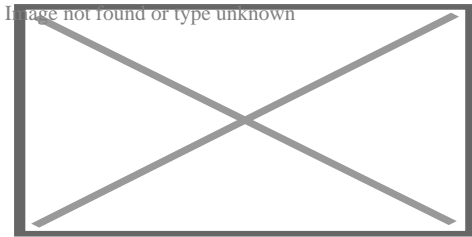


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Other Minds Festival: OM 14: Panel Discussion & Concert 1, 6 of 7



Identifier

OMF.2009.03.05.c1.F

Object Type

Digital Audio

Musical Selections

Motetten, for cello ensemble (2004)(18:55) / Mauricio Kagel

Description

OM 14 got started with Other Minds Executive and Artistic Director, Charles Amirkhanian, moderating a panel discussion with the Bent Sørensen, Chinary Ung, and Ben Johnston, whose works were to be heard during the first concert, held on March 5, 2009. Sørensen discusses how he has incorporated aspects from one of his operas into two of his more recent compositions as well as commenting on the challenges of writing for a piano trio. Ung touches upon his interest in finding the musical equivalent of the Buddhist idea of emptiness being filled by compassion, while Johnston reminisces about Harry Partch, his mentor in microtonal music.

Spiral X: In Memoriam

Genocide is not an easy theme to acknowledge in music, and yet for Chinary Ung, it finally became a necessity. In 2007 he decided to compose a tenth work in his "Spiral" series that would commemorate the Cambodian holocaust perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge. Among the 1.7 million killed were half of his family members. The players intone nonsensical phonemes and sing in raw village style, very explicitly scored. Ung is not interested in trained classical voices and urges his players not to try to imitate them. In addition, various members are asked to sing and whistle, often while playing completely different material at the same time. "Spiral X" was co-

commissioned by the Del Sol Performing Arts Organization and the Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation. - Charles Amirkhanian

The Shadows of Silence

Quite some time ago I heard, through a conversation on a mobile phone, a wonderful concert of ringing church bells from a European capital. The next night, I dreamed that the sound of those low singing bells was rising up from a piano in a huge empty concert hall. That experience became the starting point for my piano piece, "The Shadows of Silence." But before the piece gets to the ringing bells it moves through a landscape of shadows. After the passage with the low ringing bells the shadows of silence returns, melted into a lament, which sends two regards: one to two small beautiful, not very well-known, bars by Mozart, and one to the sextet in my own opera, "Under the Sky." "The Shadows of Silence" was commissioned by Carnegie Hall and dedicated to Leif Ove Andsnes. -Bent Sørensen

Phantasmagoria

It starts with a violin solo, heavily muted but aggressive, and gradually the cello and the piano enter, as shadows of the violin. The first movement ends in a dark shadow of an aria from my opera, "Under the Sky." The five movements are full of shadows of all kinds. "Phantasmagoria" is a shadow play in darkness, where contours of persons and music, voices and instruments, create adventures behind one other. "Phantasmagoria" was commissioned by the International Franz Schubert Society of Denmark and dedicated to Trio Con Brio Copenhagen. -Bent Sørensen

The Tavern

The invention in the 1980s of a guitar with sliding frets has finally allowed guitarists to control their intonation, and gave Ben Johnston the freedom to pick his notes as he pleased. The result? A 15-note/octave scale based on the first 13 harmonics of the overtone series that is created by any pitched, vibrating medium. That's the good news. The challenging news is that some of those frets are as close as 3/16 of an inch apart, making accurate performance a very delicate choreography indeed for the left hand. And then there's the voice. The music of Harry Partch that I have performed was written in such a way that, at any moment, one was simple enough to not to distract from the other. As in so many areas, Johnston has once again surpassed his predecessor, this time by producing haunting microtonal melodies that are often in counterpoint to their accompaniment, making accurate vocal intonation supremely challenging. -John Schneider

Motetten

In "Motetten," I tried to weld together the old contrasts between cantabile, the ideal realization of the vocal, and sonabile, the epitome of the instrumental. What instrument could be better suited to this than the cello, the only one that reflects the exact range of the human voice? With it, what is singable is just as natural as all the characteristics that can only be imagined in terms of instruments. The result is all kinds of dialogues within a musical texture that, like a kaleidoscope, can change instantly from monochrome to a polyphony of colors. "Motetten" is dedicated to Cello Octet Conjunto ibérico (now the Amsterdam Cello Octet), with thanks to November Music and the Eduard van Beinum Foundation. -Mauricio Kagel

O-Antiphonen

The Amsterdam Cello Octet and Arvo Pärt shared the wish to work together for years. Pärt's idea of removing the texts from his 1988 composition "Sieben Magnificat Antiphonen" and putting them in the hands of a cello ensemble offered the possibility to finally realize this long-held wish. In the words of the composer, it was "the

unique sound of Amsterdam Cello Octet, that is on the one hand so rich in overtones and on the other hand holds an inexhaustible potential for cantabile playing, that inspired me to write “O-Antiphonen” and make these literal ‘Songs Without Words’ possible.” This work was made possible thanks to support from Amsterdam’s Fonds voor de Kunst and the Amsterdam Cello Biënnale.

People

Other Minds Festival (features)
Amsterdam Cello Octet (features)
Conjunto Ibérico (features)
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Putowski, Robert (features)
Milhailescu, Rares (features)
Aristizabal, Oihana (features)
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Bleumer, Claire (features)
Hulst, Wijnand (features)
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