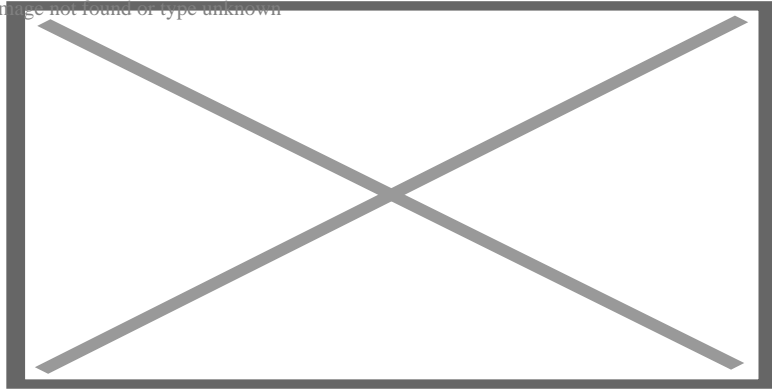


Other Minds Festival: OM 5: Concert 1, 1 of 13

Image not found or type unknown



Identifier

OMF.1999.03.25.A

Description

Other Minds, Inc., in association with the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, presented Other Minds Festival V at the Cowell Theater, Fort Mason Center in San Francisco, March 25-27, 1999.

The fifth Other Minds festival featured composers Linda Bouchard, Mary Ellen Childs, Luc Ferrari, Alvin Lucier, António Pinho Vargas, Julian Priestler, Sam Rivers, Errollyn Wallen, and special guest artist Margaret Leng Tan. Each concert was preceded by a panel discussion with the evening's artists, moderated by Other Minds' Executive & Artistic Director, Charles Amirkhanian. The first concert began with "Fanfare" from John Kennedy's "The Winged Energy of Delight" performed by Margaret Leng Tan on toy cymbals. A fitting start for a Festival that would highlight works for toy piano and other miniature instruments.

Concert 1, Thursday, March 25 1999

John Kennedy: Fanfare, from The Winged Energy of Delight (1997) * (West Coast Premiere)
Margaret Leng Tan, toy cymbals

According to Tan: "'Fanfare' is the prelude from 'The Winged Energy of Delight', a four-movement suite written for my toy piano by John Kennedy, composer and co-artistic director of the new music group Essential Music. He thought it would be fun to have me choreograph a grand entrance crashing my toy cymbals!"

António Pinho Vargas: Dinky Toys (1979; arranged by the composer for Margaret Leng Tan, 1999)
(United States Premiere)
Margaret Leng Tan, two toy pianos

Dinky Toys and General Complex are originally works for piano. António Pinho Vargas sent them to me with the following instruction: "You can do what you want (change register, organize, improvise, etc.) to play them on your toy pianos."

I have especially taken liberties with register displacements to maximise timbral variety and, in General Complex, simply to accommodate the material within the toy piano's three octave compass.

Dinky Toys lives up to its name as a charmingly whimsical evocation of childhood. The blues ambience of General Complex reflects António Pinho Vargas' experience as a jazz pianist, while his "serious" composer side surfaces in the atonal second half of the piece. The whistful codetta strikes me as virtually tailor-made for the toy piano! - MLT

Errollyn Wallen: Louis' Loops (1999) * (World Premiere)
Margaret Leng Tan, two toy pianos
Written for Margaret Leng Tan especially for Other Minds V

This piece is dedicated to my young godson, Louis Wallen. I was inspired by watching him at play, as well as by seeing Margaret Leng Tan perform in New York last autumn and by the happy afternoon we spent in her Brooklyn home discussing the forthcoming piece over toy pianos and pecan pie.

Listening to Margaret play, I was aware of the similarity in the action of the toy piano to the harpsichord and I decided to revisit one of my long-neglected loves - the French Clavecin School and, in this particular instance, Louis Couperin (1626-1661). I wanted to write a piece for Margaret that combined playfulness with virtuosity. Absorbed into Louis' Loops are snippets of three dance pieces of Couperin's - Courante, Sarabande en Canon, and Canaries. Considering the title I wonder if I was thinking subconsciously of the brilliant mathematician's mind of Louis' father and my cousin, Lincoln Wallen. Anyhow, this is for you Louis, across three centuries. - EW

Julia Wolfe, East Broadway (1996) * (West Coast Premiere)
Margaret Leng Tan, toy piano & toy boombox
* Written for Margaret Leng Tan

Julia Wolfe is co-artistic director of New York's Bang on a Can Festival. East Broadway is inspired by the frenetic energy on that street running through Manhattan's Lower East Side. - MLT

[Ms. Tan played the Schoenhut toy piano. The presentation of Ms. Tan's performance was made possible with the support of Carl Djerassi.]

