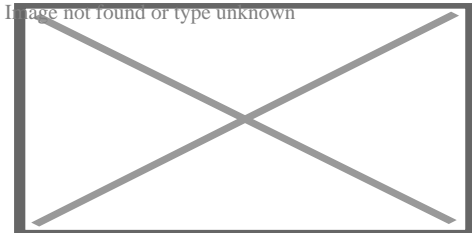




New Music America: 1987: Concert No. 2, 2 of 12



Identifier

NMA.1987.10.03.c1.B

Object Type

Digital Audio

Musical Selections

Music in the Combat Zone, for soprano and chamber ensemble [texts by Mindy Weinreb, W. M. Letts,] Ezra Pound, e.e. cummings, and Walt Whitman](1986) (18:19) / William Duckworth

Description

The 1987 New Music America Festival was held in Philadelphia during the first two weeks in October. Produced by the local ensemble Relâche, this 10 day extravaganza of adventurous musical programming featured over 20 concerts, lectures, and sound installations. A wide range of sonic delights were offered, ranging from 20th century classical works for instrumental ensemble, to examples of experimental electronic wizardry, to incomparable improvisational jazz extravaganza's, all performed by a bevy of talented musicians and composers.

The second concert of this 10 day feast of avant-garde exceptionalism began with two 20th century composition for chamber ensembles. The first was an early work by the Pulitzer Prize winning composer Aaron Jay Kernis, entitled "Music for Trio" or alternatively known as his "Cycle IV," and is scored for piano, flute and cello. Aaron Jay Kernis wrote in the Concert Program about this work:

"'Music for Trio (Cycles IV)' can be described on many levels, the first of which is the relationship of the number three to the entire work: three musicians; three sections, the first and second of which are in 9/4 and 6/4, respectively; and more important, a nine-note scale is used exclusively and there are three tonal centers. More important is the use of one melodic fragment (uncovered in the first section) to provide continuity and direction throughout. But most important, the larger ideas on which 'Music for Trio' are based are: 'to sing together, to

become one.’ Throughout, the trio becomes a duo with one pitch or type of idea being shared by two instruments which become mirrors of each other. This is also extended to the important places where the trio becomes completely unified as one. That merging of the spirit and the idea is where the true essence of this work lies.”

This serene composition is followed by the more aggressively entitled work, “Music in the Combat Zone,” by William Duckworth. It is for soprano/speaker and chamber ensemble and in addition to including useful advice for infantry also reference a number of well known patriotic musical themes and songs. In the Concert Program William Duckworth states:

“‘Music in the Combat Zone’ is a piece about disaster. A psychodrama in eight sections, it speaks to the losses that we must all endure in our lives. The work has two landscapes that intertwine until they become almost inseparable. While the public landscape concerns the tragedy of war, the more ambiguous, private landscape suggest the disintegration of a relationship or the reality of personal death. This private landscape is supported by the narrative structure of the piece, which conforms to the five commonly identified emotional stages of terminal illness denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Throughout ‘Music in the Combat Zone,’ the singer mediates between the opposing extremes of public and private experience, never allowing one landscape to obliterate or trivialize the other. Although the piece was begun alone by William Duckworth, it quickly became a collaboration when his wife, poet Mindy Weinreb, suggested the overall form of the work. Duckworth wrote the music; Weinreb selected the song texts and wrote the spoke sections; and they worked together to balance the relationship between musical and literary material.”

The rest of this concert is then devoted to the remarkable performance by jazz composer George Russell, who with the Living Time Orchestra, first perform a work of Cuban influenced be-bop that Russell originally composed in 1947 for Dizzy Gillespie, before the band rips into a full-length version of Russell’s more recent work, “The African Game.” As the composer writes in the Program Notes:

“‘As the cradle of humanity, Africa is our common home; we are all Africans-white, yellow, red, brown, or black. Great Nature is one our side. We feverishly pursue the game of how to conquer nature, while failing to understand why it needs us to join her in a state of unity. Nature responds by sending signals to tell us that we are outpacing her capacity to adapt to our technical innovations. These signals are everywhere; they cannot be missed. Entropy is accelerating. ‘The African Game’ says something of a positive nature about this. It says the God (Great Nature) is on our side. It wants to win the fame it began millions of years ago, But in order to win it needs the awareness and cooperation of each of us, descendants from the Miocene epoch now inhabiting Planet Earth.”

This concert was held at the Port of History Museum on October 3, 1987, and generously provided to Other Minds by Joseph Franklin who directed the 1987 New Music America festival, and Werner Strobel who digitized the original tape recordings.

People

New Music America (Festival) (features)

Relâche (Musical group) (features)

Duckworth, William (features)

Weinreb, Mindy (features)

Letts, W. M. (Winifred M.), 1882-1972 (features)

Pound, Ezra, 1885-1972 (features)

Cummings, E. E. (Edward Estlin), 1894-1962 (features)

Whitman, Walt, 1819-1892 (features)

Noska, Barbara (features)
Wyckoff, Laurel (features)
Hall, Wesley (features)
Marcucci, Stephen (features)
Taylor, Marshall (features)
Klucevsek, Guy (features)
Dulik, John (features)
Monroe, Diane (features)
Ierardi, Florence (features)
Holdeman, Charles (features)

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