

CAT HOPE  
EPHEMERAL  
RIVERS  
CHAMBER WORKS

## CAT HOPE, EPHEMERAL RIVERS

This is the first portrait CD of works by the Australian composer Cat Hope. It's also a group portrait, the artist surrounded by musicians with whom she regularly collaborates. Cat Hope's practice reaches across composition, sound and performance art, into film, video and installation, but she is above all an artist who works with other artists: as flautist and director of the Decibel new music ensemble, who appear here; as a bass guitarist in and director of the Australian bass orchestra; and as half of the noise improvisation duo Canded Limbs.

Like all portraits this CD can be read in different ways: it represents a moment in time, not just the artist's time but our collective time; it is intimate, but in its intimacy it shows us something of the society in which this music was made. The moment in time covers the years between 2011 and 2015, the period in which Cat Hope made the five works gathered here. Each of them inhabits what the composer herself describes as a 'nexus of electronic and acoustic instruments, animated notations, drone and noise' and although all of them might be described as chamber music, none of them is a chamber work in the classical sense of music for an exclusively acoustic instrumental ensemble. Instead, in each case the sonic resources of acoustic instruments are located within a musical frame that includes other elements: sometimes, as in *Cruel and Usual*, the live electronics extend the sounds of the instruments; sometimes the sounds created by the musicians are augmented by, or juxtaposed with other sound sources, such as the AM radio static in *Miss Fortune X*.

There is a larger frame too, the world beyond the concert hall or recording studio, the world where people live and work, and for Cat Hope this socio-political dimension is important part of her work, perhaps increasingly so. Particular issues are often explicitly referenced in work titles and also influence the way the works are made. In *Dynamic Architecture I* architectural drawings of this deliberately 'unfriendly' urban design inform the drawings that make up the score to that piece; in *Cruel and Usual* Cat Hope describes the stretching out of sounds as a sonic metaphor for 'what slow passing time could feel like in solitary confinement in a jail'. Nevertheless she says that she 'believes in

listening to music in an abstract way, not as a sonic representation of something.'

That world beyond music is also increasingly dominated by technology, much of it, like 'dynamic architecture', apparently at odds with our humanity. Paradoxically, however, it is the use of technology that emphasizes the human dimension of Cat Hope's work. The recording process heightens the intimacy of this music; as she says, it 'exposes small details of the sounds of instruments, like our ear is up close to them.' Similarly, her use of animated notation enlivens the interaction of composer and performer. Instead of a conventional paper score the musicians read from computer screens on which digitally rendered graphic notation is in movement, either scrolling from left to right or up and down, or a shuffle of images.

Cat Hope's website, [www.cathope.com](http://www.cathope.com), provides a rich resource for listeners who want to discover more about her work. The following brief descriptions of the works on this CD are in her own words:

'*Miss Fortune X* is dedicated to my father, Douglas Campbell Hope (1937–2012), and is the name of a radio-controlled model airplane he built and flew in several iterations throughout his life. Segments of the base plan appear in the score, particularly in the piano part, in which the pianist uses an elbow and roughened plectrums to render the images as sound. The original plan, from a magazine, had been copied and resized many times over the years, creating a layer of visual noise in later copies which forms an AM radio static part. The piece explores drones and glissandi, as well as the sonic colour of radio static.

*Cruel and Usual* was inspired by an article in the Al Jazeera news service about the use of solitary confinement in US prisons. In some cases, prisoners have remained in solitary confinement for decades, others may even be children, and the reasons for being admitted are not always clear or legitimate. This kind of confinement is known as 'no touch torture' to some. In my piece the musicians are sampled in very small time frames and 'translated' into much lower ranges instantaneously, these sounds lengthened and often 'distorted'.

In *Broken Approach* the percussionist uses a graphic score outlining shapes that are drawn on instrument surfaces, as well as themes that are rendered spatially on each instrument and the kit as a whole. This work is made up of active sections broken by static 'rhythmic' breaks that pause the forward motion of the piece, reversing the usual roles of rhythmic devices. Wind-up mechanisms, including clocks and toys, tick away in the background, providing 'alarms' that slowly wear down. The piece is dedicated to Vanessa Tomlinson, who performs it here.

*Dynamic Architecture I* is a piece for double bass, laid on its back and played with three bows (one strung with a guitar string instead of horse hair), with an audio track embedded in the electronic score that is played from the score-player into the double bass through a transducer positioned under the fingerboard. The tones in the electronic part are tuned close to an unusual scordatura of the bass, C-B-E-A#, creating very subtle beatings and almost inaudible bass tones that make interesting companions to the subtunes of the bowed tailpiece. 'Dynamic Architecture' is a term that describes urban architecture in which uncomfortable or aggressive designs is intended to stop people loitering or playing. These designs become the basis for the designs in the score and a metaphor for the detailed layering of sounds in the work.

