretches that they felt obliged to write. In Roger’s process, however, there came next the fine-tuning of ideas in larger sections of material. There were many crossings of ideas over cyberspace. And every time this occurred I felt I could smell the Pacific. I must add that I love to smell the Pacific ...

And, eventually, I did arrive at the Pacific in San Diego so as to have further crossing of ideas and interaction with Roger to make the final versions of these pieces; to record the *imAgE* pieces for CD; and to have rehearsals with the brilliant computer musician Paul Hembree, for *Shifting/Drifting*.

Roger had come to London the previous April to sample my violin sound. But these sessions at UC San Diego also allowed fine-tuning of that sampling and under better conditions. The Pacific days were filled with activity – moving between recording, rehearsing with the electronic sounds and visiting fine restaurants. My movements were not made easier by the fact that I had slipped and broken my ankle six weeks earlier. Doctors had begged me to postpone this long journey and what would be a “workout” for any man half my age. Crutches were employed to keep me mobile, but this was, in any case, the first solo recording I have ever made sitting down.

Rehearsals in San Diego were my first experience of how this “duo” was going to work. I had only imagined what the electronics part would sound like until this moment. The way the piece had been written allowed, even called for the sort of inter-reaction that a violinist would have with his duo partner in a classical work, or perhaps a duo partner in improvisation. Although all the material was completely notated, with quite a specific time code, there was flexibility as to when some events would happen and for how long. Each player had to react to the other, coordinating events in real time. Paul proved to be an ideal duo partner, a pleasure to work with.

Following these San Diego days, there was a short residency at the California Institute of the Arts in Los Angeles where – with the inauthentic ensemble that Mark Menzies had organized previously – we made a studio recording for this CD, with him conducting. He was thus joined to the project not only as producer (for *Kokoro*), and script writer for these notes, but also

as conductor for a piece he had previously played as soloist. It was a pleasure to get to know Mark as we had and have much repertoire in common.

MM: I’ve now studied, played and lived with pretty much your entire violin repertoire, Roger, from that dramatic first concerto *Personae*, to *Kokoro* (your first solo piece), through to the *image* pieces and *Shifting/Drifting* via the second concerto, *Aspiration*. To me it seems, over that time, as one might expect, you’ve changed as a composer, but that you’ve also found, more recently, “other things” suggested by the capacity of the violin, things quite beyond *Kokoro* and *Personae* (and not to forget *Aether*, for violin and piano). Coming to these “other things” is quite something, given how far-reaching the directions to which those “older” pieces decisively go!

RR: One of the surprising aspects of the good fortune of a long career is that one can look back – listen back – to music that one wrote, say, 40 or 50 years earlier. I had that opportunity when New World Records issued a 5-CD set documenting the ONCE Festivals in Ann Arbor, in the 1960s. Listening to some of my earliest works, it was disconcerting to realize that *I was already “there”*. In this music, created when I was still naïve and inexperienced. My sense of phrase, characteristic gestures, interval successions and harmonies, temporal proportionality, were already in place. How, one wonders, *could* this be true?

So I think there are aspects of one’s musical self that are simply going to be fixtures. Inescapable. Ways of thinking about and feeling music that are unlikely to change much over the course of a life. So that leads

to the question: What *do* we acquire as we gain experience? I would say that, at root, *how* we learn is by the feedback of our own reactions to what we do, but also because of the response of performers and audiences (these are far more important than the opinions of [most] critics). We realize what is making an impact and what is not. Such realizations, however, leave out the answer to the follow-on question, which is “What shall I do about what I learn? What is it, in the patterns of my ways, that could usefully change?”

