

A blue-tinted photograph of a man playing a guitar on a boat. In the background, a large waterfall cascades down a rocky cliff. The man is in the foreground, slightly out of focus, wearing a light-colored shirt and a hat. The overall mood is serene and scenic.

**troubadour blue**  
NILS BULTMANN

### Ten Viola Duets

Nils Bultmann and Hank Dutt, viola

- |                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| 1. Joy                  | 2:19 |
| 2. Buzy Body            | 1:47 |
| 3. Hesitant             | 1:59 |
| 4. Augward and Dimented | 1:50 |
| 5. Babble Battle        | 1:33 |
| 6. Sadness              | 3:51 |
| 7. Tom & Jerry          | 2:00 |
| 8. Accordionly          | 3:36 |
| 9. Crazy Chicken Dance  | 1:17 |
| 10. Ruby                | 3:19 |

### From the Depths

Nils Bultmann, viola;  
Stephen Kent, didjeridu

- |                            |      |
|----------------------------|------|
| 11. 1: Enter               | 4:08 |
| 12. 2: A reformed movement | 2:29 |
| 13. 3: The Headlands       | 2:26 |
| 14. 4: Deflation           | 3:40 |
| 15. <b>Lucid</b>           | 5:16 |
- Nils Bultmann: solo viola

### Suite for Solo Cello

Parry Karp: cello

- |                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| 16. Prelude (Joy) | 2:19 |
| 17. Courante      | 3:33 |
| 18. Gig           | 2:01 |
| 19. Edna Baras    | 2:25 |
| 20. Allegro       | 3:48 |

—55:38—

NILS BULTMANN

TROUBADOUR BLUE

innova 851



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**Nils Bultmann** is a violist, improviser, and composer based in the San Francisco bay area. Active as a performer in the United States and Europe, he plays both classical as well as contemporary repertoire. He is also involved in collaborative projects including dance, video, and avant-garde improvised music. He has generated

an expansive body of work in the recording studio, including solo and multi-track viola music as well as collaborative and improvised musical textures. He also writes traditional through-composed works for solo instruments, string quartets, and orchestra.

Nils was born in Houston Texas to a German father and an American mother and was raised in Madison, WI. He also often traveled in Germany. His mother introduced him to music and he began to study viola and piano at age ten. Nils received his B.A. from the University of Madison-Wisconsin on a music scholarship, studying viola performance with Sally Chisholm.

He briefly explored the path of an orchestral violist, participating for two years in the New World Symphony under conductor Michael Tilson-Thomas in Miami Beach. Since then he has turned his focus towards composition and improvisation, performing in diverse settings with Indian classical musicians, electronic DJs, and contemporary dance companies. He self-produced and recorded two solo CDs of his own multi-track compositions, "Forgiveness" and "Terminally Unique" (Mutable Music) and was featured as a member of the Transatlantic Art Ensemble performing new works by jazz Saxophonists Roscoe Mitchell and Evan Parker released on ECM records. Recently he premiered the solo viola piece "9-9-09" written for him by Roscoe Mitchell and recorded for the Rogue Art label.

Nils recently completed his PHD in music composition at UC Berkeley, where he worked with David Wessel and Edmund Campion at the Center for New Music and Technology creating interactive works and video installation pieces. His multi-media work focuses on combining diverse live performances often recorded in unconventional settings with musicians of a wide variety of backgrounds.

This CD offers selections of his through-composed works and improvised music.

## Bonus Video Link

At the same time I was composing the music on this CD, I was also deeply immersed in several multi-media video projects. The following video excerpt is from a larger piece and includes both Hank Dutt and Stephen Kent as well as musical material from the CD.

[www.nilsbultmann.com/extra](http://www.nilsbultmann.com/extra)



## Ten Viola Duets (2009)

These *Duets* are character pieces, each with a distinct personality, pivoting between frenetic busy-ness and more spacious, introspective meditative states. The faster material focuses on the action and interplay between the two violas, interjecting elements of humor and surprise, as well as sudden turns, chromatic curve balls, and twists of expectations. The slower pieces serve as a field for exploring color and calmness, while offering an opportunity to display the rich depth of expression and beauty inherent in these instruments. These scenes were brought together in this particular order with the intent of presenting a well-balanced story, though these works can either be performed individually or repositioned.

