

From Different Points

New Music and Media Works

by American and Czech Composers

Thursday, June 16, 2011
Školská 28: Komunikační prostor
Školská 28, 110 00 Praha-1

- PROGRAM -

Four Short Pieces (1982) by Laurence Sherr
David Danel, violin

Four Short Pieces was composed during my graduate studies at the University of Illinois. My goal was to explore various possibilities of writing for the solo violin while creating movements that were brief yet musically coherent. Each movement has a different character, expressed in the first two movements by the respective tempo indications *Molto espressivo* and *Dramatically*. The third movement features pizzicato passages with subtle timbral shadings. The final movement starts with quiet yet intense motion, and builds to a final burst of energy. The work shared the Top Prize in the Association for the Promotion of New Music Composition Competition in New York City in 2009.

Hommage to Alois Hába by Ivan Boreš

Ivan Boreš, quarter-tone guitar

Confession, Op. 122 (2003) by Tomáš Svoboda - First Performance
Jan Mach, clarinet

This is a melancholic solo movement in an atonal serial style, which suggests deep philosophical thoughts. Irregular rubato tempi express agitated emotions underlying the loneliness intrinsic to the velvet voice of clarinet. The soloist is given the freedom to interpret the tempi outside the metronome markings, offered only as a general suggestion.

Glass Light by Michal Rataj

Acousmatic music with sounds of light observed through pieces of light...

Sonic Situations by Ivan Boreš and Michal Rataj

Sonic engagements for quarter tone guitar and live electronics.

Mumma's Incredible Sinking Violin (2011) by Dan Senn - First Performance
for voice, lyde in D, violin and pre-recorded violin sounds

Diana Aivia, soprano; Lýdia Janičkovičová, violin; Dan Senn, lyde

Completed recently in Prague, this work began with several weeks of recording my mother's childhood violin, using extended techniques, back in Portland. All four strings of the violin were tuned to the fundamental of the lyde, a found instrument, which is about a quarter-tone flat of a D-natural. The text and vocal parts were written in Prague, at the same time, with the live violin and lyde parts added last. Perhaps my simplest piece ever, the work envisions the singer atop a sinking violin which has just pushed off from rocky shores. The work is symbolically autobiographical.

Knocking Heads with Kafka (2011) by Dan Senn - First Performance
for kinetic sound sculpture, ambient sound and video

This is the performance version of a gallery work which uses a "surface penduling" mounted on construction wood found here in Prague. The projection is of a green bug, like that in Kafka's short novel *Metamorphosis*, which awakens from a slumber, looks around, takes a pee, and begins searching for a place to hide. The sculpture was recently part of an exhibition at Galerie ve Sklepě, in Pohořelec, in May and June. The video was shot nearby in Břevnov in 2008.

Midnight Dance (2009) by Laurence Sherr
David Danel, violin

Violinist Piotr Szewczyk requested a "short, exciting, innovative" solo violin work for his Violin Futura Project. Considering these guidelines while reviewing his virtuosic online videos led to many compositional choices. Since Szewczyk and I both have Polish ancestry (Szereszewski was my family name prior to my father's immigration) influences also came from Eastern European folk dance styles. In the work, dances with patterns of asymmetrical beats contrast with sections of *bariolage*, where rapid notes on alternating strings create an undulating mosaic of timbre.

- COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES -

Tomáš Svoboda: Born in Paris of Czech parents, December 6, 1939, Tomáš composed his first opus at age 9 and was admitted to the Prague Conservatory 5 years later as its youngest student. By 1962, after graduating from the Conservatory with degrees in percussion, composition and conducting, numerous performances and radio broadcasts of his music brought national recognition to Svoboda, clearly establishing him as Czechoslovakia's most important young composer. In 1964, the Svoboda family departed Czechoslovakia and settled in the United States, where Svoboda enrolled at the Univ. of Southern California in 1966, graduating 2 years later with honors. In 1981, first publication of his music brought forth a front cover tribute to Tomas Svoboda by the highly respected PIANO QUARTERLY. In 1985, Svoboda was commissioned to write his CHORALE in E flat, for Piano Quintet, Op. 118 for Aaron Copland's 85th birthday celebration in New York. In July 2003, the Oregon Symphony Orchestra released an "All-Svoboda" orchestral CD, containing "Overture of the Season", "Symphony No. 1 (of Nature)" and "Marimba

Concerto", which was named in a GRAMMY AWARD nomination: "Best Instrumental Soloist With Orchestra"; Niel DePonte, marimba; James DePreist, conductor. To date, 21 CDs have been released with 43 works by Svoboda on them. During the 2008-09 season, major orchestral performances include Concerto for Two Violins and Strings, Op.191 with the Dayton Philharmonic; and the World Premiere performances of Svoboda's commissioned VORTEX for Orchestra, Op. 197 with the Oregon Symphony Orchestra.