Most of us do not have the opportunity to gaze into a “meta-mirror” that not only reflects surfaces – as normal mirrors do – but also presents one with a deeper picture of why what is “seen” works as it does, and, hence, about how it might be productively changed. I have been fortunate in receiving three major commissions from the French musical research facility, IRCAM. The first, in the early 1980s, stretched over two and a half years, most of which I spent in Paris. I took this engagement as an opportunity to rethink everything about what I had been doing, compositionally, up until that time. This promoted a heightened sense of the importance for me of considering outcomes before engaging with a creative process, with preparing systematically (but without suffocating limitations) the materials I was going to be working with, and assuring that they would be suited to my larger musical purposes. The primary result of time spent on the 1982-83 *Archipelago* project was that I tended to concentrate on larger formal schemes, on how careful preliminary consideration and planning could reasonably support, and to think of the “theme and variations” paradigm as central.

The third project I did at IRCAM was proposed originally by perceptual and cognitive psychologist, Stephen McAdams, then the head of this aspect of IRCAM's programs. He suggested that I compose an extended musical work that could be used as an "experimental object/opportunity" by two teams of psychologists, one at IRCAM, the other in Dijon, at the University of Bourgogne. Our resulting collaboration on *The Angel of Death* allowed me to assess – as with the aforementioned "meta-mirror" – whether the assumptions about listener experience that I had evolved unconsciously over the preceding decades, were valid or were not. The results of the scientists' experiments confirmed some of my assumptions (especially about how large form works) but challenged others. I realized that listeners did not register the identity of musical events as reliably as I had expected, and, as a result, they also did not experience transformations over time as securely as I had imagined. I thought about these results, and decided that I would do two things in response: reduce the number of material elements in play and thereby simplify the harmonic and temporal design, and also work to clarify the rhetoric of my musical forms by introducing more "sign-posts", as it were, and, in general, allowing more repetition, even of the literal sort.

As an intriguing aftermath of these deliberate changes, Irvine said casually at one point, "Oh, this is another work by the 'new Reynolds'." At first, I didn't know what he meant, but then I understood that he had grasped and characterized in his own way what was happening in my music. So, while I don't think that a composer (or artist in general) can easily alter the essential nature of his/her work, it is possible to increase

and re-direct the ways in which one pays attention to the compositional process, and to balance materials with purposes and techniques that optimize the ways in which personal predilections speak in what one does. Certainly Elliott Carter's career offers a prime example of how such a gradual realignment of ways and purposes can alter a composer's work, while, not, at root, displacing that individual's "center".

In my earlier violin music, I was, so to speak, in a direct and immediate conversation with such an intersection between compositional aims, materials, and the violin medium. I was also in a more engrossed and perhaps slightly "myopic" relationship with my composing. As time passed (particularly after the *Angel* project and the follow-up experiments), I became increasingly open to aspects of the tradition that could be re-integrated with newer ways. I remember Irvine saying after premiering *Aspiration* at the Ultima Festival in Oslo, "Why Roger, you've written a piece that asks me to *play as I was taught to!*" He didn't say it ironically, and it seemed that he meant it.

MM: Specifically, in regard to your "model" of how you relate to the violin, how did you achieve this "other" violin (writing, expression). Of course, it might be that what I hear in that new approach is a synthesis: a focus of intentions with an intricate means to deliver them through an empathy with the violin/violinist that was not so obvious before. In what ways did working with Irvine on the more recent *imAgeE/violin* pieces and *Shifting/Drifting* feel different?

RR: During our recent, intensive collaborations, I did notice some interesting elements in a book that Irvine

had done with Robert Platz (more from the performer and little from the composer), particularly *bariolage* and *spazzarole*. The former designates the rich integration of open strings with stopped notes in order to maximize the resonant force of the instrument. And, as to the latter, a very rapid "windshield-wiper" motion converts any left hand activity and string selection into a fine-grained and sparkling evanescence. These two approaches are, of course, only activation strategies, and may not speak directly to the idea of an "other" approach to the instrument.