Most of the motives, melodies, and licks in this series of viola duets had circulated over the years through improvised solo viola sets and work with dancers. The theme for *Ruby* emerged from several days of blissful improvisation in the key of A Major during an inspiring visit to the San Francisco Bay Area twelve years ago. I discovered the *Accordionly* melody in my very first compositional sketch book from 3rd grade. I had performed *Joy* as a solo piece for quite some time, the theme of which would later serve as the *Prelude* to my *Suite for Solo Cello*. The roots of the thematic material for the remaining duos, however, are less easily traceable: the ideas were collected and stored in my viola-playing fingers through the repetition of fragments of classical repertoire and personal improvisatory riffing.

The move towards notating these ideas into through-composed pieces stemmed from a desire to reach out to and connect with other viola players, as well as to expand the repertoire for the viola. I read the initial few duo sketches with Hank Dutt and, due in large part to his enthusiastic encouragement to continue, I was inspired to complete the set of ten.

## From the Depths (2011)

Viola and didjeridu is an unusual combination, but it works and I love it! I first explored this instrumentation in 2001 with my friend Noah Onstrud, who had recently acquired several didjeridus, and returned to this combination in 2010, after connecting with Stephen Kent. We got together, jammed, and, after performing live together, produced these studio recordings. In contrast to the viola duets, these pieces were entirely improvised, co-composed by Stephen and myself.

In these pieces, the timbre is a central element. In contrast to the other works on this CD in which the string writing is more traditional, these pieces reflect a style of viola playing I typically use in free-improvisation with an overall edgier sound and rawness of attack. I drew from a concise pitch pallet and often focused on fast-moving repeated figures, with timbres changing slowly over time in order to surf the complex currents of the didjeridu's expressive hums and guttural churnings.

I particularly enjoy playing with Stephen because of his imagination, spontaneity, technique, dynamic range, and sensitivity. His percussive approach and use of overtones offers many possibilities for dynamic and rhythmic interplay, and this has been a recurring texture in our work together. We recorded three long improvisations in the studio and, from this material, I edited together the four movements of *From the Depths*, keeping several long sections intact in order to maintain the flow of our live performance.

The first movement opens with a lyrical exposition in the viola over the C-sharp didjeridu and then moves in and out of rhythmic grooves interspersed with revisitations of the lyrical material. The second movement, featuring a higher pitched F didjeridu, is a fast-paced, back-and-forth free association of rhythmic ideas, changing meters and groove.

The third movement is an exploration of simplicity, silence, and sense of expansiveness, calling forth the sonic landscape of the fog horns and passing ships of the San Francisco Bay at the Marin Headlands. The fourth movement returns to the C-sharp didjeridu, opening again with a driving rhythmic groove. This movement works within a fluid pitch space using frequent glissandi diving up then melting down, timbral waves, aggressive builds, and sudden changes of metric groove. It ends with the viola expressively detuning the C string eventually decaying into a unsettling battle between two primal creatures calling out to each other.

### **Lucid** (2003)

This partially improvised solo piece is an older work. I would often perform this music at the beginning of concerts as a way for me to arrive at my instrument, connect with the audience, and get a feel for the room. Generally I followed a loose plan of action, presenting two simple textures: an opening slower low B-flat drone followed by a rhapsodic tour through a rather traditional harmonic progression. Each performance, however, would be quite different, guided in part by an intention to allow how I felt in the moment, as well as the emotional climate of the room (real or imagined), to have influence upon certain musical parameters, i.e. color shifts, number of repetitions, and intensity of dynamic swells. Over time, I began molding the material into more a structured piece while still maintaining the spirit of improvisation from which the piece evolved.

### **Suite for Solo Cello** (2012)

This *Suite* is my homage to the Bach *Cello Suite #1 in G Major*, a work that has been a foundational pillar of my musical life. All of the movements in this new piece draw inspiration from the original *Suite*, and in some cases they also draw literal harmonic and motivic connections.

The work began in 2008 with the second movement as a compositional exercise aimed at writing a new melodic line over the harmonic structure of the *Courante* movement from the original suite. I was pleased with the result and began performing the piece on viola as a single movement. I knew that I wanted to expand the work into a suite for solo cello, and over the course of the next several years I began sketching out ideas for the other movements.

