

**Anja Lechner** violoncello  
**François Couturier** piano

## LONTANO

Anja Lechner and François Couturier's musical collaboration is long established, through their concerts and acclaimed recordings for ECM New Series, both in duo and with the Tarkovsky Quartet. Their successful and highly regarded duo project *Moderato Cantabile* featured music that oscillated between Orient and Occident. Now, with their new programme *Lontano* the German cellist and the French pianist traverse a wide musical arc - embracing familiar melodies by Henri Dutilleux, Giya Kancheli, Anouar Brahem and others, and pieces which offer scope for improvisation and personal interpretation. François Couturier has also composed new music for the duo that serves as unifying element and provides a context in which improvising and free interpretation can take place. "The two musicians have refined the art of intense listening. They do not play one note too many, and use improvised passages sparingly, but pointedly. They eavesdrop for a long time and pay microscopic attention to the development of nuanced timbres, to dynamic design."

## Hans-Jürgen Linke, FAZ

### ANJA LECHNER

Anja Lechner, in addition to her classical education with teachers including Heinrich Schiff and Janos Starker, has developed her capacities as an improviser. A variety of projects with musicians of many countries reflects her talent for sensitive interpretation and improvisation. In each of them, her unmistakable, warm and clear sound is always evident. The spectrum of Anja Lechner's playing extends from performances as soloist with orchestras to solo concerts, as well as chamber music projects, in which she likes to present old and new music. Concert tours and festival appearances have taken her through Europe, Latin America, USA, Korea, China, Armenia, Lebanon and Iran. Anja Lechner has premiered many works dedicated to her, by composers including Valentin Silvestrov, Tigran Mansurian, Tõnu Kõrvits, Zad Moultaqa and Dino Saluzzi. At ECM she has made numerous recordings with, among others, the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra under the conductor Tõnu Kaljuste, with the violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja, the Rosamunde quartet, the Argentine bandoneon master Dino Saluzzi, the guitarist Pablo Márquez, the Tarkovsky Quartet and the French Pianist François Couturier. She lives and teaches in Munich.

### FRANÇOIS COUTURIER

Regarded as a leading pianist in the border zone between contemporary jazz and New Music François Couturier spent many years with the Tunisian oud master Anouar Brahem, and has played also with musicians including John McLaughlin, Louis Sclavis and Dominique Pifarély. In 2006 he founded the Tarkovsky Quartet, writing music which references and explores the associative world of Russian filmmaker Andrej Tarkovsky. The group has made three albums for ECM Records. Since 2012 he has also been playing in duo with cellist Anja Lechner. François Couturier has been described as a magician of melody and timbre, with a gift for the subtleties of intuitive design. He lives in Paris.