



Omaggio a Berio

Saturday, June 5, 2004, 8:30 pm
Community Music Center
544 Capp Street, San Francisco

Program

Sequenza I (1958) for flute

Diane Grubbe, flute

Sequenza VII (1969) for oboe

Kyle Bruckmann, oboe

O King (1968) for voice and five players

Hadley McCarroll, soprano

Diane Grubbe, flute

Matt Ingalls, clarinet

Mark Chung, violin

Erik Ulman, violin

Christopher Jones, piano

David Bithell, conductor

Sequenza V (1965) for trombone

Toyaji Tomita, trombone

Interval

Laborintus III (1954-2004) for voices, instruments, and electronics

music by Luciano Berio, David Bithell, Christopher Burns, Dntel, Matt Ingalls, Gustav Mahler, Photek, Franz Schubert, and the sfSound Group

texts by Samuel Beckett, Luciano Berio, Dante, T. S. Eliot, Paul Griffiths, Ezra Pound, and Eduardo Sanguinetti

David Bithell, trumpet; Kyle Bruckmann, oboe;

Christopher Burns, electronics / reciter; Mark Chung, violin;

Florian Conzetti, percussion; Diane Grubbe, flute;

Karen Hall, soprano; Matt Ingalls, clarinets;

John Ingle, soprano saxophone; Christopher Jones, piano;

Hadley McCarroll, soprano;

Toyaji Tomita, trombone; Erik Ulman, violin

Please turn off cell phones, pagers, and other
noisemaking devices prior to the performance.

Sequenza I for solo flute (1958)

Sequenza I has as its starting point a sequence of harmonic fields that generate, in the most strongly characterized ways, other musical functions. Within the work an essentially harmonic discourse, in constant evolution, is developed melodically. It was my intention to suggest, through the maximum speed of transformation, concentration and alternation of differing sound characters and differing figures, a polyphonic type of listening. The codes governing the Baroque era allowed one to write a fugue in two parts for a solo flute. Nowadays, when writing for monodic instruments, the relationship between explicit and implicit, real and virtual polyphony has to be invented anew, and stands at the crux of musical creativity.

Sequenza I was written in 1958 for Severino Gazzelloni.

- Luciano Berio

Sequenza VII for solo oboe (1969)

Sequenza VII is inhabited by a sort of permanent conflict - for me a very expressive and sometimes dramatic one - between the extreme velocity of the instrumental articulations and the slowness of the musical processes that sustain the work's progress, such as a certain fixedness of registers, the prolonged absence of certain notes and the increasingly insistent presence of certain intervals (the perfect fifth, for example, which is not without memories of the cor anglais in *Tristan*).

With *Sequenza VII* (as with the *Sequenzas* for flute, trombone, clarinet, trumpet, and bassoon) I continue my search for a virtual polyphony. In this *Sequenza* the solo part is placed in perspective, as it were "analyzed" by the constant presence of a "tonic," a B natural, that may be played, pianissimo, by any other instrument off stage. *Sequenza VII* was written in 1969 for Heinz Holliger.

- Luciano Berio

O King for chamber ensemble (1968)

A tribute to the memory of Martin Luther King. The text of the work is composed entirely of phonemes from the slain civil rights leader's name; over the course of the piece they gradually coalesce until the name is clearly presented. *O King* was later expanded into a version for eight voices and orchestra, which became the second movement of *Sinfonia* (1969).

- Christopher Burns

Sequenza V for solo trombone (1965)

Sequenza V, for trombone, can be understood as a study in the superposition of musical gestures and actions: the performer combines and mutually transforms the sound of his voice and the sound proper to his instrument; in other words, he has to undertake two actions simultaneously: playing and singing. It's no easy matter coordinating these two actions, and for the piece to work, the intervals between voice and instrument must be scrupulously respected: that is the only way to achieve the degree of transformation required (vocalization of the instrument and "instrumentalization" of the voice) and to establish a material that lends itself to further, and always simultaneous levels of transformation.

