

DONALD BERMAN piano

(le) poisson rouge, nyc

March 1, 2009 7pm



WHEN BRAHMA SLEEPS

Electro-Acoustic works for piano

when
BRAHMA
sleeps

I was raised on pop and electronic music. Saturday mornings I woke up my older brother to borrow his “Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass Greatest Hits” album so many times that he finally just gave it to me. I spent two hours improvising on its basic chord progressions for every hour of Kuhlau Sonatinas. My first exposure to Bizet’s Carmen was through the album “Everything you always wanted to hear on the Moog (but were afraid to ask for)”. That LP’s track of Lecuona’s Malagueña was my early tour de force at the piano. I then could only imagine its colors as hues of electronica. –db

Program

MARK WINGATE b.1955

Remember Seven 2003 New York Premiere

PRELUDE

PART ONE

MARK WINGATE

Sombras for piano and digital delay 1995 New York Premiere

SU LIAN TAN b.1964

U-Don Rock 2007 New York Premiere

ERIC MOE b.1954

Dance of the Honey Monkey 1999

Where Branched Thoughts Murmur in the Wind 2000

Hey Mr. Drummachine Man for piano and boombox 2004

INTERLUDE

MARK WINGATE

Welcome to Medicare! 2007 New York Premiere

PART TWO

ERIC CHASALOW b.1955

Due (Cinta)mani for piano and electronic tape 2002 New York Premiere

I Three Symbolic Gestures

II Cloudbands

DAVID RAKOWSKI b.1958

Etude No. 71 Chase for piano and celesta 2006 New York Premiere

Etude No. 72 Dorian Blue 2006 New York Premiere

MARK WINGATE

When Brahma Sleeps for piano and processor 2007 New York Premiere

This program is made possible in part by the argosy fund
For contemporary music.

Titles by Sarah Jane Lapp

Notes on the music

MARK WINGATE

Remember Seven

Remember Seven opens with improvisations sung by Srini Rajagopalan. These are manipulated electronically by a variety of multi-channelled prestidigitations. There are three sections: a meditative introduction, a quasi-violent percussive middle movement, and a serene exploration of low and dark vocal registers as the music recedes.

MARK WINGATE

Sombras for piano and digital delay

Sombra is Spanish for “shadow” and that describes the effect of the live sound processing in these three pieces. Each piano keystroke is picked up by microphones, sonically delayed and transposed, and sent back through loudspeakers. This creates an overlay of notes, in this case a multiplex of rhythms tangled in Latin, from mombo to samba to rumba. For every step (or misstep) of the player, he gets three or four extra beats (or trip-ups).

SU LIAN TAN

U-Don Rock

Su Tan eclecticism crafts a mini biography about the performer of U-Don Rock. The composition puts the pianist on “shuffle-mode” as the music bounces from genre to genre through narrow crevices and mini-improvs: from Buddhist bell-ringing to Las Vegas vamps; Roger Williams to Wiliam Purcell; Zeppelin to Feldman; and gangsta rap to the Debussian textures that lovingly absorb the multi-varied idioms. Toward its conclusion, American ragtime, European baroque invention, and Asian pentatonic scales all wink at each other.

ERIC MOE

Dance of the Honey Monkey

The title refers to the trickster monkey-god Hanuman of the Sanskrit epic Ramayana, who celebrates his successful reconnaissance of the demons’ stronghold by raiding the honey gardens of the monkey king. His victory lap is depicted by rhythms suffused with the syncopations of bebop and the additive beats of African music. Much is made of contrasting spasms: a twitching head - a more continuous flow - a supple tail.

Notes on the music

ERIC MOE

Where Branched Thoughts Murmur in the Wind

An ethereal meditative dance, inspired by celestial sirens of Greek mythology, creatures responsible for the music of the spheres and for conveying the souls of the dead. The title is from Keats’ “Ode to Psyche”: *Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane In some untrodden region of my mind, Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain, Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind...*

ERIC MOE

Hey Mr. Drummachine Man for piano and boombox

Is it possible to write a good piece to a pseudo-canned drumbeat? Hey Mr.Drummachine Man attempts to answer this question in seven actionpacked minutes. The music is somewhat picaresque (it’s tempting to see what you can get away with having a steady groove), but the relationship between piano and “drums” morphs as the piece evolves.

MARK WINGATE

Welcome to Medicare!

A hellish netherworld experienced in low fidelity through an onerous invention known as the “automated speech system.”

ERIC CHASALOW

Due (Cinta)mani for piano and electronic tape

I Three Symbolic Gestures

II Cloudbands

The origin of the cintamani pattern, three flaming pearls placed over sea waves, is uncertain, but it most likely has an ancient Buddhist origin. The lines representing the waves might instead connote tiger stripes or clouds. Cintamani appear typically in the decorative arts of China, India, Tibet, and the Ottoman Empire, usually in textiles, carpets, and ceramics. Here, Chasalow uses the image to describe an integral pairing of musical gesture to pianist hands (mani). The soloist plays to a fixed tape part, joining in open partnership with inexorable time.

Notes on the music

DAVID RAKOWSKI

Etude No. 71 Chase for piano and celesta

The idea behind the commision for this piece came out of Erroll Garner’s arch improvisations on piano and celesta. Here, Davy Rakowski sets the two keyboards forth in a stream of sixteenth notes embedded with longer lines interrupted by upward-moving chorales. On occasion, the streams of sixteenth notes go out of phase, hence the “Chase” as they go back in phase.

DAVID RAKOWSKI

Etude No. 72 Dorian Blue

This etude sets an ancient melody (in dorian mode) attributed to Ovadia Ha-Ger, a 12th c. Jewish mystic whose writings were found on a scroll in the Cairo Genizah in 1917. He was born in Italy and studied in Baghdad and Damascus. His chant “Wa-eda Ma” intones “And I know what I shall say in the gates. And what shall I say And what will you answer? Teach me!” As it’s an etude, right hand flourishes ornament the tune, gradually coming close to overwhelming it.

MARK WINGATE

When Brahma Sleeps for piano and computer processor

Hindu historical literatures place human existence in the context of repeating time cycles called yugas and kalpas, lasting hundreds of millions of years. The universe is said to exist for a lifetime of Brahma, the creator.

Outside of the three planetary systems, the four Yugas multiplied
by one thousand comprise one day on the planet of Brahma.

A similar period comprises a night of Brahma, in which the creator
of the universe goes to sleep.

(Srimad Bhagavatam, Canto 3, Chapter 11, Text 22)



DONALD
BERMAN
PIANO

donaldbermanpiano.com

press contact:

Kathryn King Media
4089 Pine Meadows Way
Pebble Beach, CA 93953
831.620.1332 tel
831.417.6444 fax
info@kathrynkingmedia.com