

# Kevin Volans

(b. 1949)

“In the sense that modernism is not a style, but a tenet - nothing is given and there is no received language - I consider myself a committed modernist.”



Photo: Eugene Langan

Kevin Volans was born in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. From 1973 to 1981 he lived in Cologne where he studied with Karlheinz Stockhausen and Mauricio Kagel, later becoming Stockhausen's teaching assistant. He is now an Irish citizen and lives in Dublin.

In Germany during the mid-1970s, his work became known as part of the 'New

Simplicity'. Later, following several field recording trips to Africa, he embarked on a series of pieces based on African compositional techniques which quickly established him as a distinctive voice on the European new music circuit. Since the mid-1980s his work has been extensively performed at venues including the Lincoln Center, New York; the Pompidou Centre, Paris; the Vienna State Opera; the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam; and the Royal Albert Hall, London for the BBC Henry Wood Promenade Concerts. Seventeen CDs featuring his music have been released to date.

Kevin Volans' music is published by Chester Music and Black Sheep Edition. He is represented by Van Walsum Management, London.

## Selected Works

### ORCHESTRAL

#### **Concerto for Double Orchestra (2002)**

4444 4330 2 perc pf hrp str [16.13.13.10.8]

Black Sheep Edition Ltd. 20'

Commissioned by the BBC.

Premiere: 9 February 2002. Barbican Hall, London. BBC Symphony Orchestra, conductor Josef Swensen.

#### **Strip-weave (2002)**

3222 4231 perc str

Black Sheep Edition Ltd. 11'

Commissioned by the Ulster Orchestra with funds provided by the the Arts Council of Northern Ireland National Lottery Unit.

Premiere: 27 September 2002. Waterfront Hall, Belfast. Ulster Orchestra, conductor Thierry Fischer.

#### **Cello Concerto (1997 rev. 1998)**

vc-solo, 2222 422 hrp str [14.12.10.8.6]

Chester Music Ltd. 22'

Commissioned by Bayerischer Rundfunk / Music Viva.

Premiere: 12 December 1997. Munich, Germany. Wen-Sinn Yang (vc), Bavarian Radio Orchestra, conductor Marek Jarowski.

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

#### **Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments (1995)**

pf-solo, 3333 4231 2 perc 3 db

Chester Music Ltd. 20'

Commissioned by BBC.

Premiere: 18 October 1995. De Doelen, Rotterdam. Peter Donohoe (pf), Netherlands Wind Ensemble, conductor Daniel Harding.

Recording: *Volans Premier Recordings*. Netherlands Wind Ensemble, conductor Wim Steinmann. Chandos 1997. CHAN 9563.

#### **One Hundred Frames (1991)**

3222 4231 2 perc pf+cel hrp str

Chester Music Ltd. 20'

Commissioned by the Ulster Orchestra Society with funds provided by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Gallaher Limited.

Premiere: 6 December 1991. Ulster Hall, Belfast. Ulster Orchestra, conductor Yan Pascal Tortelier. Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

### ENSEMBLE

#### **Chakra (2003)**

3 perc

Black Sheep Edition Ltd. 20'

Commissioned by Ultima Festival, Oslo, with funds provided by the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon

#### **String Quartet No. 7 (2002)**

Black Sheep Edition Ltd. 10'

Commissioned by the Crash Ensemble with funds provided by the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon for the Cicada Quartet.

Premiere: 7 December 2002 Up North! Festival, Dublin Castle. Cicada Quartet. Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

#### **Piano Trio (2001)**

Black Sheep Edition Ltd. 25'

Commissioned by the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

Premiere: 15 July 2003. St Mary's Church, Islington.

#### **Trumpet and String Quartet 1 (2002)**

Black Sheep Edition Ltd. 6'

#### **Trumpet and String Quartet 2 (2002)**

Black Sheep Edition Ltd. 8'

Commissioned for the Tromp Muziek Biennale by the Eduard van Beinum Foundation.

Premiere: 19 October 2002, Eindhoven, Germany. Daniel Quartet.

#### **String Quartet No. 6 (2000)**

4 vn 2 va 2 vc / 2 vn va vc tape

Chester Music Ltd 20'

Commissioned by The Duke Quartet with funds provided by the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon and The City Music Society, London.

Premiere: 29 March 2001. Bishopsgate Hall, London. Duke Quartet.