Without, perhaps, fully understanding what you are getting at with your question, I can ask myself if I am conscious of a change in the way I think about the violin in recent works. Probably the strongest factors have been the continuous, and quite direct (sometimes many emails and illustrative examples in a single day) interaction with Irvine during the compositional process, and also a sense of freedom and confidence, a willingness to let my impulses play out as they needed to, even if the result overflowed the boundaries of a pre-existent structure. From the start, I made clear to Irvine that I really wanted the conception and forming of the two complementary solo works (*imAgeE/violin* and *imAgeE/violin*) to be as collaborative as possible. In the former, for example, I was seeking the fastest possible pizzicato speeds. Irvine gave me a metronome mark and I sent him exercises. I heard that I was not getting the effect I wanted by combining right and left hand pizzicatos (and still don't fully understand why my strategy failed) and so he proposed a *col legno battuto* approach involving directly striking the strings with the wood of a reversed bow.

The two solos mentioned above were intended to be as strongly contrasted as possible. I thought about how I hear what Irvine does and settled on two fundamental characteristics: the rapid movement of a double-stop involving the two upper strings to the two lower ones, or vice versa. I wrote out exercises that showed various double-stop successions and Irvine gave me feedback. So *imAge* was centered upon rapid position *shifting*, that is, on *sudden displacement*. Its complement was centered on the precision Irvine was capable of in passage work. This I labeled *drifting*. I had the idea of continuously shifting finger patterns that would begin on a specific set of, say three pitches, and then migrate upwards or downwards, altering the initial intervallic structure in the process so that the contour was retained, but rendering it gradually narrower or more ample. I asked that he maintain, at the same time, a drone pitch on an open string. This turned out to be very challenging, and, as well, the gradual shifting of a patterned contour produced a disturbingly sour harmonicity. We opted instead, at his suggestion, for writing out the shifting patterns on the basis of specific (and thereby already learned) tempered pitches. The idea remained but the approach was more explicitly quantified.

The above are just two instances of many. What I guess would be fair to say is that I moved the center of my violin writing from a place very near, if not confined to, my own sense of viable normatives (though sometimes pressed to extremes) towards a position that was further from my proclivities and more in line with Irvine's approach to his instrument. Perhaps this – the customization of musical intention to violinistic character – is the source of the change you identified.

Additional comments on the included works
by the composer:

Kokoro 1991/92

[commissioned by Arditti with funds from
the British Arts Council]

As I came to know Irvine, I heard that the nature of his playing (or was it the nature of the music he played?) emphasized assertive and evidently virtuosic shiftings. In *Kokoro*, I wanted to seek, to elicit, the more tender and ruminative side that I knew was there. Reading D. Suzuki's *Zen and Japanese Culture*, I came upon a footnote in which he elaborated the many separable meanings in that Japanese word. It proved the perfect catalyst for my purposes. And, as well, my effort to address the whole of what Irvine was/is explains why his performance has evolved as he has over the years.

Aspiration 2004/05

[commissioned by the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne
and the Oslo Sinfonietta]

Irvine and I had talked on different occasions about the fact that, when he was the young leader of the London Symphony, the orchestra had to play at an extremely hushed level to ensure that the soloist be heard. I vowed that, should I have the opportunity to write a concerto for him, I would find a way around that issue. I did so in two ways. Firstly, there is a formal alternation between sections for the orchestra alone (or with Irvine) and a set of five extended cadenzas that have their own formal evolution. So the formal interplay between soloist and ensemble, from a larger perspective, interweaves two different musical arcs: one for the soloist, one for the ensemble. Secondly, when Irvine is superimposed on the ensemble, he has frequent, impassioned, rhythmically improvisational, figurative outbursts that serve to bring a listener's attention back to his role in whatever is happening.

**imAge/violin 2015 and
imAge/violin 2015**

In 2007, in response to a request from cellist Alexis Deschames, I wrote the first pair of complementary solo works in what became a continuing series. *imAge/cello* stressed the "evocative and expressive" side, while *imAge/cello* focused on the "articulate and assertive". In composing the violin pair, I adopted a strategy that would involve a continuously collaborative interaction with Irvine so that the resulting works were crafted closely to his ways. I would propose, he would counter (a serve and return model with occasional rushings to the net and overhead smashes, even the occasional lob).