*Sogno 102* takes its influence unashamedly from Giacinto Scelsi. Each instrument is sampled in real-time at their second appearance in the work, and this initial pitch is then transformed, unfurling through the duration of the work, sliding across the other parts. The movements of these slides are designed from parameters extracted from Scelsi's writings, transcribed from tape recordings, and collected in a volume entitled *Sogno 101*. Just as Scelsi's words were transcribed into this book, here the instruments are 'transcribed' into this work.'

Christopher Fox, May 2016

## Introduction

This CD features five chamber works by composer Cat Hope, composed between 2011 and 2015, exploring the nexus of electronic and acoustic instruments, animated notations, drone and noise. These pieces tend on the quiet side of Hope's oeuvre, exploring her collaborative processes with individual performers and her own ensemble Decibel. All works are acoustic.

Cat Hope is an accomplished Australian musician, composer, sound and performance artist whose practice is an interdisciplinary one crossing over into film, video and installation. Her work has taken her on numerous tours around Australia, the USA, Japan and Europe. She has written soundscapes for dance and theatre companies as well as commissions for film and pure music works. Cat is a classically trained flautist, vocalist, improviser, experimental bassist and composer. She has directed and edited numerous short music videos and created audiovisual installations. She has founded a number of groups that include Decibel new music ensemble, noise improvisation duo Candied Limbs, The Australian Bass Orchestra and the Abe Sada project. She has also founded pop group Gata Negra. Cat has been a resident at the Visby International Composers Centre, Sweden, the Peggy Glanville Hicks house in Sydney, Australia, and is a Churchill and Civitella Fellow.

Hope's scored music is published by Material Press, Frankfurt. It uses animated graphic notation, read on the Decibel ScorePlayer application on iPad. Available from [decibelnewmusic.com](http://decibelnewmusic.com).

"a superstar of Australian new music"  
[Realtime](#), 2016.

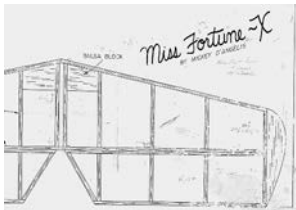
"...*Cat Hope* shows that "new music" can be both accessible and relevant."  
[Aussie Theatre](#), 2012.

"...work of great psychological and theatrical impact"  
[Realtime](#), 2011.

[cathope.com](http://cathope.com)  
[materialpress.com](http://materialpress.com)

### Miss Fortune X (2012)

Miss Fortune X is the name of a radio controlled model airplane Hope's father built and flew in several iterations of throughout his lifetime. The work uses segments of the base plan in the score, particularly in the piano part, where an elbow and roughened plectrums are used. The original plan, from a magazine, had been copied and resized many times over many years, creating a layer of visual noise in later copies which forms a score for the AM radio. The piece continues Hope's ongoing explorations of drone and glissandi, as well as the sonic colour of radio static. It is dedicated to Douglas Campbell Hope (1937–2012).



### Cruel and Usual (2011)

Cruel and Usual is a work inspired by an article by the Al Jazeera news service that discusses the use of solitary confinement in US prisons as incarceration rates explode in the USA. In some cases, prisoners have remained in solitary for over 38 years, or may even be children, and the reasons for being admitted are not always clear or legitimate. This kind of confinement is known as 'no touch torture' by some. The players are sampled at certain small moments of the piece as it unfolds, and 'translated' into much lower ranges instantaneously, which fade out or grow, and are sometimes 'distorted'. The use of drone acts as a descriptive metaphor for the lives of these that may find themselves in these situations. The piece is dedicated to Judith Hamman. MaxMSP programming by Sam Gillies and Stuart James.

### Broken Approach (2014)

The percussionist uses a graphic score that outlines shapes that are drawn on instrument surfaces, as well as themes that

are rendered spatially on each instrument and the kit as a whole. This work is made up of active sections, broken by static 'rhythmic' breaks that pause the forward motion of the piece, reversing the usual roles of rhythmic devices. Wind up mechanisms, including clocks and toys, tick away in the background, providing 'alarms' that slowly wear down. The piece was completed during a fellowship at Civitella Ranieri, in Umbria, Italy. The piece is dedicated to its commissioner, Vanessa Tomlinson, who performs it here.