Recording: *Hunting: Gathering*. The Duke Quartet. Black Box 2002. BBM1069.

**Wild Air (1998)**

2 gui 2 vc [all amplified]  
 Chester Music Ltd. 60'  
 Commissioned by Siobhán Davies Dance Company with funds provided by the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts Council of England.  
 Premiere: 7 May 1999. Oxford Playhouse, England. James Woodrow (gui), David Arrowsmith (gui), Sophie Harris (vc), Audrey Riley (vc), Siobhán Davies Dance Company. Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**This is How it is (1996)**

fl, ob, ca, 2 cl, 2 btrn, 2 bn, 2 hn  
 Chester Music Ltd. 9'  
 Commissioned by Netherlands Wind Ensemble.  
 Premiere: 28 January 1998. Utrecht, The Netherlands. Netherlands Wind Ensemble, conductor Wim Steinmann.  
 Recording: *Volans Premier Recordings*. Netherlands Wind Ensemble, conductor Wim Steinmann. Chandos 1997. CHAN 9563.

**Untitled (1996)**

In memoriam G. H. V.  
 pf-solo, fl ob ca 2 cl 2 bn 2 hn [off stage]  
 Chester Music Ltd. 14'  
 Premiere: 15 April 1999. Oberlin College Conservatoire of Music. Kevin Volans (pf), Netherlands Wind Ensemble, conductor Tim Weiss.  
 Recording: *Volans Premier Recordings*. Netherlands Wind Ensemble, conductor Wim Steinmann. Chandos 1997. CHAN 9563.

**Cicada (1994)**

2 pf  
 Chester Music Ltd. 25'  
 Commissioned by the Double Edge Piano Duo with funds provided by the Mary Flagler Carey Foundation.  
 Premiere: 25 April 1994. County Museum of Art, Los Angeles. Double Edge Piano Duo. Recording: *Cicada*. Mathilda Hornsveld (pf), Jill Richards (pf). Black Box 2000. BBM1029.

**String Quartet No. 4: The Ramanujan Notebooks (1990)**

Ballet title 'Correspondences'  
 Chester Music Ltd. 26'  
 Commissioned by the Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company.  
 Premiere: 16 December 1990. Almeida Theatre, London. Smith Quartet.  
 Recording: *Dancers on a Plane / The Ramanujan Notebooks*. Duke Quartet. Collins Classics 1995. 14172.

**String Quartet No. 3: The Songlines (1988 rev. 1993)**

Chester Music Ltd. 26'  
 Commissioned by the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts New York and Viking Press Inc. for the Kronos Quartet.  
 Premiere: 26 November 1988. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York. Kronos Quartet.  
 Recording: *Kevin Volans: String Quartets 2 & 3*. Balanescu Quartet. Argo 1994. 440 687-2.

**Into Darkness (1987 rev. 1989)**

2 cl, pf, mar, vib, vn, vc  
 Chester Music Ltd. 16'  
 Commissioned by the Southern African Musical Rights Organisation [SAMRO] for London New Music.  
 Premiere: 28 January 1987. Purcell Room, South Bank Centre, London. London New Music. Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**String Quartet No. 2: Hunting: Gathering (1987)**

Chester Music Ltd. 24'  
 Commissioned by the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts New York, and by Doris and Myron Beigler, for the Kronos Quartet.  
 Premiere: 11 December 1987. Herbst Theater, San Francisco, California. Kronos Quartet. Recording: *Kevin Volans: String Quartets 2 & 3*. Balanescu Quartet. Argo 1994. 440 687-2.

**String Quartet No. 1: White Man Sleeps (1982 rev. 1986)**

Chester Music Ltd. / CH 61123 22'  
 Commissioned by the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London.  
 Premiere: 13 July 1986. Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. Kronos Quartet. Recording: *Hunting: Gathering*. The Duke Quartet. Black Box 2002. BBM1069.

**Kneeling Dance (1985 rev. 1987)**

2 pf / 6 pf  
 Chester Music Ltd. 10'  
 Premiere: 25 August 1985. Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. Gustave Fenyö (pf), Peter Seivewright (pf).  
 Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Leaping Dance (1984)**

Version also available for wind ensemble  
 2 pf  
 Chester Music Ltd. 6'  
 Recording: *Volans Premier Recordings*. Netherlands Wind Ensemble, conductor Wim Steinmann. Chandos 1997. CHAN 9563.

