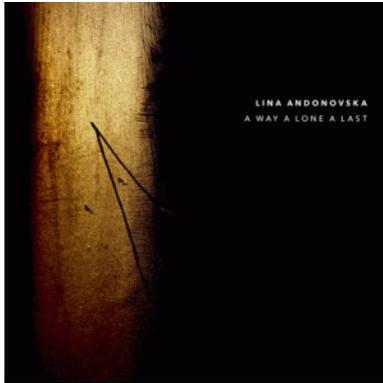




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| A Way A Lone A Last



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CLASSICAL, NEW MUSIC

Artist/s: **Lina Andonovska (flute), Matthew Jacobson (percussion)**

Category: **Classical, New Music**

Label: Diatribe Records

<http://www.linaandonovska.com>, <http://www.diatribe.ie>

Reviewed by **Alex Raineri**

“Andonovska’s control of her instrument is immediately applaudable and the cyclonic energy of her playing commands an intensity of listening that is rare to encounter.”

A very recent 2020 release by Irish label Diatribe Records, *A Way A Lone A Last* features Australian flautist Lina Andonovska in a tour de force collection of World Premiere recordings. The album is comprised of five works commissioned by and dedicated to Andonovska composed by Irish composers Barry O’Halpin, Nick Roth, Donnacha Dennehy and Judith Ring.



A fearless exponent for the creation and dissemination of new work, Lina Andonovska is one of Australia's brightest shining lights on the international stage. She is equally brilliant in her playing of the most ferociously complex of contemporary scores as she is on the Australian Chamber Orchestra roster or in her role as a core member of the Southern Cross Soloists.

Despite the medium of solo repertoire for flute suffering from a notable immersion within the contemporary canon, the newly commissioned works on this album are strikingly original and beautifully crafted. I have no doubt that a huge component of the vibrancy of these works is perhaps due to the collaborative influence of its commissioner.

The bookend works on this album feature percussionist Matthew Jacobson who together with Andonovska comprise the duo SlapBang. Commencing with *Hox* by Barry O'Halpin, the curious combination of amplified bass flute and drum kit spins a web of husky rhythmic utterances on bass flute and percussive tapping which is coloured by an electric tapestry of stumbling freneticism, the players in flawless rhythmic unison for much of the work.



Lina Andonovska and Matthew Jacobson

This work gave me the feeling of having been pocket dialled and being led down the rabbit hole of listening to the rhythmic groove of someone's daily ritualistic patterns, muffled and fluttering in and out of focus. Techno meets Boulez, this otherworldly kind-of-dance number is a thrilling opener for this excellent record.

A solo transcription of Nick Roth's recorder trio *A Way A Lone A Last* (from which this album's title is derived), *A Loved A Long* is an abstract interpretation of the last six hundred and eight words of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. This is a hauntingly rendered performance filled with incantational whispering, wisps of traditional Irish music and virtuosic sweeps across the full range of the flute.

This quasi-pastiche work is a gripping sonic puzzle with a cyclical nature that lends a feeling of the infinite, the perpetual, intrinsically journeying in a state of floatation where both journey and destination merge into the one entity. Mention must be made of recording engineer Adrian Hart for the stunning quality of the multiple layered sonic dimensions across this full record.