Michal Rataj (1975) is assistant professor of electroacoustic music at the Academy of Performing Arts, Prague. He studied musicology (Charles University, Prague) and composition (Academy of Performing Arts, Prague) with prof. Ivan Kurz and prof. Milan Slavický. He also went to study in Egham (UK) and Berlin (D) and as a Fulbright Scholar he conducted research in Center For New Music And Audio Technologies at University of California, Berkeley, CA in the academic year 2007 - 2008. He works also as a radio producer for acoustic arts at Czech Radio. He is a member of the EBU Ars Acustica Group, his music has been broadcast worldwide and performed throughout Europe and in the USA.

Ivan Boreš (1976) was self-taught until the age of 25. He then studied for four-years at the Conservatoire in České Budějovice specializing in guitar under the tutelage of Emanuel Kúmell and then in music composition with Radek Rejšek and Jiří Churáček. He also studied for four years in the class of prof. Štěpán Rak at Academy of Performing Arts, Prague. Most of his concerts consist of his own music for guitar. His piece Nocturno op.2 won the Composer competition of PRO GUITARRA in 2007. He is an active guitarist performing chamber as well as solo synchronical compositions often using a quarter-tone and fretless guitars. Currently he is publishing a complete guitar recital which is called the "Obraz prvý."

Laurence Sherr (1953) is Composer-in-Residence at Kennesaw State University in Atlanta, USA. Awards include top prizes in the Delius Composition Contest and the Classical Lounge Composition Competition. Ein-Klang in Europe and Capstone Records in the USA have released CDs with his compositions. International performances have occurred in Austria, Holland, Switzerland, Japan, Canada, Mexico and Cuba. Holocaust memorial performances in Germany and the USA have engendered education, reconciliation, and healing. The Florida State University treatise "Laurence Sherr: Chamber Music for Flute" examines his contributions. Dr. Sherr is the founder and clarinetist of the klezmer band Oy Klezmer!. While in Prague, Sherr will present the lecture-recital "Shoah Memorial Music" on 20 June at the Jewish Museum, and a Shoah Remembrance Concert at the Church of St. Lawrence, Hellichova 18, on 28 June.

Dan Senn (1951) is an intermedia artist in the fluxes tradition with strong links to the work of John Cage. His art encompasses kinetic sound sculpture, experimental and documentary film, but is most pervasively influenced by his work as a composer of classical music. He has a doctorate in music composition (minor area, ceramic sculpture) from the University of Illinois-Urbana. He has been a professor of music/art at Ball State University, Indiana, at the Canberra School of Music, Australia, and elsewhere. His music is published by Smith Publications of Baltimore with his sculptural instrument, media and compositional work repositied as part of the Sylvia Smith Archive at the University of Akron in Ohio. Dan lives and works as a professional artist in Portland, Oregon, and then in Prague where he is currently in the throws of organizing Echofluxe, a festival of composer-filmmaker presented work to be held at the Trafačka Arena in July (see Efemera-Ephemera.org).

Mumma's Incredible Sinking Violin

by Dan Senn

Floating slowly on Mumma's old violin.
Pushing away from these rocky shores.

Off on a flatted D[ee],
Sinking to a C[ee].
Floating so slowly
on top this sea.

Oo, ah, oo...

Life is so beautiful if you are free.

On top this violin,
listing to the left,
I'm off on a flatted D[ee].
Afloating atop a C[ee].
On top this sea.

List'ning deep within.
Following my heart.
Doing what is difficult.
Finding my bliss.

<repeat previous four lines>

Floating slowly
on top of Mumma's violin.
Moving away from those rocky shores.