**Walking Song (1984)**

fl, hpd, 2 perc [handclappers, finger clickers, cvs]  
 Chester Music Ltd. 7'  
 Premiere: Durban Art Gallery, Durban, South Africa. Alain Barker (fl), Kevin Volans (hpd), Matteo Fargion (perc), Angela Impy (perc).  
 Recording: *Volans Premier Recordings*. Netherlands Wind Ensemble, conductor Wim Steinmann. Chandos 1997. CHAN 9563.

**White Man Sleeps (1982)**

2 hpd, perc, vadg  
 Chester Music Ltd. / CH 61123 22'  
 Commissioned by Institute of Contemporary Arts, London.  
 Premiere: 13 July 1986. Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. Kevin Volans (hpd), Paul Simmonds (hpd), Margriet Tindemans (viola de gamba), Robyn Schulkowsky (perc)].

**Matepe (1980)**

2 hpd, perc [rattles]  
 Chester Music Ltd. 20'  
 Commissioned by Kulturamt, Köln.  
 Premiere: 1980. Ostasiatische Museum, Köln. Kevin Volans (hpd), Paul Simmonds (hpd), Manos Tsangaris (perc).  
 Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Nine Beginnings (1979)**

2 pf  
 Chester Music Ltd. 10'  
 Premiere: 1 June 1979. Beginner Studio, Köln, Germany. Kevin Volans (pf), Gerald Barry (pf). Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Akrodha (1998)**

solo perc  
 Chester Music Ltd. 24'  
 Commissioned by Svenska Rikskonserten for Jonny Axelsson with funds provided by Swedish Radio.  
 Premiere: 18 March 1999. Stockholm New Music, Sweden. Jonny Axelsson (perc). Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Asanga (1997)**

solo perc  
 Chester Music Ltd. 8'  
 Premiere: 30 September 1998. Stockholm International Percussion Festival, Fylkingen, Sweden. Robyn Schulkowsky (perc).

**She Who Sleeps With a Small Blanket (1985 - 1986)**

solo perc  
 Chester Music Ltd. 16'  
 Commissioned by Robyn Schulkowsky.  
 Premiere: 22 October 1985. Museum Carolino Augusteum, Salzburg, Austria. Robyn Schulkowsky. Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

## VOCAL AND CHORAL

**Confessions Part 2 (2001)**

Music theatre work  
 2 S-solo, B-solo, actor, 2 vn va vc, taped chorus, shadow puppets, video projection  
 Black Sheep Edition Ltd. 45'  
 Text: Jane Taylor  
 Commissioned by William Kentridge and the Handspring Puppet Company.  
 Premiere: 14 May 2002, Lunar Theatre, Brussels. Handspring Puppet Company

**Confessions Part 1 (2000 - 2001)**

Zeno at 4 am.  
 B-solo, 2 vn, va, vc, tape [satb choir], actor, shadow puppets  
 MS 40'  
 Text: Jane Taylor  
 Commissioned by the William Kentridge and the Handspring Puppet Company.  
 Premiere: 18 May 2001. Kunsten Festival des Arts, Lunar Theatre, Brussels. Handspring Puppet Company.

**The Man with Footsoles of Wind (1993)**

Chamber opera  
 2 S-solo, T-solo, treble-solo, Bar-solo, speaker, fl+picc, cl, bcl, tpt, 2 hn, btrbn, 2 perc, pf+cel, hrp, 2 vn va vc db  
 Text: Roger Clarke  
 Chester Music Ltd. 90'  
 Commissioned by Dancelines Productions and the English National Opera Contemporary Opera Studio with funds from Arts Council of Great Britain. Premiere: 2 July 1993. Almeida Theatre. Susan Bisatt (S-solo), Jennifer Rhys-Davies (S-solo), Thomas Randle (T-solo), Almeida Opera, Almeida Ensemble, Brindisi Quartet, conductor David Parry.  
 Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

## ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC AND MIXED MEDIA

**String Quartet No. 5: Dancers on a Plane (1993)**

2 vn va vc, tape  
 Chester Music Ltd. 30'  
 Commissioned by BT and the National Federation of Music Societies.  
 Premiere: 8 October 1994. Barnes, London. Duke Quartet.  
 Recording: *Dancers on a Plane / The Ramanujan Notebooks*. Duke Quartet. Collins Classics 1995. 14172.