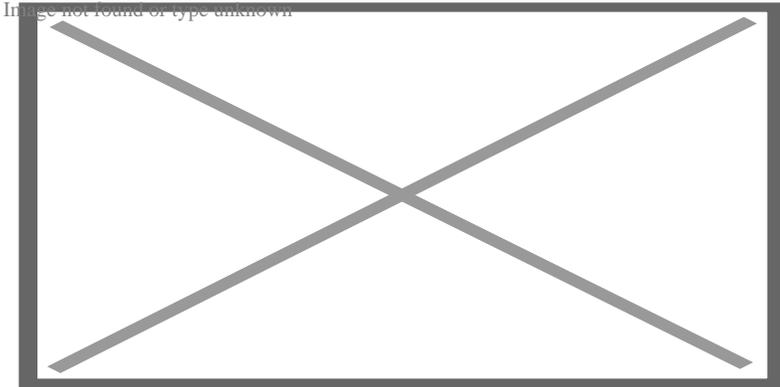


Other Minds Festival: OM 13: Panel Discussion & Concert 1, 6 of 8



Identifier

OMF.2008.03.06.F

Object Type

Digital Audio

Musical Selections

Suite No. 6 in D Major, BWV 1012 [excerpts] (ca. 1720) (16:50) / Johann Sebastian Bach

Description

Charles Amirkhanian moderates a panel discussion with the composers featured in the first concert of OM 13. Michael Bach discusses the inspiration for Dieter Schnebel's "Mit Diesen Händen" as well as describing his unique curved BACH.bow that he uses to perform it. Åke Parmerud then reflects on the nature of science and the concept that all of creation can be considered as a single organic machine, and how he has used it as the philosophical basis for his tape piece "La Vie Mécanique". Elena Kats-Chernin describes her works for piano, which despite their deceptively simple structure, are in fact incredibly difficult to play. And a somewhat taciturn Ishmael Wadada Leo Smith offers a brief introduction to his compositional technique, while also declaring his personal predilection to not talk about his music but rather have the audience experience it directly.

"Mit Diesen Händen ('With These Hands')", was originally a musical setting for a poem by Heinrich Böll. According to the composer, Dieter Schnebel, in this shortened, instrumental version, "The text should be embedded in the music. Thus, in the instrumental introduction the text is transformed quite literally by the cellist's gestures...The rhythmical language of the music has its basis in sound, partly it is surrounded by quasi-speaking events, or the music draws the short indicative words into a net of punctual notes. The tumultuous

language provides the music's own drive...The instrumental part was realized from a close dialogue with the cellist Michael Bach, having been inspired by his experiments in sound and techniques. Consequently, there is a particular unity of language and music.”

“La Vie Mécanique”, according to composer Åke Parmerud, is a “composition dedicated to the world of sounds emanating from mechanical machines and tools...It is also a sonic comment on the idea of living matter as an ‘organic machine’. The body (so far unsuccessfully) viewed as a structure that may be deconstructed into increasingly smaller units and finally explained as a very sophisticated robot. Using only sounds from various kinds of machinery (mechanical, electric, etc.) the piece is built as a kind of story line describing the birth, death and rebirth of a mechanical life structure. The piece also, in a sense, alludes to the birth and death of aesthetic values connected to the use of machines as tools for making music. Starting in a style of electro-acoustics, building through the increasing use of repetition and rhythm ending in a style reminiscent of electronica or techno this piece marks a kind of ‘rite of passage’ from one modernism to another.”

“Purple Prelude”, by Elena Kats-Chernin, was inspired by a Russian melody that popped into the composer’s mind during a plane trip, and was later developed into a piece. According to Kats-Chernin, “It is based on a very minimal motif based on 3 notes. The title, with its allusion to ‘purple patches’, suggests going off on a tangent.” Another work “Tast-En” was composed by Kats-Chernin, after a five year self-imposed hiatus from writing concert works. According to the composer, she “sat down and decided to start, with just one note (F-sharp, appropriately lying in the middle between two C's)...One note did not feel like enough to go on, so I split it into octaves (monstrously hard to play for a pianist!), to make a note last for longer.” Kats-Chernin continued to work on the piece, adding a carefully chosen note here and there, until it developed into a type of fantasia with a chorale. All in all it is a work that only exceptional pianists can perform.

After the intermission Michael Bach returned to the stage to perform excerpts from Johann Sebastian Bach’s “Suite No. 6 in D Major” and Nicolò Paganini’s “Capriccio 1828”. A last minute addition to the program, due to the absence of scheduled performer Frances-Marie Uitti, who had injured her back and was unable to attend the Festival, these pieces highlight the versatility of the adjustable, curved BACH.bow in interpreting the music of past masters.

The concert concluded with the world premiere of Ishmael Wadada Leo Smith’s “Taif: Prayer in the Garden of the Hijaz” a work commissioned by Other Minds. Scored for trumpet, percussion, and string quartet, the work is a sonic supplication to the Creator, concerning an individual’s weaknesses. Reflective, meditative, and contemplative, this work, according to the composer, is best heard rather than described.

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