The *Prelude* movement draws its theme from of a solo piece called *Joy*, serving to establish G Major and welcome the listener into the piece. The *Gig* movement is a 6/8 upbeat dance that generally follows a simple Baroque-style harmonic progression with some sudden detours. The *Edna Baras*, entirely pizzicato in the key of E minor, was created with the intent of providing a sense of weight and grounding, similar to the *Sarabande* movements in the original *Suites*. The final *Allegro* movement has the most literal motivic connection to the original *Suite*, often importing entire passages from the *Prelude* directly into what are very different and often quirky phrase structures. In the second half of this movement, I reference the joyous opening four chords to the original *Prelude* and use this material to help build to the end.

**Hank Dutt**, violist, began his musical studies at age 10 in Quincy, Illinois. He continued his work under the inspirational tutelage of David Dawson at Indiana University where he earned a Bachelor and Master of Music degree. Directly after his work at Indiana in 1977, he joined the Kronos Quartet and has held the viola position ever since. For nearly 40 years, San Francisco's Kronos Quartet has pursued a singular artistic vision - a commitment to expanding the range and context of the string quartet. In the process, Kronos has performed thousands of concerts worldwide, releasing more than 50 recordings and commissioning more than 800 new works and arrangements for string quartet. Kronos' work has also garnered numerous awards, the Polar Music Prize (2011), the Avery Fisher Prize (2011), a Grammy for Best Chamber Music Performance (2004) and "Musicians of the Year" (2003) from Musical America.

Multi-instrumentalist and composer **Stephen Kent** is one of the premier didjeridu virtuosos in the contemporary world. Born in England he was raised in East Africa and - in a career spanning well over two decades, based at various times in Australia, Spain, the UK and now the San Francisco Bay Area - has pioneered the modern day use of the ancient Australian Aboriginal instrument. A catalog of over twenty CD releases, spanning 1988 to the present day, forms the backbone of his considerable record. His six solo works, and multiple collaborations with group projects such as *Trance Mission*, *Lights in a Fat City* and, most recently, the Australian *Bebop Ragas & Baraka Moon* reflect the idea that collaboration across cultural boundaries is at the root of his interest. He has worked with extraordinary musicians from around the planet including Aírto Moreira (Brazil), Zakir Hussain (India), Mamadou Sidibe (Mali), Rahim Al Haj (Iraq), Chirgilchin (Tuva), Samul-nori (Korea), Leonard Eto (Japan), Omar Sosa (Cuba), Paul Horn, Glen Velez, Del Sol Quartet, and R.Carlos Nakai (USA), among countless others.

Cellist **Parry Karp** is Artist-in Residence and Professor of Chamber Music and Cello, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he is director of the string chamber music program. He has been cellist of the Pro Arte Quartet for the past 37 years, the longest tenure of any member in the quartet's 100 year history. Parry Karp is a active solo artist, performing numerous recitals annually in the United States, and has recorded six solo CDs. He is active as a performer of new music and has performed in the premieres of dozens of works, many of which were written for him, including concerti, sonatas and chamber music. As cellist of the Pro Arte Quartet he has performed over 1000 concerts throughout North, Central and South America, Europe, and Japan. His discography with the group has been extensive (over two dozen recordings) and includes the complete string quartets of Ernest Bloch, Miklos Rosza, and Karol Szymanowski. Many of these recordings received awards from *Fanfare* and *High Fidelity* Magazines.

## CREDITS

*Ten Viola Duets*: Recorded August 12th, 2009 at Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley  
Tracking by Phil Perkins, editing and post-production by Nils Bultmann and Hank Dutt  
*From the Depths*: Tracking by Peter Reto at the Art Institute of California, San Francisco  
*Lucid*: Tracking, editing, and postproduction by Nils Bultmann  
*Suite for Solo Cello*: Tracking by Nathaniel Bartlett at Sound-Space Audio Lab, Madison, WI.  
Editing and post production by Nils Bultmann  
Art by Tobias Tovera  
Disc photo: Noah Onstrud  
Nils photo: Katrin Talbot  
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[www.innova.mu](http://www.innova.mu)

It has been an honor to have collaborated with such amazing players. The interaction and personal connection with other musicians is at the core of why I perform and compose and it was a great joy to work with these quite inspiring individuals.