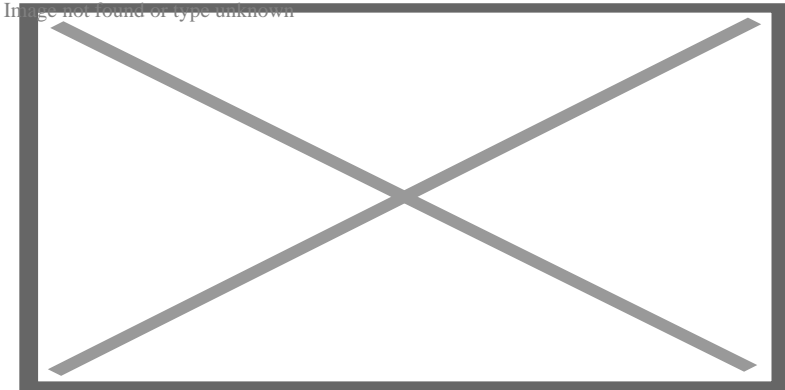


Other Minds Festival: OM 16: Panel Discussion & Concert 1, 6 of 8



Identifier

OMF.2011.03.03.c1.F

Object Type

Digital Audio

Musical Selections

Zilver, for piano, clarinet, flute, percussion,, and piano (1994) (14:44) / Louis Andriessen

Description

The 16th Other Minds Festival of New Music (OM 16) began with a panel discussion with some of the composers featured in the first night's concert, held on March 3, 2011. Joining moderator Charles Amirkhonian on stage were Kyle Gann, Louis Andriessen, Agata Zubel, and Janice Giteck. Gann briefly discusses "Triskaidekaphonia I" which is the result of Gann's desire to finally incorporate the musical equivalent of the number 13 into a composition, something he achieves with the introduction of a pure 13th harmonic at the beginning of this piece. His other featured work, "Kierkegaard, Walking," was inspired by a European walking tour and an early interest in the Danish philosopher. Polish composer Agata Zubel discusses her decision to take up a second career as a classical concert singer, while also introducing her setting of a poem by Samuel Beckett in which the shortest part of the poem, just one line, is assigned the longest segment of the composition. Louis Andriessen, the legendary Dutch avant-garde composer, provides a succinct review of his illustrious career as well as discussing his appreciation of the quiet natural environment and congenial conversations that all the composers shared during their retreat at the Djerassi Resident Artists Program. The panel discussion concludes with composer Janice Giteck talking about how her work "Ishi (Yahi for 'man')" which was inspired by the gentle spirit and great courage of a man that witnessed the complete genocide of his people, and the parallels of

that experience with today's geopolitical strife.

Hymn

When attorney and amateur poet Francis Scott Key penned his verse "The Defence of Fort McHenry in 1814, little did he know that it would be attached to John Stafford Smith's drinking song composed for the Ancreontic Society of London, a men's social club, and in 1931 officially become the national anthem of the U.S.A. Set over one and a half octaves, the music's difficulty for individual singers is legendary... Aside from Igor Stravinsky's bracing harmonic re-setting, dating from 1941, this version by Oakland composer and sound poet Tony Gnazzo is the most thorough deconstruction of the original. Gnazzo, who has worked for many years as a sound recording engineer, invited numerous friends and colleagues into the studio to record the entire anthem a capella. He then collaged the various phrases from different performances to create a kaleidoscopic meltdown that presents a tragi-comic cover version of "The Star Spangled Banner." - Charles Amirkhanian

Triskaidekaphonia I

This work is performed on a keyboard that is connected to piano simulation software. This modern instrumental configuration enables the performance of this microtonal work in which each key is specifically tuned.

