

René Mogensen presents a concert of current works:

René Mogensen

Five Seasons

for solo saxophones and electronics

and

Comedy of Circles

a duet with

Esther Lamneck

on clarinet and tárogató

Thursday, March 23rd, 2000 at 7:30 pm
at the Danish Contemporary Art Gallery
525 West 22nd Street, New York City.

The third annual concert of René Mogensen's works at
the DCA Gallery

The Program:

Five Seasons:

(by René Mogensen)

1. *Autumn Rune Song*

2. *Winter Waves II*

3. *Place Rum Chamber: Lyd*

Room 1

Room 2

Room 3

4. *Spring*

Decomposition II

(with text by Lars Aagaard-Mogensen)

Fem Årstider:

Efterårets Runesang

Vinter Bølger II

Forårets

Kompost Komposition II

5. Comedy of Circles

(by René Mogensen and Esther Lamneck)

Five Seasons

by René Mogensen

Autumn Rune Song

The beginning - ominous creation - unexpected growth: An apparition constructed entirely of fragments of saxophone sounds, self-contained, and orchestrated electronically. There is a counterpoint of pitch space and stereo space, both progressing in time, and the driving force is the beingness of sound. My instrument is echoed and transformed by the electronic immersion.

A song without words from the runes in my mind lives in the beginning. Residue from the past or just a fantasy? Regardless, a creative process in which overwhelming turbulence seems to occur in an instance also occupied by serenity. These opposites could not be identical, but are simultaneous, and perhaps time is the only real conveyor of identity. Contradiction is a key to creation. Could time exist without the force of opposites in simultaneity?

If you listen, you will hear the runes that I play - they are yours and mine - like the waves, the rooms that we enter, the gift of early spring, or a smile. In the runes are those who have passed away, and those who are yet to come. The process of creation is that with which I teach and learn - a simultaneity always present in this art.

Winter Waves II

An aural winter landscape emerges, in which the deconstructed and decomposed *Waves* is embedded, and from which *Waves* reappears: Forgotten, remembered, and recomposed. A configurational collage is created. Strands, of otherwise disparate references in musical fragments from *Waves*, fuse in the sonic ether.

A style collage was bound together in *Waves*, through its linear and chronological program associations. In *Winter Waves II*, this

linearity is replaced by stratification, which gives rise to conflict and contrast, and hereby a drama is heard. Music-semantic references are fragmented, intermingled and superimposed. In analogy: as the present contains a collage of the past, this work contains the parts of its' predecessors.

Some background information: I constructed the electronic part of *Winter Waves* at the Danish Institute for Electroacoustic Music in Århus, with samples from my 1996 recording of the piece *Waves*, with the addition of a collection of samples of gongs performed by Tom Beyer and saxophones performed by myself. I composed the score *Waves* for the modern dance production of the same title by the Klixbull Dance Co. in New York City. I manipulated fragments of this deconstructed work as the building blocks for the collage construction of the new piece *Winter Waves*. Exploring the idea of a sound image being a collage was fueled at least in part by the predominance of this type of form in city life - submersion in a large-scale man-made collage of sounds.

The score for *Waves* was designed to accompany, and also interact as a partner to the choreography of Louise Klixbull. *Waves* tells a story of struggle, through many past ages. The different segments of the music in *Waves* refer, or give associations to, various time periods in western history, presented in a linear chronology, from past to present. A conglomeration of styles was bound together in *Waves* through its linear, chronological program associations. In *Winter Waves*, this linearity in reference is deconstructed. Stylistic areas are fragmented and recombined while they are all treated as equals - as sound. The different time periods intermingle and are superimposed, so all the time periods occur simultaneously, throughout the duration of the piece. The present contains a collage of the past, manipulated by consciousness in the present. This simultaneity of temporal reference then is a powerful expression of the present, the existence of now - a reflection of structure that is preeminent in our human-made surroundings.

Again: The electronic developments of the gong and saxophone samples was used to generate an the aural winter landscape, in which the decomposed *Waves* is embedded, and from which it appears: forgotten, remembered, and recomposed. This compression and simultaneity of forms, by collage, in an aural "ether" exposes the present in the past to which the samples from *Waves* bear reference. It is at the same time a step in an artistic process, just as the season in which it was conceived is

part of the World's process. Simultaneously, this winter landscape has the vastness of a human built world, with the constant hum of machinery, the clatter on concrete, and the harshness of metal. The city environment of concrete, plastic, metal, and masses of people has the oppressing conflict of a winter storm. But it also has the invigorating property of a necessity in life.

Place Rum Chamber: Lyd - Solo

Three rooms, that are sonically created, engulf the performer and the audience. The music lives in these electronically produced localities, which exist by three elemental ideas: People, the past, and hope/loss. Three movements of this work are performed here:

Room 1: Prelude-After-Comedy

People. The interaction of noise and music? An old theme is developed. It's OK to laugh. Do we communicate?