### Dynamic Architecture I (2015)

This is a piece for double bass, performed laying on its' back, with three bows – one that is strung with a guitar string instead of horse hair – and an audio track embedded in the electronic score. This track is played from the score player into the double bass through a transducer positioned under the fingerboard of the bass as the piece unfolds. The tones in the electronic part are close tunings to the unusual tuning required of the double bass, tuned to C-B-E-A#, creating very subtle beatings and almost inaudible bass tones that make interesting companions to the subtones of the bowed tail-piece. Dynamic Architecture is a term that is sometimes used to refer to urban architecture that is designed to stop loitering, living or playing through designs that are uncomfortable or aggressive. These designs are used as the basis for the designs in the score, but also a metaphor for the detailed layering of sounds in the work. Designed as a drone piece, small details appear and disappear in this work. The work is dedicated to Mark Cauvin.

### Sogno102 (2013)

This piece takes its departure in the way Italian composer Giacinto Scelsi would adopt glissandi, vibrato and drone in his later works. Each instrument is sampled in realtime at their second appearance in the work, and this initial pitch is sampled then transformed through the duration of the work, sliding across the other parts. The movements of these slides are designed from parameters extracted from Scelsi's writings, transcribed from tape recordings, and collected in a volume entitled *Sogno 101*. Like Scelsi's words were transcribed into this book, the instruments are 'transcribed' into this work. The work was premiered at the Cage/Scelsi 101 Festival in Palermo, Italy, in December 2013, by Decibel. MaxMSP programming by Stuart James.

Thank you! Whether this is your first recording from Hat Hut Records, or your Xth, we want you to know how proud we are to have you as a member of our growing world-wide community of listeners. We hope that you enjoy this recording. It represents our constant aim to bring you the music of the future to discover. What you hear is what you hear.

Werner X. Uehlinger

Like all portraits this CD can be read in different ways: it represents a moment in time, not just the artist's time but our collective time; it is intimate, but in its intimacy it shows us something of the society in which this music was made. The moment in time covers the years between 2011 and 2015, the period in which Cat Hope made the five works gathered here. Each of them inhabits what the composer herself describes as a 'nexus of electronic and acoustic instruments, animated notations, drone and noise' and although all of them might be described as chamber music, none of them is a chamber work in the classical sense of music for an exclusively acoustic instrumental ensemble. Instead, in each case the sonic resources of acoustic instruments are located within a musical frame that includes other elements: sometimes, as in *Cruel and Usual*, the live electronics extend the sounds of the instruments; sometimes the sounds created by the musicians are augmented by, or juxtaposed with other sound sources, such as the AM radio static in *Miss Fortune X*. *Christopher Fox*

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EPHEMERAL RIVERS  
CHAMBER WORKS

*First recordings by*

Tracks 1 and 5 by Decibel: Tristen Parr, cello; Aaron Wyatt, viola; Cat Hope, flutes; Lindsay Vickery, bass clarinet; Stuart James, piano and electronics; Louise Devenish, percussion. Track 2 by Zachary Johnston, violin;

Lizzy Welsh, violin; Phoebe Grey, viola; Judith Hamman, cello; Samuel Dunscombe, electronics.

Track 3 by Vanessa Tomlinson, percussion soloist Track 4 by Mark Cauvin, Double Bass soloist.

- |   |   |       |                     |
|---|---|-------|---------------------|
| 1 | <b>Miss Fortune X</b> (2012) <i>For AM radio, viola, cello, piano and cymbals.</i>                      | 7:07  | ISRC CH 130.1700781 |
| 2 | <b>Cruel and Usual</b> (2011) <i>For string quartet, live electronics and four bass amplifiers.</i>     | 8:03  | ISRC CH 130.1700782 |
| 3 | <b>Broken Approach</b> (2014) <i>For brass drum kit, AM radio's, and wind up mechanisms.</i>            | 12:02 | ISRC CH 130.1700783 |
| 4 | <b>Dynamic Architecture I</b> (2015) <i>For solo double bass and electronics.</i>                       | 21:36 | ISRC CH 130.1700784 |
| 5 | <b>Sogno 102</b> (2013) <i>For bass clarinet, bass flute, viola, cello, piano and live electronics.</i> | 7:02  | ISRC CH 130.1700785 |

Total Time 55:53  
DDD <sup>24</sup>Bit

All works composed by Cat Hope, Tuhtah Publishing SUIISA.

Recording dates: *Miss Fortune X* October 2014; *Cruel and Usual* May 2011; *Broken Approach* January 2015; *Dynamic Architecture I* October 2015; *Sogno 102* October 2014.

Tracks 1, 3, 4 & 5 recorded and mixed by Stuart James at Soundfield Studio; Track 2 recorded live by Samuel Dunscombe at the North Melbourne Town Hall; CD-Master by Peter Pfister; Liner notes by Christopher Fox and Cat Hope; Graphic concept by fuhrer vienna, Produced by Cat Hope and Stuart James; Executive production by Bernhard "Benne" Vischer, Christian C. Dalucas & Werner X. Uehlinger.

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www.hathut.com

www.cathope.com

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