As in *Sequenza III* for voice, I tried in *Sequenza V* to develop a musical commentary on the relations between the virtuoso and his instrument, separating out elements of behavior in order to reconstitute them, in a transformed state, as musical units. *Sequenza V* can thus also be heard and seen as a theater of vocal and instrumental gesture. What weaves its way in and out of *Sequenza V* is the memory of Grock (Adriano Wettach), the last of the great clowns. Grock was our neighbor in Oneglia: he lived in a strange and complicated villa on the hillside, set in a sort of Oriental garden with little pagodas, pools, streams, and weeping willows. Often I and some of my school friends would climb over the gates to steal oranges and mandarins from his garden. When I was a child, the fact that he was my neighbor, that his name was all too familiar, and that the grown-ups seemed to take little notice of him, prevented me from understanding his genius. Only later (when I was about eleven) did I have the opportunity to attend one of his performances, in the Teatro Cavour at Porto Maurizio, and then I did understand. During one of his complicated and eminently musical numbers, just once in the course of the evening, he unexpectedly interrupted his routine, fixed his audience with a disarming look, and asked "warum?" (why?) I didn't know whether to laugh or cry and I wanted to do both. After that, I didn't steal any more oranges from his garden.

Sequenza V, written in 1965 for Stuart Dempster, is intended as a homage to Grock and to the English version of his *warum* - why - which is the generative nucleus of the piece.

-Luciano Berio

Hitchhiking between Oakland and Seattle, WA, 1975, taking lessons with Stu Dempster to learn his repertoire. Researching Grock - autobiography, pictures, testimonials. Would his mask help me to understand his character? What's the subtext? (Pourquoi pourquoi? Il n'y a pas pourquoi!) Searching for Grock in Paris. the old clown. the new mimes. Pinok & Matho. Performing in the streets. entertaining children. Starved for nature. Where's

wilderness. Twenty-five years after my last, 128th performance I return to the place I started and see it for the first time.

- Toyoji Tomita

Laborintus III (1954-2004)

Laborintus III is a collaborative work created for tonight's performance based on Berio's *Laborintus II* (1965) for voices, instruments, and tape with text by Edoardo Sanguineti. Drawing inspiration from Berio's compositions involving postmodern collages and recontextualizations of older works, we have taken *Laborintus II* as a formal skeleton and then added elements from over twenty-five other Berio works across this 45 minute performance. Although Berio is the source of virtually all the material for *Laborintus III*, it is our goal to create something genuinely original that no individual sfSoundGroup member, nor Berio himself, would create on his or her own. As in Berio's most notorious collage-based composition, the "In ruhig fliessender Bewegung" movement of *Sinfonia*, it is not required (or even possible!) to identify all the excerpts in order to enjoy the performance.

"And when they ask, why all this, for it is not easy to find an answer."

It started with the desire to perform *Laborintus II*, as it is an almost a perfect piece for the sfSoundGroup: elements of improvisation, popular music, and electronics; its connection to Mills College (premiered at Mills in 1967 and is mentioned in the text); and an instrumentation that relates well to our core group of players. However, given the large number of instrumentalists and vocalists the piece requires, it was not practical for us to perform the work as originally written. What then to do? We had attempted other "radical transcriptions" in the recent past: Ligeti's *Ten Pieces for Woodwind Quintet* transformed into eight text-instruction pieces for a mixed wind and brass quartet, Varese's *Octandre* reduced to a "Septandre", and Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano* transcribed for instrumental ensemble. Given Berio's own predilection for transcription and other forms of musical archaeology, *Laborintus II* seemed like a prime candidate for a similar project. Then Berio passed away last year, and we thought it appropriate to create an "Omaggio a Berio" that included many other works from his career. Combining all this with inspirations from recent performances of Anthony Braxton's music, we were well on our way before realizing that this concert was not only going to be an homage to Berio, but also a summary of many of our own interests synthesized into a single work!

Works which figure in *Laborintus III* include:

Laborintus II for voices, instruments, and tape [1965]
Agnus for voices and clarinets [1971]
Autre Fois for flute, clarinet, and harp [1971]
Chamber Music for voice, clarinet, cello, and harp [1954]
Chemins II for viola and ensemble [1972]
Circles for voice, harp, and two percussionists [1960]
Coro for voices and instruments [1976]
Cries of London for voices [1973]
Erdenklavier for solo piano [1969]
Epifanie for voice and orchestra [1965]
Folk Songs for chamber ensemble [1968]
Gesti for solo recorder [1968]
Momenti for tape [1960]
Gesti for solo recorder [1968]
Momenti for tape [1960]
O King for voice and five players [1968]
Opus Number Zoo for woodwind quintet [1951]
Passagio for voices and chamber orchestra [1962]
Points on a curve to find... for piano and 23 instruments [1974]
Re-call for chamber orchestra [1995]
Rendering for orchestra [1990]
Serenata No. 1 for flute and 14 instruments [1957]
Sequenza I for solo flute [1958]
Sequenza III for solo voice [1966]
Sequenza V for solo trombone [1965]
Sequenza VII for solo oboe [1969]
Sequenza VIIIb for solo saxophone [1969]
Sinfonia for eight voices and orchestra [1969]
Still for orchestra [1973]
Thema - Omaggio a Joyce for tape [1958]
Violin Duos [1979-83]
Visage for tape [1961]
Selected writings and interviews