As was the case earlier with *Kokoro*, I had in mind strongly contrasted materials and interpretative attitudes that were aroused by my thoughts, not only about Irvine's violinistic capabilities, but also by the person I had come to know well and easily "heard" in imagination. During the months in which I was working on these pieces, we would sometimes exchange numerous emails in a single day. It was a deeply textured and enjoyable, a productive process. I can hear in Irvine's performances the sort of natural investment that I had hoped would result. Our friendship provided a kind of halo around a process (itself featuring occasional driftings into worries over or admiration for what Roger Federer or Novak Djokovic were accomplishing in various international tennis tournaments).

Shifting/Drifting 2015

[commissioned by ArtPower at UC San Diego,
California Institute of the Arts, and Stanford University]

Twice earlier I had taken the step of moving from two contrasted solos, to an interplay of their materials in dialog within a larger form for the solo instrument and a computer musician. The latter performed as a partner in a duo where real time computer algorithms allowed him to manipulate "seeds" (phrase, gestures, passages) from the soloist's materials interactively during performance. These two works (*Dream Mirror* for guitar and computer and *MARKed MUSIC* for contrabass and computer) had placed firmly in my mind the plan of creating something of the sort with Irvine. In *Shifting/Drifting*, however, the process became much more interwoven than had been the case previously: Irvine with me, the two solo works with one another, the solo works with newly composed materials for the larger composite, and computer musician (and programmer) Paul Hembree with us both, in the development phase and in concert presentations.

It is important to recognize here how invaluable collaborating with technically expert, and musically informed younger persons has been for me. It is, in a general sense, becoming increasingly more difficult to accomplish by oneself high quality work in the many distinct disciplinary fields that are implicated as one's imagination travels aloft. Paul continues to be a valued collaborator for his perceptiveness, skills, and the thoroughness with which he prepares.



Photo by Kylie Johnson, © Reynolds Trust

Roger Reynolds: composer, writer, producer, mentor and pioneer in sound spatialization, using intermedia and algorithmic concepts, and an inveterate synthesizer of diverse capacities and perspectives. His notorious (1961) composition, *The Emperor of Ice Cream*, which uses graphic notation to depict performer location on stage, was widely imitated. In fact, Reynolds's work often arises out of text. One of his IRCAM commissions, *Odyssey* (1989–93) sets a bilingual Beckett text; his Pulitzer prize-winning composition, *Whispers Out of Time*, for string orchestra, muses over a poem by John Ashbery. The FLIGHT project arose out of a collection of texts that stretches from Plato to astronaut, Michael Collins. These works demonstrate how seamlessly text, electroacoustic resources and novel presentation strategies can be melded with live instrumental and vocal performance.

Collaborations with individual performers and ensembles, theater directors, choreographers, and scientists have been important for Reynolds. Such influences have provoked *Sanctuary* (2003–2007) for percussion quartet and real-time computer processing with Steven Schick. Gramophone wrote: "Here's the most outstandingly original view of percussion since Varèse's *Ionisation*." Diapason wrote "fresh-minted but also thrillingly open-ended ...", about a Mode 2-disc set of Reynolds' complete cello music featuring Alexis Descharmes.

Reynolds' music is published exclusively by C.F. Peters Corporation and his manuscripts are housed in a Special Collection at the Library of Congress and at the Sacher Foundation in Basel. He has been commissioned by the Philadelphia, San Francisco, Los Angeles, BBC, and National Symphony orchestras, as well as the British Arts Council, the French Ministry of Culture, Ircam, the Fromm, Rockefeller, Suntory, and Koussevitzky foundations. Dozens of CD recordings are produced by Mode, Neuma, New World, Lovely, Aavidis, Wergo, and now Kairos.

