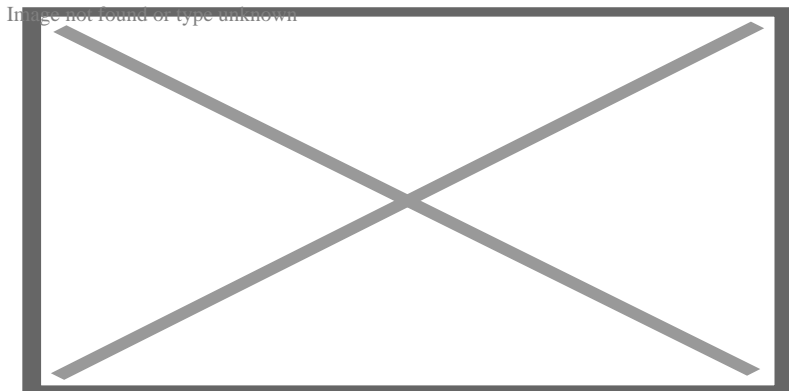


Other Minds Presents: Henry Cowell: The Whole World of Music, Concert One, 10 of 18



Identifier

OMP.2009.11.12.J

Description

On November 12, 2009, at the Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley, CA, Other Minds presented the first of two concerts dedicated to the music of Henry Cowell. Born in nearby Menlo Park in 1897, Cowell began his musical career as a concert pianist, and is perhaps best known for pioneering such “ultramodern” performance techniques as “tone clusters,” in which the arms are used to play a number of notes simultaneously, and the direct manipulation of the strings of the piano, in a manner that presaged John Cage’s works for prepared piano. Yet Cowell’s greatest contribution to avant-garde music came with his publication of the journal “New Music Quarterly” and its associated recordings. First issued in 1927, and edited by Cowell until 1936 this journal was where many works, by what are now recognized as the greatest 20th century American composers, were first published. Cowell also influenced a whole generation of American composers through his teaching at the New School for Social Research, where his course on “Music of the World’s Peoples” exposed many young composers to Asian and other non-Western music for the first time. In 1936 Cowell’s life took an unexpected and tragic turn when he was convicted on moral’s charges involving consensual oral sex with another man, and was sentenced to 15 years in prison. However through the tireless efforts of his wife Sidney, Cowell was released in 1942, and he eventually resumed teaching and composing until finally passing away in 1965, after a number of years of poor health. This concert features a wide selection of his works, including not only his compositions for solo piano, but also a fine selection of songs, a string quartet, and other chamber works. Performers include pianist Sarah Cahill, mezzo-soprano Wendy Hillhouse, and the Colorado String Quartet.

Musical Selections

Thou Art the Tree of Life, for voice and piano [text by Edward Taylor] (1955) (1:01)

Artists

Other Minds (Organization) (features)
Cowell, Henry, 1897-1965 (features)
Taylor, Edward, 1642-1729 (features)
Hillhouse, Wendy (features)
Gandolfi, Josephine (features)