Linda Bouchard: Ductwork (1997)
The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players
Linda Bouchard, conductor

Until I got to the job site, I had no idea how much work needed to be done. This was not your standard arrangement. I'd heard the space required an entire circulation system or else one nothing would flow.

I started from scratch, not knowing quite which way to turn, but as it often happens in this business, each situation creates its own patterns; one way or another the work unfolds. In the end "Ductwork" turned out to be, if not a straightforward experience then at least a memorable one.

The "Flanged" solo was tricky. As usual give a strong voice to an instrumentalist and all sorts of unpredictable elements start to take shape. To keep things on track I thought the steady chords would help, like a rim around the line.

If "Louvered" sounds short, it is because it is. Once the opening was created I just had to keep the stormy

weather from getting in. How it will handle the backdrafts is still anybody's guess. Only time will tell.

In terms of composition, the three "Sheet Metals" are made of the same alloy. I wanted to put each one to a different task, to create some independence within the system. You'd be surprised how far you can go with a few essential characteristics when you dress them up with the right tools, a few fasteners and a touch of paint.

Ductwork was composed for Array Music in Toronto with the help of a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts commissioning program.

Ductwork est dédié à David Cole, mon complice le plus précieux.

- LB

[The presentation of this work was made possible with the support of the Fleischhacker Foundation, with additional support from Henry Brant.]

Errollyn Wallen, Songs (United States Premieres)

Errollyn Wallen, voice & piano

Charles Amirkhanian writes about Songs: "Wallen's first attempt at songwriting bubbled up subconsciously in one hour into What's up Doc? full of absurd lyrics which dissolve toward a social pathos of contemporary loneliness. A song to melt your heart, Guru is only gradually perceived as a satire on the promise held out by certain unscrupulous new age spiritual leaders. What Shall I Sing? emerged after the end of a love relationship and includes a play on the Victorian rhyme, "Sing sing/what shall I sing? The cat has run off/with the pudding string." Wallen learned the poem from her composition teacher David Lumsdaine who wrote a setting of the actual folk rhyme. Beginning in A major and concluding in G Minor, The Lighthouse is a touching tribute to a California composer-pianist friend, Ronald Avant, who died of AIDS in 1990. Magritte Man is a meditation on childhood days, imagination and men with umbrellas in the clouds."

Favorite Things (piano solo)

"More light, more light..." (Bonnard) is the inscription I placed at the head of this piece as it encapsulates the spirit of my intention here - to observe space and stillness. Although Favorite Things is full of movement and whimsy at certain points, it is essentially a reflective piece written to celebrate the wonderful playing of jazz pianist Bill Evans. A real master and whimsy at certain points, it is essentially a reflective piece written to celebrate the very best elements of classical and jazz performances. - EW

What's Up Doc?

Guru

What Shall I Sing?

The Lighthouse

Magritte Man

[The presentation of this work was made possible with the support of Jeanne & Howard Baumgarten.]

INTERMISSION

Alvin Lucier: Islands (1998) (United States Premiere)

The Other Minds Ensemble

Islands, for wind instruments and amplified snare drums, is the latest in a series of works by Alvin Lucier that explore the spatial characteristics of sound waves in enclosed spaces. In DIRECTIONS OF SOUNDS FROM

THE BRIDGE (1978), flashlights deployed around a cello are activated by sounds which flow out of the instrument in different directions for different frequencies; in SELF-PORTRAIT (1989) air flow from the lip of a flute causes the blades of a wind anemometer to spin at various speeds. In ISLANDS sound waves from five wind instruments cause a collection of snare drums, scattered throughout the room, to resonate and sound. As the sounds from the instruments flow out into the space, the drums react singly and in combinations, determined by pitch, loudness, directivity of the wave-flow and the architecture of the room.

Islands, completed in November of 1998, was written for the United Berlin Ensemble and is dedicated to Christian Wolff. It was first performed on February 2nd, 1999, at the Schauspielhaus, Berlin, on the "Woher-wohin? Komponieren heute" series. - AL

[The presentation of this work was made possible with the support of Stephen Weaver.]