Reynolds envisions his own path as entailing the principle of weaving together threads from tradition with novel provocations originating outside of music. His outlook has been affected by reading about and researching psychoacoustics. His long-standing friendships with Cage, Nancarrow, Takemitsu and Xenakis also inform his views in procedural and personal ways. Reynolds conceives composition as "a process of illumination", a path toward (occasional) clarity in turbulent times. He seeks the satisfaction of proposing and experiencing unexpected connections, of bringing the elevating capacity of music into public spaces, of engaging with other arts and artists to discover new amalgamations of sensation and of insight that can "improve the human experience."



Irvine Arditti studied at the Royal Academy of Music where the Arditti Quartet was formed in 1974. He has performed in both the quartet and as soloist throughout the world in most leading concert halls and festivals, promoting the most challenging new music and has given world premieres of hundreds of works. His name is synonymous with the highest level of quality and dedication in the performance of new music.

The composers he has worked with read like a who's who of 20th- and 21st-century music, and there are also hundreds of lesser names, younger composers with whom he has performed. Many composers have written solo works or concertos for him and they include, Cage, Dillon, Ferneyhough, Francesconi, Harvey, Hosokawa, Kurtag, Paredes, Pauset, Sciarrino and Xenakis and, of course, Roger Reynolds, the majority of whose solo works were written for Arditti and are contained in this Kairos set.

Arditti has appeared with many distinguished orchestras and ensembles, including the Asko Ensemble, Avanti, Ensemble Modern, Bayerische Rundfunk, BBC Symphony, Berlin Radio Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw, Ensemble Contrechamps, Junge Deutsche Philharmonie, London Sinfonietta, Orchestre National de Paris, Het Residentie den Hague, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Nieuw Ensemble, Nouvel Ensemble Modern, Oslo Sinfonietta, Philharmonia orchestra, Schoenberg Ensemble and Ensemble Signal. His many concerto performances have won acclaim by their composers, in particular Dutilleux, Ligeti and Xenakis.

He has recorded more than 200 CD releases, both with the quartet and as soloist. His recording of Berio's violin *Sequenza* for Mode records, contained within the complete set of *Sequenzas*, won the Deutsche Schallplattenpreis in 2007 and was awarded best contemporary music release by the Italian music magazine, *Amadeus* in 2008.

As leader of the quartet, in 1999 he accepted the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize. This prestigious prize begun in 1974 had only been awarded to individuals in classical music. The quartet was the first group and remain to this day the only group to have receive this lifetime achievement prize. The complete archive of both the Quartet and Irvine Arditti are housed in the Sacher Foundation in Basel, Switzerland.

Paul Hembree is an active computer musician, composer, and educator working with experimental music and interactive media. As a computer musician, he has worked with prominent performers of new music, including Irvine Arditti, the Arditti Quartet, Pablo Gómez Cano, the International Contemporary Ensemble, Ensemble Signal, Southwest Chamber Music, and JACK Quartet, as well as in compositions by Pauline Oliveros, Brian Ferneyhough, Kaija Saariaho, and Roger Reynolds, among others. As a performer, his festival appearances incorporate June in Buffalo (2015), the Miller Theatre Composer Portrait Series, and the Darmstadt International Summer Course for New Music (2016).

Hembree's recent compositions consist of a series of audiovisual duos for solo performers with video doppelgängers, comprised of *Cerebral Hyphomycosis* (2016), premiered by cellist Tyler J. Borden, and *Pulmonary Zygomycosis* (2017), premiered by trumpeter Sam Wells. Hembree also created tools that blur the

line between "instrument" and "composition", using techniques for procedurally generating abstract animations and sound. Some of these tools are *Apo-cryphal Chrysopoeia* (2016), featured at National Sawdust in the 2016 New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, and *Audiovisual Alchemy* (2017), for HTC Vive virtual reality. His article, "A Spatial Interpretation of Edgard Varèse's *Ionisation* Using Binaural Audio", co-authored with percussionist Dustin Donahue, appeared in *Perspectives of New Music* (Vol. 51, No. 1, 2013).

In 2015, he received his PhD in music from UC San Diego, specializing in composition and computer music. Hembree is currently a visiting assistant professor of electronic music at Bard College.

