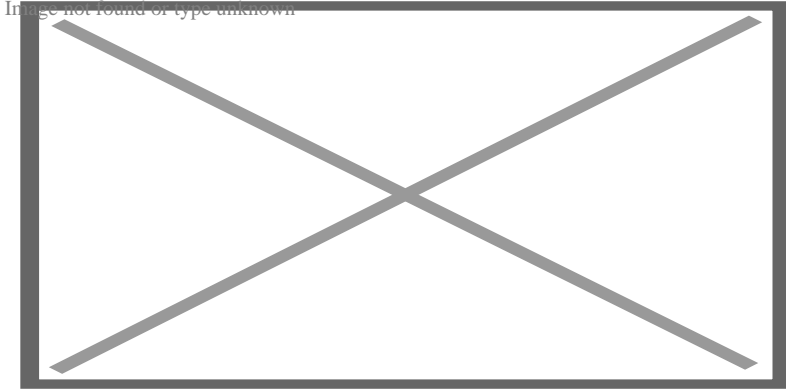


Other Minds Festival: OM 20: Panel Discussion & Concert 3, 3 of 6



Identifier

OMF.2015.03.08.c1.C

Description

2015 marked the 20th anniversary of the Other Minds Festival of New Music. Other Minds Executive & Artistic Director Charles Amirkhanian explained the 20th anniversary as an opportunity to reflect on two decades' worth of prescient programming. "As we look back at the nearly 200 composers we've brought to San Francisco for these gatherings, it seemed a good time to tip our hat to some of our most surprising discoveries who have gone on to make signal contributions to international concert life. We'll also pay tribute to the late Peter Sculthorpe, who had accepted an invitation to be with us as our elder statesman, and the legendary Lou Harrison, whose last work was composed for our 2002 festival and our American steel guitar soloist David Tanenbaum, and will be reprised on our opening night."

Other Minds offered a hearty welcome back to Don Byron (OM 2), Frode Haltli (OM 12), Tigran Mansurian (OM 10), Miya Masaoka (OM 3), Michael Nyman (OM 11), Pauline Oliveros (OM 8), David Tanenbaum (OM 8 & 12), Maja S.K. Ratkje (OM 12), and Errollyn Wallen (OM 5). Some milestone birthdays were also celebrated: Tigran Mansurian, 75. Michael Nyman and Charles Amirkhanian: 70. At the pre-concert reception on March 5, 2015, Pauline Oliveros, at 82, received our lifetime achievement award - the OMie - in recognition of her exceptional contributions to experimental music. (Last year's first award was presented to synthesizer pioneer Don Buchla.)

The panel discussion before the third and final concert of the 20th Other Minds Festival featured School of the Arts conductor Bradley Hogarth, violinist Movses Pogossian, Armenian translator Azat Fishyan, and Armenian composer Tigran Mansurian. Michael Nyman fell ill and could not be in attendance. Moderated by Charles Amirkhanian, this discussion covers topics from the Armenian genocide, to Michael Nyman's 2nd symphony being performed that day by the SOTA Orchestra.

Concert 3: Sunday March 8, 2015.

A Centennial Memorial: The Armenian Genocide

Charles Amirkhanian: Miatsoom (Reunion, 1994-97)

Notes by the composer: This half-hour tape piece explores the sounds of the Republic of Armenia as experienced by myself and my father Benjamin Amirkhanian during our first (and only) trip there in August 1994. Both he and I were born in Fresno, California, in 1915 and 1945 respectively, and only had heard about our homeland from friends and relatives who had visited there. The experience of seeing the land and visiting with the people firsthand was an overwhelmingly moving personal experience for us together. The piece is called Miatsoom (Reunion) and was commissioned by New Radio and Performing Arts with a grant from Meet the Composer. It was composed between 1994 and 1997.

Tigran Mansurian: Canti Paralleli (2007-08, U.S. Premiere)

Tigran Mansurian writes, “Canti Paralleli was written between 2008 and 2012, first as a work for soprano and piano, and later in a version for soprano, piano and string orchestra. At the heart of the work are four pairs of poems, each by one of 4 Armenian classics (Baghdasar Dpir, Yeghishe Charents, Avetik Isahakyan, Vahan Teryan). Each pair of poems both complement each other and create a relationship of contrast between themselves. This way, every one of the songs in the pair is featured more completely thanks to the vicinity of the song resounding before or after it.

“As I was nurturing in me these Canti Paralleli towards their mature state, I would relive in memory Plutarch’s “Parallel Lives” that I had read years ago.”

Texts by Paghtasar Dpir, Yeghishe Charents, Avetik Isahakyan.

Movements: Song of the Lost Love / Because of Love / On the Blue Lake

An Evening... / My Soul / Snow on the Mountains / Autumn Song / My Quiet Evening...

Intermission

Tigran Mansurian: Romance for Violin and Strings (2011, U.S. Premiere)

Tigran Mansurian writes, “When the classical composers write instrumental “romances,” sometimes the synthesis of the singing nature imposed by the “romance” genre with decorative musical gestures becomes truly captivating.

“What kind of musical structure would it be if its melodic foundation were based on tunes bearing the characteristics of Armenian medieval spiritual taghs? A tagh is an Armenian form of monadic song writing, taking flight from emotional expression and expansive in form and rhythm. Acquaintance with them enables one to appreciate fully the folk music collecting of my spiritual father Gomitas who preserved our music by transcribing hundreds of songs in the early 20th Century.

“This is the question that I contemplated while writing Romance for violin and string orchestra. I made this composition at the suggestion of my good friend, the Moldovan-Austrian violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja, and I dedicated it to her.”

Michael Nyman: Symphony No. 2 (2014. U.S. Premiere)

Michael Nyman writes, “The series of 19 symphonies that I started writing in December 2012 as a 70th birthday present for myself in March 2014 is more or less half completed and might deserve as many words of explanation as there are notes. Suffice it to say that the symphonies are conceived in the form of an extended network that ‘archives’ and represents and re-presents new material, old material of mine and of other composers

(such as Brahms' Symphony No. 1), as well as ideas of mine that have already been presented in orchestral form, or by the Michael Nyman Band in proto-orchestral and even, as the opening movement of Symphony No. 5 the 6th movement of my String Quartet No. 2.

“Symphony No. 2 began its life as Pozcatek, a ‘Michael Nyman Band’ ‘soundtrack’ that I wrote for the Michael Nyman Band to accompany a selection of sequences from post-war Polish films that I selected and edited in 2009. That work has already been reworked as Pozcatek for piano trio (recorded by the Fidelio Trio for MN Records) and a song cycle Ex Votos Songs with texts transcribed from Mexican Ex Votos, hence the possible subtitle for this symphony: Ex Photos. The symphony consists of four interconnected movements.”

The work was premiered in November 2014 by a youth orchestra in Mexico City, at the re-opening of a refurbished movie theatre, and the performance there was accompanied by a miscellany of clips from historical Mexican films of the 20th Century. The composer intends the music to stand on its own, and, as the references to famous scenes in Mexican films are less familiar in the U.S., has decided to omit them for this presentation. This is the U.S. premiere of Symphony No. 2.

[Notes taken from concert program.]

Musical Selections

Miatsoom (Reunion, 1994-97) (26:20) / Charles Amirkhanian

Artists

Other Minds Festival (features)

Amirkhanian, Charles (features)