Featured performers in tonight's concert:

Oboist **Kyle Bruckmann** has recently relocated to San Francisco from Chicago, where he had lived since 1996. He became a fixture in that city's thriving experimental music scene, collaborating regularly with many of the most creative visiting and resident improvisers and sound artists, including Jim Baker, Fred Lonberg-Holm, Jeb Bishop, Michael Zerang, Guillermo Gregorio, Scott Rosenberg, Bob Marsh, and Olivia Block. National and European tours have brought him into contact with the likes of

Polwechsel, Bhub Rainey, Greg Kelley, Guiseppe Ielasi, Boris Hauf, Larry Marotta, Matt Ingalls, Karen Stackpole, Ernesto Diaz-Infante, Dan Plonsey, and John Shiurba. Ongoing affiliations include EKG (an electroacoustic duo with Ernst Karel), the quintet Wrack, new music specialists Ensemble Noamnesia, and the experimental punk monstrosity Lozenge.

Diane Grubbe has appeared as a soloist with orchestras in the US and Europe including the Calabaras Chamber Orchestra in Southern California, with whom she recorded the Vivaldi Piccolo Concerto for their CD *The Baroque Concerto*. As an orchestra flutist, Ms. Grubbe freelances in the San Francisco Bay Area, performing with many groups including the Vallejo Symphony, Pocket Opera, Napa Valley Symphony and Lamplighters. Contemporary music performances include the US premiere of John Wolf Brennan's solo flute piece, *Drei ver-flix-te Stücke*, and appearances in the recent retrospective of Pauline Oliveros' work where she performed *Trio for Flute, Piano and Page Turner* with Sarah Cahill and Monique Buzzarté. Ms. Grubbe is a graduate of San Francisco State University and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Toyaji Tomita studied trombone at the Juilliard School of Music and the Curtis Institute of Music, and studied the didjeridu with Stuart Dempster. In 1976 he won the First Prize in the Gaudeamus International competition for Interpreters of Modern Music in Rotterdam, Holland. Living in Paris, France for the next three years, he toured Europe extensively both as a soloist and as a member of the Ensemble Musique Vivante, Diego Masson director. He received an M.F.A. in electronic composition from Mills College in 1986. He is a co-founder of the Mills College Didjeridu Ensemble.

We gratefully acknowledge Luciano Chessa, Annamaria Lelli, and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura San Francisco for their support of this concert. Thanks also to CNMAT for the loan of rehearsal space and equipment, CCRMA for the sound system, and the UC-Berkeley, Stanford, and Mills College Libraries for the stack of scores required to make *Laborintus III*.

Please join us for a reception immediately following the concert.

On this one year anniversary of his death, we dedicate tonight's concert to the memory of our friend and sfSoundGroup bassist Matthew Sperry.

Upcoming sfSoundSeries concerts:

Tuesday, July 20, 8 pm

The Oakland Box Theater
1928 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland

A showcase of works-in-progress, compositions, and improvisations by the sfSoundGroup.

Saturday, August 7, 8 pm

Community Music Center
544 Capp Street, San Francisco

Classic minimalist and process compositions by Louis Andriessen, Philip Glass, Alvin Lucier, and Steve Reich.

Saturday, August 28, 8 pm

Community Music Center
544 Capp Street, San Francisco

The second in our series of paired solo recitals: Australian flautist and "new complexity" specialist Kathleen Gallagher, and local virtuoso oboist, improviser, and composer Kyle Bruckmann.

Saturday, September 25, 8 pm

Community Music Center
544 Capp Street, San Francisco

A variety of approaches to contemporary music, including Iannis Xenakis' *Epei*, Christopher Burns' *Maxwell's Demon*, and game pieces by John Zorn.

<http://www.sfsound.org/series/series@sfsound.org>