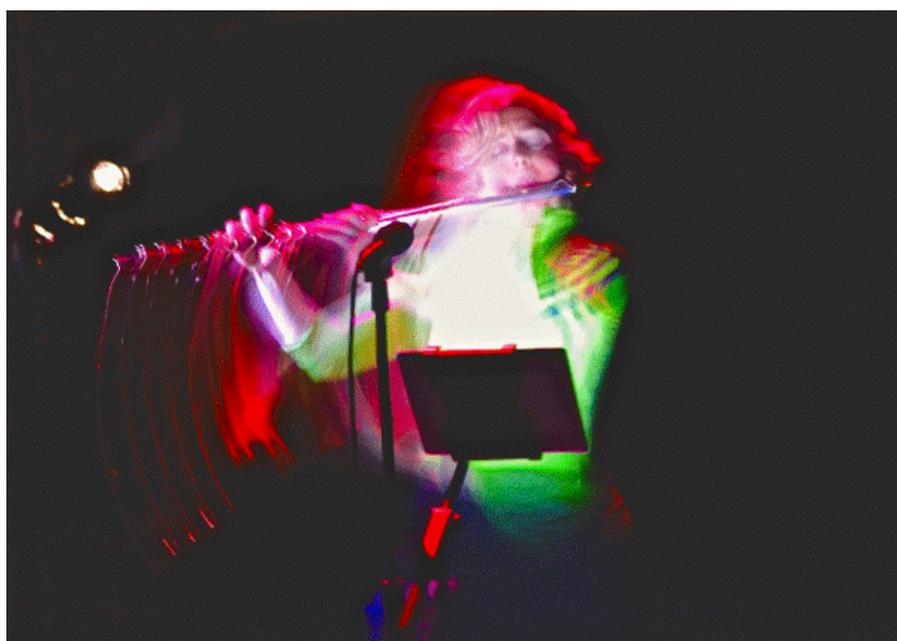
Donnacha Dennehy's *Bridget* is perhaps the most traditionally virtuosic of the works on this album, a deeply pleasing musical affirmation of post-minimalist inspired figurations, spun within a discourse that speaks with utter originality. Scored for flute and (as far as I am able to tell) pre-recorded flute chorus, there is a gorgeous flux of harmonic tension and release that gives Andonoska the opportunity to show off a lighter and playful side of her flautistic personality.

The only work for solo flute without any partnership (live or pre-recorded), Judith Ring's *A Breath of Fresh Air* is a search for stasis in a sometimes overwhelmingly

fast-paced world. There is a feeling that the performer is struggling to be 'traditional'. 'Affected' impure sounds fight for spiritual stasis in a music that tells a conflicting story. Its outer effect is one of stress, unsettlement, its inner logic seemingly searching for a simplicity that is subverted. A beautiful metaphoric representation of perhaps one of the most dangerous facets of our digital age, a disassociation with the fundamentals of human nature. Perhaps we should indeed all take a moment to breathe, after purchasing this excellent record.

The closing work on this album is perhaps the most challenging for the listener. Nick Roth's *Bátá*, in the words of the composer, "traces the concept of fugue in Roland Barthes' seminal *Image Music Text* (Fontana, 1977) through the rhythmic tension between its structural analysis of literary narrative and the Junglist massive circa '95".

With my personal unfamiliarity with the aforementioned points of departure, I feel that perhaps I was unable to listen to this work within an appropriate framework. With similarities to the previous work by Nick Roth there is a strong feeling of cross-fertilization within musical genres. Nightclub, fragmented poetic readings, and a distorted yet groovy sense of musical pulsation all combine within this extremely strange yet endlessly compelling work.



Lina Andonovska

The flute playing on this album is imbued with an impressive gamut of tone colours ranging from the kaleidoscopically 'affected' sonic tapestry of extended techniques to a gorgeously pure 'traditional' sound that would be just as appropriate in a Mozart Flute Concerto. There is a stunning clarity to all of Andonovska's playing on this album, with glistening crystalline upper register passage work and seductive golden timbres in the lower registers.

Andonovska's control of her instrument is immediately applaudable and the cyclonic energy of her playing commands an intensity of listening that is rare to encounter. Equally strong as an artist and a technician, it is the former that shines through and defines Andonovska as one of Australia's leading artists, collaborators and curators.

A Way A Lone A Last is available for purchase via digital download or limited physical release copies on the website of Ireland's leading new music cross-genre label, Diatribe Records.

<https://shop.diatribe.ie/album/a-way-a-lone-a-last>