Mark Menzies has established an important, worldwide reputation as a violist and violinist, and more recently, as a conductor. He has been described as an "extraordinary musician" and a "riveting violinist" in the Los Angeles Times. His career as a viola and violin virtuoso, chamber musician, conductor and advocate of contemporary music, has allowed him to perform in Europe, Brazil, Mexico, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and across the United States, including a series of appearances at New York's Carnegie Hall.

Currently Professor of Music at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, where he teaches conducting, Mark Menzies has previously designed and curated the California Institute of the Arts concerts at REDCAT, a part of the Disney Hall complex in Los Angeles, from 2003 to 2016. A highlight of this series was a 5-concert festival of Sophia Gubaidulina's music performed in her presence (2011); an additionally significant event was the US premiere of Gérard Grisey's *Les espaces acoustiques*, which Menzies conducted. He has appeared on a number of recordings as conductor, including Anne LeBaron's dance/opera *Pope John* and music by Mark Applebaum on the Innova label. Both featured inauthentica, an ensemble Menzies founded in 2003.

inauthentica began as an initiative by Mark Menzies and highly talented musicians from the Los Angeles-based California Institute of the Arts community, with their first concert being in 2003 at the San Francisco Art Institute, focused on John Cage's music. The idea, reflected in the ensemble name, was to explore a spirit of performance that dares to find itself alive and relevant – even if it, by chance, appears to be inauthentic to (pre)conceived notions of "correctness". The LA Times wrote, in 2005, "Classical musicians' vaunted claims of authentic performance practice have become almost a mantra. So it's a relief to hear of a new group that calls itself inauthentica".

A particular focus of the ensemble has been on contemporary music: from 2003, a close working relationship with Stanford University led to a series of recordings released on Innova Recordings, with a highlight being the premiere recording of Mark Applebaum's *56 1/2 ft.* Chapman University in Orange, California, another partner with the ensemble, hosted, amongst other concerts and workshops, an extraordinary 8-hour marathon concert with the ensemble in 2008.

An early success for inauthentica was its debut at REDCAT/Disney Hall in 2005, with a performance of music by Stephen "Lucky" Mosko, Wolfgang Rihm, and Roger Reynolds. Resident ensemble at the Santa Cecilia Orchestra's Chamber Series, Los Angeles, from 2007–2011, its eclectic repertoire offering explored "commentary" on contemporary notions of period performance practice, offsetting that by highlighting contemporary music – particularly from Latin America. In a similar spirit, the ensemble had previously performed, and released a recording of, Schönberg's *Pierrot lunaire*, rarely presented unperformed, during the 2005/2006 concert season.

Gratitude

If one is fortunate, a creative life can be filled with a significant number of those whose expertise, friendship, and nourishing presence enhances and enables the best of one's capability. These dependencies are *always* a factor that I do not doubt. In the case of the *ASPIRATION* CD project, they are easily identified.

The New Zealand-born conductor, violinist, violist, and pianist, Mark Menzies first came into my life as a graduate student at the UC San Diego Department of Music. That was long ago and since then, his friendship and varied ministrations have been of enduring, and often decisive, importance to me.

Recording Engineer, Josef Kucera, was the Senior Recording Engineer of the Music Department at UC San Diego, for several decades. His dedication to getting it right – his listening, understanding, and technical skills – allowed the recorded dissemination of my creative glow that could not otherwise have been achieved. His work has been fundamental for me.

Irvine Arditti, friend and colleague for more than three decades is, simply said, the most valued (and also *enjoyed*) collaborator that I have had the privilege to work with throughout my career. His energies, the sharpness of his ear, his irrepressible searching for that which is (at least a bit) beyond what one imagines possible – as well as his dry wit and appetite(s) shared – remain continually, precious components of my days.

Roger Reynolds



Photo by Karen Reynolds, © Reynolds Trust

Roger Reynolds and Irvine Arditti in Yucatán in December 2000

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