Room 2: Persistent Memory of a Dance that becomes Soft in Time

The past. Datid eller fortid? Loops of water. Music is echoed and presounded by the space in which it lives. What do we know?

Room 3: Song from a Windmill in my Mind

Hope and loss. Endnu en runesang. The wind turns. What else is there to say? The ancient mill, driven by breaths - can we read the runes?

A famous, old windmill turns in my mind. It's blades are pushed by breaths that have travelled far, and they move my thoughts. Its circle challenges me. Another rune song. Seeds may be churned in the mill, or left to sprout or wither away. These are offerings.

Spring Decomposition II

An organic machine exists in this time, pulsating in two speakers. It is a complex being of simple apparition, which manages the production of a pulse innocently, without consciousness. This sound-

being is made of the sounds of wood, metal, air and water, from samples taken from my old apartment in Brooklyn and by a beach on the Atlantic Ocean.

The bitter text of *Delighted Lifelight*, by Lars Aagaard-Mogensen, is read by my voice, and the lively *Traveling Song* is played - together these give birth to a circus of sound. An transformed instrumental trio part, which I recorded during my residency at Mills College, is thrown in and out of the aural circus ring. The machine, the words, the music: Clowns have more fun. Rationality is expanded by humor.

Growth and decay are simultaneous, and in the instance that is the process, something appears that seems familiar but is unrecognizable - perhaps because it is always new. The machine provides a mechanical pulse, and the inevitable decay in time synchronization is a result.

There is a struggle - a persistent feeling of urgency - in the idea of productivity. There is a sorrow in the knowledge that everything shaped by the mind will be unshaped by time: It is the fear of death. There is peace in the knowledge of growth - a kind of rebirth.

Comedy of Circles

by René Mogensen and Esther Lamneck

A circular comedy gives cause for melancholy, but underneath the surface is the power of ancient voices, carried through many generations. This power lies in the balance of human will and acceptance of the world. Struggle imposes itself, but clarity, focus, and interaction result in the true creative force.

This piece has textures with a richness of rhythm and microtonal melody which, through the use of the tárogató, draws on the spirit and styles of Slavic folk music. The electronic part is constructed entirely from samples of a quartet recording which we did in Italy several years ago. A challenging piece to perform, and one of the fruits of the ongoing creative collaboration between Esther and myself.

More comments

The juxtapositions and superimpositions of contrasting elements is an important structural aspect in these works. Elements that might otherwise be perceived as being entirely musically contradictory will coexist and in fact form mutually dependant relationships. In the compositional process logic is found in these structures. The structures exist in time, while the logic is temporally independent.

Contradiction is a basis of expression, and of learning, and hence identifies a fuel of life. Balance in contradiction gives peace. The structures in the pieces are governed by an understanding of balance in contradictions. Structure in the world can be found through the understanding of balance in contrasts.

Color is achieved by the confrontation of dissimilar elements. Sound patterns, unburdened by ideologies of direction through musical tradition, can be shaped to include sounds with references to the music-cultural ideologies. A beautifully imperfect symmetry becomes clear. Creation becomes circular perhaps. Creation in art is conception within the medium(s) at hand.

Four genres of aural arts have interested me the most: new composition music, jazz, sound art, and text settings. My own musical thoughts take from all these genres, and to these materials I impose my personal dramatic sense. The expectations which I presume are a conglomeration of knowledge of these art forms. The proportions of each varies with each work. In a piece such as *Spring Decomposition II* these genres are embodied as individual entities within the work: These entities challenge each other, and it is often the resulting contrasts between these entities which becomes more powerful than the tension possible within any of the individual music types. In *Winter Waves II* a collection of music pieces, from diverse styles within jazz other contemporary music genres, are all concurrently present throughout the piece - various layers of the stratified whole are brought to the aural foreground in a counterpoint with a ethereal sound construction buildt of percussion and saxophone samples.

“Musicality” is an approach to the organization of materials within a medium or set of mediums. This basic way of thought can be



Birth Picture II, by René Mogensen
(1999, acrylic on canvas, 34”x44”)

applied to the organization of any kind of sound. Such an idea of musicality underlies all my works. Musicality is very important to our society, not the least as an alternative to the pacifier of consumerism which dominates the “popular” western culture.

These works could perhaps be perceived as provocations of popular and traditional culture, until the realization is made that these works in fact necessitate an acceptance of the conglomerate structural characteristics of our global society. With this, the works are invitations to expanded “thought models” which enable the perception of a “functional” harmony between elements that are often put apart, and designated as being separate.

René Mogensen