Le Voile du Bonheur

"Le Voile du Bonheur" has two stories attached to it. It started off as a contribution to a collection of didactic violin music to be written by Reinbert de Leeuw (this collection never came into existence). Later, Andriessen added a teenage tune to it. - Monica Germino

Kierkegaard, Walking

While Kierkegaard's books had a potent, if subtle, impact on my early intellectual life, I admit that when I began "Kierkegaard, Walking," I didn't have him in mind. But I was thinking about walking, and I had an upcoming trip to Copenhagen on the horizon, with the intention of retracing Kierkegaard's steps. I was trying to think up images that had to do with meandering through mental or spiritual fields, while reading Joakim Garff's excellent biography of the philosopher, and it finally dawned on me that Kierkegaard wandering endlessly through Copenhagen, talking to everyone he met and working out his dialectic with or without an accompanying audience, was the image I needed. There are even passages where the aesthetic (or time-based) is contrasted with the eternal (repetitive), as in *Either/Or*. But it would be stretching things to connect "Kierkegaard, Walking" too closely with the content of the philosopher's writing: it is more the biographical image, the peripatetic philosopher in constant motion while musing *sub specie aeternitatis*, "from the standpoint of eternity." I managed to complete the first draft in Copenhagen, then tinkered with it a little more in Amsterdam. Despite the piece's simplicity, any tendency to hurry must be resisted. - Kyle Gann

Zilver

The idea behind "Zilver" was to write a chorale variation as Bach did for organ: a long, slow-moving melody, combined with the same melody played faster. The ensemble is divided into two groups: the wind and strings play the sustained melody in chorale-like four-part harmony, and the rest of the instruments – vibraphone, marimba and piano – play increasingly fast staccato chords. The two groups play in canons. "Zilver" is one of a planned series of chamber pieces named after a type of physical matter. "Hout" (wood) is the first, and "Zilver" (silver) is the second. The title also refers to the two silver instruments – flute and vibraphone – which start and end the piece. - Louis Andriessen

Cascando

“Cascando,” created especially for the Seattle Chamber Players, is based on a text of Samuel Beckett reflected in the music from many angles: as a poem, structure, words, sounds, letters, ambience, and impression. Having written the piece for her own phenomenal voice, Zubel instructs the soprano to produce unusual sounds covering a huge range, with all possible nuances of vocalizing, Sprechgesang, whispering and other sound expressions. With all these experiments, which are also happening in the instrumental parts, the murky air of this music is filled with the Romantic sensitivity typical of Polish music since the times of Chopin. The piece begins as a soprano and violin duo in shimmering pianissimo that develops through different sonic effects in the ensemble texture. A very short and jerky staccato of the second movement, alternating with abrupt rests, becomes the foundation for the brief words spread out through the entire soprano range. In the climax, the instruments repeatedly descend with a non-synchronous glissandi held against the floating bass suspended in the cello part, intercepted with the tragic exclamations about "all the others that will love you." The last movement does not employ exact pitches; it uses noise effects produced on all instruments and a phrase whispered twice against the backdrop of mystical percussive sounds: "...unless they love you..." - Dr. Elena Dubinets, Artistic Director, Seattle Chamber Players

Ishi (Yahi for 'man')

Ishi (Yahi for 'man') is a musical quartet with theater and film. It honors the extraordinary life events of Ishi (1860-1916) the last known survivor of stone-age North America. Each of the six movements features a part of the enduring Ishi legacy and summons the spirit of his earthy relationship with reality as the last Yahi Indian, the last speaker of his 4,000 year old language, the last to know the myths, creation stories, the medicine. To bring Ishi close in, I draw directly on the "resonance" of Yahi tribal melodies that Ishi recorded for anthropologists near the end of his life. To visually evoke the "place" of Ishi, the piece concludes with a short film by Emiko Omori made during our pilgrimage to his home near Deer Creek, Mt. Lassen, California. "stone" as well as "consciousness." - Janice Giteck

Notes: "Kierkegaard, Walking" was commissioned by the Seattle Chamber Players; "Zilver" was commissioned by the Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation and the California EAR Unit; "Ishi (Yahi for 'man')" was composed for the Seattle Chamber Players with support from the Seattle Arts commission.

Louis Andriessen is presented with the support of the Consulate General of the Netherlands; Agata Zubel is presented in partnership with the Polish Cultural Institute.

People

Other Minds Festival (features)
Seattle Chamber Players (features)
Andriessen, Louis, 1939- (features)
Zivian, Eric, 1968- (features)
Mach, Loren (features)
Davel, Joel (features)
DeLuca, Laura (features)
Shmidt, Mikhail (Violinist) (features)
Sabee, David (features)
Taub, Paul (features)

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