Luc Ferrari: Les Émois d'Aphrodite ("The Emotions of Aphrodite"; 1998) (World Premiere)
The MC Band; Mary Chun, music director

Les Émois d'Aphrodite (The Emotions of Aphrodite) is one of many Ferrarian essays in musical Freudian psychology. The work has gone through several versions, having been composed in 1986 for clarinet, piano and percussion, and subsequently revised in 1991. This version from May-June 1998 superimposes a new work on the old and adds two keyboards and may be considered a completely new work. The scoring now is for clarinet, piano, percussion and two sampling keyboards plus tape.

It's in five movements: (1) une première danse, (2) un morceau de peur, (3) une deuxième danse, (4) une bonne portion de trip charnel, and (5) enfin une danse sauvage d'Aphrodite. Players are instructed to play joyously and violently in the two dance movements. It is intended that some sounds from the pre-recorded tape cover the instruments and vice versa. A cyclic, modal style of writing which Ferrari has developed since the 50's, and which predates American minimalism, permeates the piece. - Charles Amirkhania

[The presentation of this work was made possible with the support of Mrs. Ralph I. Dorfman.]

About the Composers

French-Canadian Linda Bouchard has composed over 50 works for a number of genres, from orchestral and chamber works to dance scores, concerti, and vocal pieces. Her works have been heard extensively on both sides of the Atlantic and have been recorded by the CBC and Analekta in Canada, ECM in Germany and CRI in the USA.

Her works have won Prizes in Canada and the USA including four PROCAN awards, first prizes in the Princeton Composition Contest, the Indiana State Competition and the NACUSA Contest. In 1997, Ms. Bouchard won the Joseph-S-Stauffer Prize from the Canada Council for the Arts and was chosen "Composer of the Year" from the Conseil Québécois de la Culture's Prix Opus.

She lived in New York City from 1979 to 1990 where she composed, led new music ensembles and made orchestral arrangements for various organizations. From September 1992 to August 1995, Linda Bouchard held the position of Composer-in Residence for the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, Canada. During her residency, she composed several works for the orchestra and organized 20th Century Music events such as : The First Orchestral Workshop, the Summer Music Festival and other educational activities.

As a conductor, Ms. Bouchard has led a number of orchestras and ensembles in the US and in Canada. She conducted the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in Feb 1998 and she conducted the premiere of her

PILGRIMS' CANTATA at the Oregon Bach Festival in June 1996. In 1993 she led the NAC Orchestra in an innovative Young People's Concert dedicated to the music of this century and conducted the first Double-Take Concert of the yearly Summer Festival. In early 1994 she served as musical director and conductor for the NAC performance of Mauricio Kagel's *Variété*. During her time in the USA she led the St Luke's Orchestra, the American Dance Festival, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the New York New Music Ensemble and the New Music Consort. She also was assistant-conductor for the New York Children's Free Opera from 1985 to 1988. From 1990 to 1992 she was guest conductor for the Atelier de Musique Contemporaine of l'Université de Montréal, and served as artistic coordinator of FORUM 91 for le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne.

Ms. Bouchard was music director for the 20th Century Songs Integration Program at the Banff Center in 1994 and returned as guest artist to give Master Classes in composition in 1995.

The music of composer Errollyn Wallen spans numerous styles from avant-garde classical to jazz songwriting. Born April 10, 1958, in Belize City, Belize, she now resides in London where she founded Ensemble X whose motto is, "We don't break down barriers in music . . . we don't see any." Wallen has written prolifically, including a Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra, commissioned by BBC Radio 3, *In Our Lifetime*, choreographed by Christopher Bruce for London Contemporary Dance Theatre, *Horseplay*, commissioned by The Royal Ballet), a second opera *Look! No Hands!*, a saxophone concerto for jazz virtuoso Courtney Pine, to be premiered by the Hallé Orchestra, and *Mercury*, for brass band and steel drums. She also has composed extensively for chamber media, including piano solo and duet, string quartet and various mixed ensembles, often with voice. The Independent on Sunday wrote, "If Wallen was to become a household name it could only be a good thing." Her performances at Other Minds marks only her second U.S. appearance and her first on the West Coast.

