Just Ancient Loops composed by Michael Harrison
Notes by cellist, Maya Beiser

There are those rare moments in an artist's life when you realize that you are part of something that is greater than yourself, your collaborators, your listeners - when everything falls into place and music just lives and breathes on its own: raw, naked, real. It takes over. It becomes a force of nature. Such was the moment when I listened to the first mix of *Just Ancient Loops* - a 25 minute musical odyssey that unveils every aspect of the cello - from its most glorious and mysterious harmonics to the earthy rhythmic pizzicatos. The “just intonation” tuning used in the work reveals how music exists in nature. In the process of working on this project I read several books diving into its harmonic principles. For me however, it was a simple revelation: I have always heard music in just intonation. The sound of the cello shimmers and bounces through space when it’s tuned correctly. You start hearing all the nuances, the shades of light that the natural harmonics create. It’s as if you are turning all the artificial lights off and just letting the rays of sunlight into your space.

Michael’s music is perfect for our times: it's architectural and precise, yet exhilarating and beautiful. It draws on music from ancient Greece and the Renaissance, Indian ragas and minimalism. Our collaboration began when a brown envelope arrived one day in my mailbox. It included the score to *Just Ancient Loops* and a letter from Michael asking if I would consider working with him on this piece. He said he would develop it further with and for me, exploring and challenging my artistry. He wanted this piece to be an unprecedented work for the cello in its scope, size and complexity. Having heard his remarkable album, *Revelation*, I was intrigued. We decided to collaborate on a whole album together.

In *Just ancient Loops* the cello becomes this "Uber instrument" laying down the drones, building rhythmical grooves on top of each other, singing melismatic melodies, and reaching up to the stratosphere as the music evolves and builds into a massive, exhilarating climax.