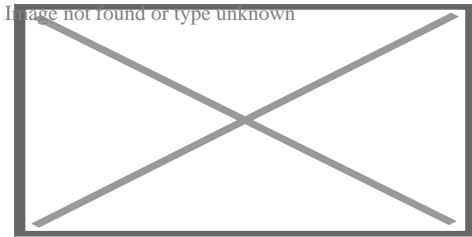




Other Minds Festival: OM 23: Sound Poetry - Scandalnavians, 4 of 14



Identifier

OMF.2018.04.12.c1.D

Object Type

Digital Audio

Description

The 23rd Other Minds Festival, focused on the art of Sound Poetry, took place in San Francisco at the ODC/Dance Theatre over the course of six days (April 9-14, 2018); OM's longest festival to date which included five concerts and a day of lectures and workshops. This year's line-up brought together old and new masters from several countries, all well representing the "intermedium between poetry and music": Beth Anderson (US), Mark Applebaum (US), Tone Åse (Norway), Jaap Blonk (Netherlands), Alvin Curran (US/Italy), Sheila Davies Sumner (US), Enzo Minarelli (Italy), Amy X Neuberger (US), Ottar Ormstad (Norway), Aram Saroyan (US), Susan Gilmore Stone (US), Anne Waldman (US), Taras Mashtalir (Russia); Lily Greenham (Denmark), Pamela Z (US); Michael McClure (US), Sten Sandell (Sweden), and Clark Coolidge (US).

April 12, Concert 3 - Scandalnavians

The third concert of Other Minds 23 was an exploration of past and present text-composition from Scandinavia including an American debut by Norwegian-Russian duo OTTARAS and a World Premiere by guest artists Sten Sandell and Tone Åse. From the past we heard pre-recorded works for tape from pioneering artists in text-sound like Sten Hanson and Åke Hodell. Hanson and Hodell were part of the experimental arts scene emerging out of the Fylkingen center in Stockholm during the 1960's-70's. Another artist working in text-sound during the same era was Lily Greenham, a Dutch artist and poet. Greenham's "Outsider" is heard before closing off the first half of the concert with Hodell's "Mr. Smith In Rhodesia". In between the historical tape works was a live multimedia performance by OTTARAS. The second half features Norwegian vocalist Tone Åse and Swedish

pianist Sten Sandell, both in solo performances and in a collaborative improvisation.

Sten Hanson

Che (1968) for tape

How Are You (1969) for tape

Sten Hanson (1936-2013) was a Swedish composer, poet and performance artist, and was one of the pioneers of text-sound composition. His composition Che is a homage to Argentinian Marxist revolutionary Ernesto “Che” Guevara. The material is drawn from a speech given by Guevara.

How are You, as the name implies, is a short work that uses only the three words of the every-day greeting.

These phonemes are then electronically manipulated in order to create a piece that showcases the composer’s “linguistic/aesthetic awareness and a playful robust humor.”

OTTARAS: Ottar Ormstad and Taras Mashtalir

4 CONCRETE (2018) U.S. premiere

LONG RONG SONG

NAVN NOME NAME

KAKAOASE

SOL

OTTARAS is a collaboration between the Russian musician and composer Taras Mashtalir and the Norwegian poet and artist Ottar Ormstad. Based on some of Ormstad’s earlier works of concrete poetry, the videos are made by Russian video-artist Alexander Vojjov.

Projected on a grid of particles that at times seem ordered, while other times chaotic and continually in flux, Ormstad’s constructed language poetry is exposed and read by the author over Mashtalir’s pulsating music. Is everything connected to one another in the sphere that is shaping before the viewer’s eyes? How does language relate to the atmospheric videoscapes Vojjov creates of numbers, geometric forms and abstract shapes? Raising awareness of electronic poetry, sonic ecology, and welcoming new audiences to a potent “yet-to-come” genre is the inspiration for this collaboration.

CONCRETE 4:

LONG RONG SONG conveys Ormstad’s language research project that is based on AUDITION FOR FENOMENER UTEN BETEGNELSE (Audition for Phenomena without a Name), his second book of concrete poetry (2004). In the video, Ormstad reads through a cycle of 5 poems that present combinations of four letters made of an artificial language system he created, and which may or may not result in words commonly used in Latin languages.

NAVN NOME NAME is based on Ormstad’s telefonkatalogdiktet (the phonebookpoem) published in Norway by Samlaget (2006), containing family names only, from Oslo in 2004 selected and ordered by the author. Some names may be connected to Norwegian landscapes, other may have been chosen mostly for the sound.

