



mue  
emma jane lloyd

### 1-3) *freely, darkly, deeply*

[12:48]

Matthew Whiteside

[www.matthewwhiteside.co.uk](http://www.matthewwhiteside.co.uk)

For years, it was a running joke that, despite all of the music I'd written for Emma, I had never written a solo piece for her first instrument: the violin. I'd composed solos for viola and even viola d'amore, but somehow the violin always escaped me. This piece finally sets that right. It is a work born from countless hours of collaboration, conversations about music, and exploring our shared interests. In many ways, it's a musical reflection of the time we've spent working together.

The piece is guided by a simple yet open-ended instruction, its title: *freely, darkly, deeply*. There are no dynamic or tempo markings anywhere in the piece, leaving Emma to interpret what it means to play freely, to play darkly, and to play deeply. Giving her freedom to play with her own sound. A freedom that sometimes isn't in my other compositions. These ideas invite the performer to explore their own relationship with the instrument and how they can express those ideas in the moment.

Structurally, the piece is a theme and variations, but it uses effects pedals to expand the possibilities for variation. The looping and sound manipulation create both a constantly evolving texture and reminder of the theme. My goal was to use these tools in a way that avoids the feeling of a strict, repetitive loop. Instead, the pedals add layers of transformation and discovery, mirroring the performer's exploration invited by the title.

(Matthew Whiteside)

### 4) *Small Haven*

[8:23]

Rylan Gleave

[www.rylangleave.com](http://www.rylangleave.com)

Emma is such a joy to work with. In the early stages of this piece, I'd drafted out a violin idea and a separate graphic score. Emma came to my flat and we had coffee, and talked about the different ideas that I'd put on paper. As soon as she played the first sketch, I practically heard the rest of the piece. She has an incredible knack for expressing a deep sense of emotion across one or two notes. After this session, I finished the rest of the score and recorded the electronic parts over the next week

or so, melding the graphic ideas into the violin notation. I joined Emma at her studio space and we figured out the best places to split the track for her violin timings, but it felt like there was very little editing to do. Her approach to graphic and open scoring, in combination with the parameters I'd set by way of standard notation, transforms *Small Haven* into a strange, lonely narrative that still resonates with me every time I hear it.

(Rylan Gleave)

## **5-11) caprices esquisses**

**[11:35]**

**Emma Jane Lloyd**

[www.emmajanelloyd.com](http://www.emmajanelloyd.com)

for mum and dad

There are four artefacts, three chorals and three murmurs in no specified order. Mostly written in time of reflection, these pieces are an exploration of the violin and my relationship with it. They are a challenge to myself, and a celebration of the versatility of the instrument.

Some of these sounds lie on the limit of tone production of the instrument. For me, subharmonics, bow harmonics, wolf tones and other 'undesirable phenomena' are all part of the rich timbral world of this instrument and these pieces embrace these sounds.

They may work or not. Don't be afraid; this isn't a test; it is an exploration.

(Emma Jane Lloyd)

## **12) Mue**

**[7:48]**

**Émilie Girard-Charest**

[www.emiliegirardcharest.com](http://www.emiliegirardcharest.com)

In French, the word "mue" has several meanings. It can refer to the change of register of the voice of a teenager, but it can also be the moment when a snake sheds its skin in order to grow a new one. Overall, it always refers to a transformation process, with all the instabilities and fragilities that it implies.

In *Mue*, I have been specifically interested in those asperities and in the delicate intersections that open when evolving into new territories. The work is a path exploring the liminal spaces of the instrument with the use of extreme registers and complex timbres. Working with such material implies a high level of risk and strong adaptive skills. Even though the score is fully written, what really makes the piece is what really happens in the moment of the performance, what emerges and how it is welcomed. The purpose of the piece is to embrace instability.  
(Émilie Girard-Charest)

### **13) Mishra Pilu** *Egidija Medekšaitė*

[18:18]

The work is dedicated to Emma Jane Lloyd

Pilu is an Indian evergreen raga that incorporates all chromatic notes, allowing each note to appear freely. It is traditionally performed in the late afternoon before sunset.

The word *Mishra*, derived from Sanskrit, means “mixed” and offers the artist great flexibility to incorporate melodic phrases from other ragas. A *Mishra Pilu* raga is deeply expressive, conveying devotion and piety through a captivating blend of emotions—joy and sadness, longing, and tenderness—that form the essence of human experience.