In between her work on classical composition, Wallen began in 1988 writing pop/jazz songs for a change of pace. By now she has produced numerous such selections and has recorded a demo CD, *Meet Me at Harold Moores*, in which she solos on vocals and piano with in arrangements for herself and ten other players. The results are electrifying, as she moves freely among influences ranging from Laurie Anderson to gospel, Bill Evans, blues, Schubert, and Ives.

On February 5th, 1999, Luc Ferrari celebrated his 70th birthday in Paris. It's with great pride that Other Minds presents this legendary figure in 20th Century. The work and aesthetics of Luc Ferrari continue to have a singular impact on several generations of American avant-garde composers. Like Alvin Lucier, Ferrari first obtained a thorough, traditional technique in composition. He took piano lessons with Alfred Cortot, composition lessons with Arthur Honegger and musical analysis with Olivier Messiaen. But he proceeded to become interested in the recording process to such a degree that he began to make tape pieces using altered ambient sounds and later incorporated electronics into his work in an effective and original manner.

In 1954, his life altered radically when he boarded a ship and traveled to New York to meet Edgard Varèse, after having been impressed by live radio broadcast of his *Déserts* for tape and orchestra. From Varèse, Ferrari learned to treat sound as a thing in and of itself; also to place sound objects in the right time and space, from both an audio and psychological point of view. By 1963-4 he had begun *Hétérozygote*, an extended tape piece in which ambient sounds unfold in narrative form, suggesting a dazzling variety of incidents, all unexplained. The composer's program notes for these scores, themselves works of a poetic imagination, only added to the fascination.

By 1970 he had completed *Presque Rien No. 1*, a kind of musical photography, in which unassuming ambient sounds of a small village in Yugoslavia, recorded throughout a long day, are telescoped by means of seamless dissolves into a 21-minute narrative in which no apparent "musical" sounds are included. When the work was issued on a Deutsche Grammophon LP worldwide the response was first one of shock and then revelation.

Finally, John Cage's exhortation that "music is all around us if only we had ears," had been taken seriously by a fellow composer.

Beyond his work involving technology, Ferrari has composed a large body of instrumental music, ranging from very early piano solos to works for large orchestra, such as *Histoire du plaisir et de la désolation* (1979-81), a towering 35-minute work in three movements which won the International Koussevitsky Prize for recordings when it was released in 1990. And among his important credits are a series of invaluable television films which he made about the rehearsal processes of Varèse, Messiaen, Stockhausen and others.

Alvin Lucier was born in 1931 into a musical family. Both his mother and father were excellent amateur musicians, and he grew up in a home in which there was much music making, including four-part singing around the dinner table. He studied at Brandeis and at Yale, where he produced a large-scale work for flute, harpsichord, and string orchestra during his senior year, and spent two years in Rome on a Fulbright Scholarship in the early 1960s. After returning from Rome, he joined the faculty at Brandeis. There he conducted the Brandeis University Chamber Chorus, which devoted much its time to the performance of new music. In 1966 he co-founded the Sonic Arts Union with Robert Ashley, David Behrman, and Gordon Mumma, and from 1972 to 1979 was music director of the Viola Farber Dance Company. Since 1970 he has taught at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut.

Alvin Lucier has been a pioneer in many areas of composition and performance, including the use of brain waves in live performance (*Music for Solo Performer*), the generation of visual imagery by sound in vibrating media (*The Queen of the South*), and the evocation of room acoustics for musical purposes (*I am Sitting in a Room*). His recent works include a series of sound installations and works for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, and orchestra in which, by means of close tunings with pure tones, sound waves are caused to spin in space. Among these recent works are *Small Waves*, for trombone, piano, and string quartet with six amplified glass vases; *Wave Painting Songs*, for soprano and pure wave oscillators; and *40 Rooms*, for five players with Lexicon Acoustic Reverberation System. A new large-scale work for three orchestras, written for the S.E.M. Ensemble, will be performed in May, 1999, in Prague. His works have been performed around the world, and he is represented on over three dozen recordings. In March, 1995, MusikTexte published a bilingual edition of his scores, interviews, and writings.

About the Performers:

Margaret Leng Tan is an internationally celebrated artist whom *The New Yorker* has called "the diva of the avant-garde." Hailed by *The Village Voice* as "the world's premiere string piano virtuoso," she is renowned for her performances of American and Asian music that defy the piano's conventional boundaries. The first woman to graduate with a doctorate in music from the Juilliard School, she has since created a radically individual style fusing sound, choreography, theater, and performance art. She has premiered works by composers who have written for her including John Cage, Alvin Lucier, Tan Dun, Somei Satoh, Toby Twining, Guy Klucevsek, Julia Wolfe, John Kennedy, Stephen Montague, Raphael Mostel, Dary John Mizelle, Christopher Hopkins, and Ge Gan-ru.

