

NEW SOUNDS AND MEDIA

SOUND AND SILENCE

Compositions by Dr. David K. Barton

With Guest Artists

Phillip A. Ray, Piano

Boyd Nutting, Composer

PLATO & the Western Tradition

A Postmodern Improvisation Ensemble

A presentation of

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTH BEND

Division of the Arts

Daniel Cohen, Chancellor

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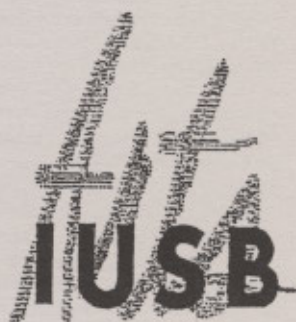
Eight o'clock

Saturday, September 12, 1992

Indiana University South Bend

Campus Auditorium

Third Program, 1992-93 Season



Notes

"The Great American Fluorescent Bassoon Concerto" was originally my "Trio for Solo Bassoon and Tape Delay System." The score was painted with fluorescent paints on a sheet of acetate, which hung between the performer and the audience. The work was premiered in November, 1969, at the premiere performance of The California Time Machine, A New Music Performance Group, at the University of California, Santa Barbara and was subsequently performed at UC Santa Cruz and UC Davis. However, at a performance at Mills College in Oakland in late January, 1970, the tape delay system, which had worked properly in the rehearsal, didn't work in the performance. In frustration, I left the stage, got my fluorescent paints, and created the work as it now exists. This version has been performed in Vancouver, Holland, and several times in California. I decided to perform what is for me a very toxic piece for two reasons: I have never done this work in the Midwest; and, since it is a kind of trope on John Cage's very famous piece "4'33", it seems appropriate to program it on a concert which is intended to be a tribute to this remarkable American composer. This is the last performance of this piece.

"The Dream of Orestes" and "Eumenides" are both independent compositions and preliminary studies for a major theatrical project now underway at IUSB -- the production of "The House of Atreus," by Warren Pepperdine, which will be staged by Theatre IUSB in Fall, 1994. "Atreus" is an updating of "The Orestia," the cycle of three ancient Greek tragedies on the murder of Agamemnon by his wife, Clytemestra, her subsequent murder by her son Orestes, and the pursuit of Orestes by the vengeful Furies, the Eumenides.

"The Dream of Orestes" integrates two technologies. The first is the marvelously complex and expressive mechanical technology of the Bösendorfer Imperial Grand Piano; the second is the electronic technology of the Yamaha SPX900 Digital Effects Processor. The score has this epigraph:

Orestes, at the end of all time, revisits the statue of Athena.

Falling into a deep sleep, he dreams of the past -- his and ours.

The piece is dedicated to my student, my friend, and my musical colleague, Phillip Ray; Mr. Ray dedicates this evening's performance of the piece to the memory of John Cage.

"Eumenides" -- the Greek name for the Furies, the demonic beings who hunted down malefactors and hounded them to justice. This piece also integrates a conventional musical instrument -- the human voice -- with new technology; in this case, with an Amiga-based digital sound sampling program. The piece is also somewhat unusual in that it is a collaborative composition; while the sounds stored in the computer are samples of my voice, Mr. Nutting has composed the layer of the piece which uses these samples. I have composed the live vocal parts, and the background sounds, which are generated on digital synthesizers and controlled using an Atari-based sequencer program.

The vocal sounds used for both the samples and the live vocal parts are from the repertoire of Extended Vocal Techniques (EVT). EVT is a musical rethinking of the potential of the human voice, which has been developing since the late 1940s; some of the pioneers of this exploration have been Olivier Messiaen, Luciano Berio, John Cage, and, more recently, Trevor Wishart. Among the techniques which I used in "Eumenides" are:

Reinforced Harmonics: producing a vocal drone, and creating audible pitches above that tone which are members of the harmonic spectrum or overtone series of the drone pitch. Undertone Singing: derived from Tibetan chant, this technique produces very low octaves -- I have reached the Bb two octaves below middle C using this technique. Vocal Fry: a controlled, mild scream in which the vocal chords produce more than one pitch. Aspiration: emphasized airy intakes and outflows of breath.

The use of recording or photographic devices at a concert in any auditorium of IUSB is forbidden. Eating, drinking or smoking at such events is also prohibited. Attendance by children under the age of responsible behavior is discouraged.

Program

The Great American Fluorescent Bassoon Concerto
(1969-70)

David K. Barton, Bassoon

The Dream of Orestes, for Piano and Effects Processor
(1992)

Phillip A. Ray, Piano

Eumenides, for Voice, Sampler, and Ambient Sounds
(1992)

David K. Barton, Voice

Boyd Nutting, Sampler

Intermission

Passing On, Improvisation #383

PLATO & the Western Tradition

A Postmodern Improvisation Ensemble

David K. Barton, Narration

Phillip A. Ray, Prepared Piano

Evie Barton, Movement

Boyd Nutting, Found Objects and Video Processing

Jon Yazell, Camera

In Memorium John Cage, 1912-1992

NOTES CONTINUED: The samples were created and stored in Boyd's Amiga between Midnight and 2:30 A.M. on August 24, 1992. The sampler layer of the piece was then composed, and the live voice part added after that. EVT rely heavily upon amplification -- some of the sounds are inaudible without it -- and this particular work also uses effects processing. I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the financial support of the Division of the Arts, IUSB, which enabled me to attend the Voices of the Future Conference at the University of Illinois last June; while my use of EVT dates back many years, what I gained from that experience has been invaluable. This score bears the inscription: "In Memorium Olivier Messiaen."

"Passing On" is an improvisation dedicated to the memory of John Cage, who passed away on August 12, 1992. The scenario for this improvisation links the activity of each of us to some aspect of Cage's art and music: I will be telling stories and making statements, as Cage did in "Variations IV" and other works; Phil will be playing a piano prepared according to the instructions of Cage's "Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano"; Boyd will be making noises with "found objects," as Cage did on numerous occasions; and Evie will be dancing without necessarily connecting her movements to the music -- "Why should the dance and the music have anything to do with each other?" -- John Cage and Merce Cunningham.

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