My intention was to create gradual changes that, while following strict patterns, remain almost imperceptible. The pre-recorded material was created by Emma Jane Lloyd.  
(Egidija Medekšaitė)

## Post Production Reflections

Having worked so closely with Matthew for so long, it has been inevitable that I have listened to a lot of Emma's playing, as a live sound engineer, a composer, and a recording engineer. What I love about Emma's playing is her attention to every single moment of a note. Every sound she makes has a fascinating start, middle and end with an incredible variety in how she shapes sound. I really love this, but, I think, I particularly love that it isn't always about having an imagined perfect sound, but letting her hands and the instrument dictate what comes out, and the real spark of genius in Emma's playing is what she does next. Having listened intensively to each sound she makes, she responds, playfully, improvisatorily in how she shapes the next sound, and the next sound, and the next sound... I think this is clearly audible in this album. It is no coincidence that Matthew's own piece creates so much space for this to happen. There is something beautiful that happens when musicians work so closely together for such a long time, I hope you hear it here too!

(Timothy Cooper)

## Artefacts and Murmurs

In March 2020 I had to make a very quick decision to leave Paris, where I had been living, and return to Edinburgh to wait out the lockdown with my family. I had been planning to leave for a few months and go on a solo cycle tour around the Baltic sea but the universe had other ideas. In a way, my plan for some solitude, and time to create and reflect played out, just in a very different way from the one I had imagined.

The *caprices esquisses* were a way for me to explore in more detail some of the sonic capabilities of the violin that are particularly unstable: to see to what extent I could develop my technique in order to use them more reliably in composition and improvisation, and to what extent the instrument would always offer an indeterminate and complex timbral field. The pieces are also an aural reflection of the environment and time in which they were written. The world became quiet, the unusually sunny and warm weather invited us out to be with the plants and the birds as spring turned to summer. I duetted with Olive the dog as she vocalised and I found that copying her was a way for me to practice subharmonics. The collaborative nature of my practice is ever present in these pieces.





Collaboration with other musicians took a different form during this period, with much of our communication happening online, and necessitating more time working individually, rather than in a room together. Performances were postponed and consequently projects had a longer time to mature.

My work with Rylan began much in the way described above, with a call for scores and a session over a video call. The music that Rylan wrote for me drew me into his aesthetic world, and provided the groundwork on which we could establish a collaborative relationship. In the period of time between this initial meeting and starting work on the album we had come to know each other much better and, to my delight, Rylan expressed an interest in writing a new piece: that which would become *Small Haven*. This piece is raw, honest and an expression of mutual trust. Rylan's beautiful voice becomes my duet partner with my part becoming less and less notated throughout - a combination of ink drawings and the sound world

that Rylan has created as an immersive score inviting and challenging me to explore new narratives. This piece takes me to different places every time I play it.

The first time I met Émilie we were in Stockholm at Fylkinghen and I performed with her, kneeling on the floor slowly detuning her cello with the fine tuners for her 30 minute long solo cello piece *s'offrir*. When the piece ended and the applause began I suddenly realised that I couldn't feel my legs any more, having been so transported by Émilie's music that I had not been aware of them going numb. I staggered off stage, and hoped it would not be the last time we made music together. *Mue* uses a detuning of the violin, making even more unstable the natural harmonics of the violin that I explore in *caprices esquisses*. No two performances of this piece will ever be the same, and over the years of getting to know it and allowing my playing of it to mature I have come to love each one for the surprises it presents.

I first met Egidiija when I played her music with Decibel and I immediately wanted to get to know her and to play more of her music. *Mishra Pilu* started life as fragments of score and recording sent back and forth between us. From these tiny pieces of material, like delicate threads, Egidiija wove together the vast tapestry that became a seemingly limitless and engulfing space, both for the performer and the listener. Egidiija's unique imagination and energy that she brings to her work and her process is ever present for me when I play this piece, along with her humour - who ever thought a violin would sound so good played with an electric toothbrush?

Having worked with Matthew for over a decade, performing and recording his music, touring, and putting the world to rights over a pint at the end of the day, in the true spirit of musical collaboration and friendship, this album would not have been complete without a piece by him. Our shared musical history is also ornamented with technological challenges, including ludicrously ambitious programming, a DIY pressure sensor glove for his *Solo for Viola D'amore and Electronics*, and countless broken strings and cables along the way, so this piece would not have been complete without something electronic and a bit silly. This time it was guitar pedals, and so yet another challenge for me to coordinate my fingers and my feet.

With all of the pieces on this album, there is something beautiful and serene, almost calling to the natural world on the surface of this piece, and yet with layer upon layer of history, humour, challenge, vulnerability and empathy beneath...and plenty of space for the listener to find their own meaning.

(Emma Jane Lloyd)

# mue

emma jane lloyd

Performed by: Emma Jane Lloyd

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Recording Engineers: Timothy Cooper & Matthew Whiteside

Mixed and Mastered: Timothy Cooper

Booklet Editing: John Hails

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Photo: Laura Meek

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