Margaret Leng Tan's work with extended piano techniques led her to the toy piano, and in 1993 she made her toy piano debut at Lincoln Center's "Serious Fun" Festival. Her fascination with the toy piano as a bone fide musical instrument has inspired composers to develop a broad and varied repertory for the toy piano and ancillary toy instruments. Ms. Tan's career as a toy pianist takes her to festivals around the world where her toy piano extravaganzas create a music theater of nostalgia and hilarity. Her latest album, *The Art of the Toy Piano* (Point Music/PolyGram), received major media coverage (*Newsweek*, *USA Today*, *CNN*, *CBS News*, *Fox News*, *National Public Radio's "All Things Considered"*), appeared on many top ten lists and became one of the 25 best-selling Classical Crossover albums in 1998.

The MC Band performs under the musical direction of conductor and keyboardist Mary Chun. Particularly interested in opera as well as new music, Mary Chun conducted the Canadian and European premieres of John Adam's *I was Looking at the Ceiling then I saw the Sky*. She also recently assisted Peter Sellers and Tan Dun on *Peony Pavilion*. Among the many opera companies on which she has served as a member of the conducting staff is the Opéra de Lyon, where she was also the Director of Musical Studies for music director Kent Nagano. Percussionist Kevin Neuhoff holds the post of timpanist with the Western Opera National Touring Company, the international Carmel Bach Festival Orchestra, the Berkeley Symphony, and the Fremont Symphony. He has performed as a soloist and chamber musician with the Cabrillo Festival, the Oakland Ballet, and the Modern Japanese Ensemble. Clarinetist Tony Striplen is active as a soloist, orchestral, and chamber musician, and is co-founder of the Gold Coast Chamber Players. He is currently bass clarinetist/clarinetist with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, and frequently performs with the San Francisco Symphony and Ballet Orchestras. Composer and keyboardist John McGinn has performed with such local groups as Earplay and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, as well as additional groups around the United States and Europe. This spring, the AmCam label will release his CD of 20th-century solo piano works, plus three improvisations. As pianist and harpsichordist, Michael Touchi has worked with several Bay Area opera and theater companies, including Festival Opera of Walnut Creek and Opera San Jose.

The Other Minds Ensemble is led by clarinetist Larry London and is joined by guest trumpeter Susan Radcliff. A graduate of Harvard College, Larry London was one of the charter members of the Bay Area's famed 1750 Arch Ensemble, and as a composer has had works performed by the San Francisco Symphony, among others. His score for the recent film about Isamu Noguchi, *Stones and Paper*, has won several awards. Freelance oboist and English horn-player Robin May was also one of the charter members of the 1750 Arch Ensemble, and has performed in Bay Area for the last 20 years with such ensembles as the San Francisco Symphony, Oakland Symphony, and the San Francisco Opera. Trombonist Toyoji Tomita is a specialist in contemporary repertoire, and has worked with Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen, as well as frequently with Margaret Fisher. He is a winner of the Gaudemus competition for contemporary music. George Brooks is an outstanding jazz saxophonist who has worked and toured with Terry Riley and Etta James, among others. His work is available on a number of CD releases.

The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players is a leader among ensembles in the United States dedicated to contemporary chamber music. A five-time winner of the prestigious, national ASCAP/Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music, SFCMP has performed over 850 new works, including 126 U.S. and world premieres, and has brought 50 new pieces into the repertoire through its active commissioning efforts.

The instrumentalists who make up the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players are recognized as virtuosi in new music performance. Active as soloists and chamber musicians, many are members of the San Francisco Symphony, Ballet or Opera Orchestras; others perform and record with their own chamber ensembles. The 1998-99 season is the ensemble's first under the leadership of Music Director Donald Palma.

[Notes taken from the original printed program.]

Musical Selections

Fanfare [from "The Winged Energy of Delight"] (1997) (1:59) / John Kennedy [West Coast premiere]

Artists

Other Minds Festival (features)

Kennedy, John, 1959- (features)

Tan, Margaret Leng (features)