KAKAOASE is based on a poem originally made as a digital print in a solo exhibition where Ormstad presented pictures made by letters only (Galleri Briskeby, Oslo 2007). The poem consists of mostly constructed “words,” which may be seen as impossible to read at all. But because every fifth syllable is identical, the text becomes a kind of end-rhyme.

Even for Norwegians, any meaning is difficult to catch—one just has to taste the sound of the poem.

SOL (2017) is the second video based on Ottar Ormstad’s telefonkatalogdiktet (the phonebookpoem) (2006). For this language research project, Ormstad read (!) the phonebook of Oslo 2004 and selected names on a poetic basis. The names are presented visually as concrete poetry. Most of the names are strongly connected to Norway and describe phenomena in nature. The video is based on one page in the book only, where all names starts with sol, the Norwegian word for sun. SOL is the fifth work of a collection of video poems created by OTTARAS, this time with Russian video-artist Yan Kalnberzin.

Lily Greenham

Outsider (1973) for tape

In Outsider, Greenham intones and speaks about her outsider status in society, backed up by a chorus made of her own voice, via electronic manipulation. In much of her work, speech “emerges as music” and the resulting piece is effectively a solo monodrama with choral support.

Åke Hodell

Mr. Smith in Rhodesia (1970) for tape

Mr. Smith in Rhodesia recounts Ian Smith’s brutal racial oppression in Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe). Hodell employs an ancient format with a chorus that repeats the choral leader’s phrases. For this he needed five children 11 or 12 years old who spoke correct Oxford English (which was the English dialect that children in Rhodesian schools were indoctrinated to speak). He obtained the children from the English school in Stockholm and offered them juice and cake in the studio where they read the various sentences. The messages were alternately positive and negative: “Mr. Smith is a good white man,” “Mr. Smith is our friend and father,” “Mr. Smith is a murderer.” When the children returned home, they related what they had been involved in to their parents, who immediately notified the British ambassador in Stockholm, the BBC and various newspapers in London. On March 23, 1970, everything wound up on the Daily Telegraph’s placards, now under the headline “Children in Race Hate Radio Trial.” The article in the newspaper stated that British school children 6 and 7 years old were tricked into reciting political slogans in an anti-American opera at Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and that in the final scene, they were lined up against a wall and forced to say that Mr. Smith is a murderer. The British ambassador delivered a protest to Swedish Radio and there was a ban on transmitting the piece by radio until 1985.

A document in Hodell’s archives bears the superscription “First draft of Mr. Smith in Rhodesia” and the date November 30, 1969. It indicates that at an early stage Åke Hodell apparently was well aware of what the reactions would be and that accordingly it was important to keep secret the name of the country that was going to be accused. In this text there is a claustrophobic, not to mention conspiratorial, tone. It also suggests the dark undercurrents that make Hodell’s works from this period simultaneously suspenseful and direct.

Tone Åse

Ka? (2018) World premiere

Ka? means what? in Åse’s dialect. Sounds of questions, hesitations, the state of dubiousness and possible anxiety, is the wellspring for this improvisation. What is explored and played with is the meaning, sonority and music in words and utterings, through the use of voice and electronics.

Sten Sandell and Tone Åse

Voices inside the Language (2017-18) World premiere

Sten Sandell

v e r t i k a l a k u s t i k . med horisontell prosodi (2017)

Sandell’s v e r t i k a l a k u s t i k . med horisontell prosodi (2017) is an improvisation for voice and piano. Perforated performances through e, i, a, a, o, u and i acoustic permeations, cavities, are formed. v, r, t, c, l, c, s, t and c form punched sound profiles around this flowing-through. All these profiles have their own, unique sound charts consisting of different harmonic series and rhythm. Between the punched profiles there is interaction, where already chiseled monads gain new life through various disruptive actions. labile patterns arise. focusing is obstructed. double. Listening arises.

[Notes taken from printed program.]

People

Other Minds Festival (features)

ODC Theater (features)

Ottaras (Musical group) (features)

Mashtalir, Taras (features)

Ormstad, Ottar (features)

Vojjov, Alexander (features)

Related Collection

OMA.COL002.OMP.01

[Other Minds Festivals](#)

Related Objects

IM.OM.FP.0023.029

[OTTARAS performing during OM 23, San Francisco CA \(April 12, 2018\)](#)