



INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE SATURDAY, JANUARY 21 / 7:30 PM BING CONCERT HALL

PROGRAM NOTES

ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR (B. 1977): *RÓ* (2013)

For bass flute, bass clarinet, two violins, viola, cello, piano, and percussion

Ró was written for the Reykjavik-based ensemble CAPUT for their concert tour in China in 2013. The Icelandic word *Ró* translates as “serenity” in English.

MARK APPLEBAUM (B. 1967): *SERIOUSNESS* (2002)

For violin, viola, and cello

Sum = Parts (2000-2002) is a cycle of six autonomous yet interdependent works: *56 1/2 feet* for chamber orchestra, *Authenticity* for solo trumpet, *Integrity* for two percussion and piano, *Depth* for trombone and contrabass, *Merit* for wind quintet, and *Seriousness* for string trio. In addition, *56 1/2 feet* is reprised at the end of the cycle, thereby functioning as a kind of seventh work.

56 1/2 feet for chamber orchestra was commissioned by the Illinois State University Contemporary Players and premiered by them in 2001. The title refers to the minimum distance a sound needs to travel and rebound to be perceived as an echo; in many respects the piece is a response to Mark Z. Danielewski’s extraordinary novel *House of Leaves*.

The five companion pieces—which include *Seriousness* for string trio (2002)—employ each member of the chamber orchestra once. Selected materials from *56 1/2 feet* were expanded and compressed, forming a kind of gauzy and irregular template in and around which new discourses were composed. In this regard, the companion pieces embark upon new and independent musical narratives while at the same time revisiting familiar (and previously undeveloped) material through lenses of variable magnification.

ASHLEY FURE (B. 1982): *THEREFORE I WAS* (2012)

For cello, percussion, and piano

My grandmother had advanced Parkinson’s disease. Despite its surface manifestations, her sickness was not muscular. Her body *worked*, her brain *worked*, but the method of passing messages between the two malfunctioned. She knew how she wanted to move, but she couldn’t make her muscles move. She knew what her emotions were, but she could not grasp their cause. She lived inside a radical disassociation, a gap between intention and execution so extreme that the simplest of actions required inordinate effort. This sense of disassociation pervades *Therefore I Was*. You’ll see it in the limbs of the cellist as they wrench away from the ordered movements required to sound stable pitches. You’ll hear it as the players strain towards a unified breath around which to coalesce. The music repels between two aesthetic poles: one pulling the instruments towards stillness; the other anchoring their gestures to an anxious, aggressive ground. This movement mirrors the crisis I watched my grandmother endure. The life to which she fiercely clung was brutal and unforgiving. At such times the will to live can seem irrational, even inhumane. And yet, somehow, astonishing, and unabashedly human.

BRIAN FERNEYHOUGH (1943): ON STELLAR MAGNITUDES (1994)

For voice, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano

Alice Teyssier, soprano

Texts:

Aldebaran

Alamode

Lehár: Did eider

Braxy angary

Read a nork?

Bellatrix

By exuviae - less lubrication.

(And then those Repetends in Xhosa).

Capella

“Could” aslant paralysis; (elenchus: logic- Looms astir).

Deneb

De- Laminated.

En- Antiaphonic nodes.

Enate be.

Elnath

Entrenched lone

Numbing; “armipotens”:

Telos hadn’t.

Fomalhaut

from over-mumble atoll. Logy half-stuff

Aroint us, turtlet!

Gienah

Gide, in extremis, necrobiotic,

Almost hegelian.

Hamel

He’d appendiced

Momsers, even-

Loofed.

Kaus Australis

Kryokyctic aboral “up-

Start, squamose

Abdicant”!

Umpteen stuff:

Take-out-rank ap-

Pendage (leastways)

Is spondulicks.

Mirfak

Matrix inbasket
Ripieno
Fabulated antichthones'
Knack-
Ery.

Nunki

Nondendroid, utricles neared
Knothole implantation.

Rasalhague

Rosetta and serpens.
Attar leakage.
Heterotaxis.
Ansa, gript upmost.
Exclusivities.

Suhail

Scrutoire's
Underbelly
Had
An
Inner
Lacunule.

Turais

Tiny utrillo
Ructions
Aye indeed
Surtout.

Wezen

Werkzeug ein-
Seifen! Zermatt ejido?
Nirgends.

Vega

Visible:
Ejactment's
Ghost
Asynchronisms.

Zubenelgenubi

Zygomorphous
Umbo-bezonian
Enactor (nonesuch
Elemental).
Leud gobony,
Enskyed.
Numen, "unmewed
By itself."

Texts by the composer. Note: the reversed (i.e. non-alphabetical) order of *Vega* and *Wezen* is intentional, and reflects their actual placement in the composition.

MARK APPLEBAUM: *CONTROL FREAK 3* (WORLD PREMIERE)

Control Freak 3 consists of four movements in which a vocalist is accompanied by an instrumental octet, both of whom spontaneously invent their own treatment of the given materials. The singer chooses texts from a collection of sonnets by American flarf poet K. Silem Mohammad. Mohammad's hilarious, often absurd sonnets—which he calls *sonnagrams*—are anagrams of Shakespeare sonnets. The vocalist's treatment may be plain or histrionic, sober or outlandish. It may involve traditional technique or the most esoteric modes of vocal production. Meanwhile, the octet responds to improvised hand gestures given by the conductor, ones that call upon an extensive reservoir of sounds, from conventional musical motives to glitch, Foley artist noises. Every performance results in a different sonic outcome, the consequence of a ludic, indeterminate, ensemble ritual. *Control Freak 3* (and its ancestors *Control Freak* and *Control Freak 2*) requires a very special kind of virtuoso musician, one who is playful and imaginative, capable at once of the utmost discipline and whimsy.

Control Freak 3 was commissioned by the International Contemporary Ensemble, with great thanks and admiration to Ross Karre, and abiding affection for and wonderment at the incomparable pan-virtuosity of Steven Schick.

STEVE REICH (B. 1936): *PULSE* (2015)

For twelve players

Pulse, for winds, strings, piano, and electric bass, was completed in 2015 and was, in part, a reaction to my Quartet of 2013 in which I changed keys more frequently than in any previous work. In *Pulse*, I felt the need to stay put harmonically, and spin out smoother wind and string melodic lines in canon over a constant pulse in the electric bass and/or piano. From time to time, this constant pulse is accented differently through changing hand alternation patterns on the piano. All in all, it's a calmer, more contemplative piece. As is well known, composing is primarily a solitary activity. However, after completing *Pulse*, I sought out suggestions for improving the piece from Maggie Heskin, my editor at Boosey & Hawkes. She offered several ideas that helped motivate me to find my solution of hand alternation patterns mentioned above. I want to thank Maggie for her thoughtful and generous help. *Pulse* was commissioned by Carnegie Hall, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Music Director Gustavo Dudamel, the Barbican, Kölner Philharmonie / KölnMusik, and Philharmonie de Paris.

—Steve Reich

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE (ICE)

Steven Schick, *Conductor and Artist-in-Residence*

Rachel Beetz, *flute*

Alice Teyssier, *flute and soprano*

Campbell MacDonald, *clarinet*

Joshua Rubin, *clarinet*

Ross Karre, *percussion*

Greg Chudzik, *electric bass*

Cory Smythe, *piano*

Jennifer Curtis, *violin*

Gabriela Diaz, *violin*

John Marcus, *violin*

Josh Modney, *violin*

Kyle Armbrust, *viola*

Wendy Richman, *viola*

Michael Nicolas, *cello*

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