

Tonight's Composers

Positive Binding Factor

Whether waveshape, barnacle, pedestrian, or conifer, there's a common pulse through us all, and sometimes it's in $\frac{6}{4}$.

— Ed Herrmann

Three Minuets

I wrote this piece while very sick and unable to get out of bed. An old minuet I'd written 17 years ago kept going through my mind. I wondered what would happen if I wrote each part backwards, upside down and simultaneously backwards and upside down, and then combined the parts in each of the possible combinations. Of the 16 possible combinations, three seemed to work in a subversive kind of way.

— Elaine Schnaidt

Shadows

These are shadows of things which are a part of me: faith, music, words, love. . .

A shadow is a dark image of that upon which light is shining. The shadow can reproduce the shape of the thing itself exactly but not necessarily.

— Ramón González

Stillness Begets Time

This string quintet was written in 1984 and revised in 1988. The title refers to the emanation of time and the temporal from the contemplative activities of the intellect. This in no way implies the inferiority of time, only its origin and derived quality. The piece is in two movements, known only by their metronome markings ($\text{♩}=60$, and $\text{♩}=92$).

Musically, **Stillness Begets Time** concentrates on continuity of sound, the inherent richness of the stringed instruments, and the tenuous character of uncommitted melodies. A tip of the hat to three favorite male composers of mine: Messiaen, Stravinsky, and Berlioz (the first two are especially audible).

Also a particularly big thank you to those who supported this resuscitation, including the enthusiastic ensemble you hear tonight.

— Jennifer Rycenga Plonsey

James III, Part 3: "The Trinity" doesn't fall into any of the three categories of tragedy, comedy, or history. Instead, this work takes to its heart a great deal of the stumbling about in mythic times, relieved only by rambling melodies and the spotty lighting of both the furnaces of creation and of the fire delivery-man, Prometheus. We are rather proud of our new toaster oven, and we hope to be making toast and heating up leftovers for many years. The last t-oven had to be retired after the final glorious short. I will never forget the looks of surprise and wonder on our faces at the brilliant bloom of white with which that dedicated kitchen appliance expired. I would like to be able to tell you that we never used it again, but the truth is that we imagined for a week that nothing had gone seriously wrong—the alternative, in retrospect, being that the light was in fact a hierophany (that is, a display of the divine, akin, perhaps, to the burning bush). We tried to use it to make toast during that time, and wondered why only one side was getting done. Finally, somewhat irritated, we pushed it to the back of the counter where it wouldn't be so much in the way, and dug out an old toaster which was fine for everything but leftover pizza. Now we know that there are scientific explanations for everything, but we can't figure out why we had the audacity to both imagine that a toaster oven producing contained white light was by necessity of logic a divine revelation, and at the same time remain so blasé.

— Daniel Plonsey

This presence in the wilderness, more noumenal than phenomenal, ontic like a tiger's "pook," in *stream of consciousness*, this deeper book: Imagination

Composed cyclone I looked away
 when tigereye led me through and over sky
 the Milky Way I saw when returning and milky it is
 but that's not a poem or writing poetry anyway
 only celestial journey I ever took tiger was there is too
 tiger paws bounding about the earth animal
 without memory the great thread in a smile taking
 its time to unwind through each astral house nothing
 fashionable about this only toothy grin in the forest
 a growl on the roots of the tree of life nothing good
 nor evil about this climbing in the tree of life only
 animal the last animal with cubs a litter of fifty
 times fifty cubs in that tree purring the cosmic sound
 in soft resonance the mind humming along what
 you might call music verse volume I will think
 about it no it's not a poem or writing poetry was thought
 to be composed cyclone I looked away turned back
 was there dancing claws in the bark only
 tiger I ever followed in the forest deep
 across the river and what a leaf from the
 book I lost long ago in a classroom
 of sorrow of song of story of mind of
 love

— Stephen Mays

Flextets '88

Flextets are pieces of flexible scoring, instrumentation, and arrangement which are easily adaptable to Cafeteria conditions; i.e., dealing with unknown (and unknowable) musical forces. Tonight's version includes Trombone, Violoncello, Bass Clarinet/Clarinet, Electric Guitar, and Percussion. Flex #1 is based on a theme which was derived by placing a musical staff over the pattern of lights outside my window on a densely foggy night. The voices are quite independent. Simul 4 is a score of sound gestures with the trombone soloing on the "*simultaneities curve*". The stretchable-contractible/one-melody-fits-all canon is just that. Diction Trap first destroys syntax and then continues in different time frames. What can one say about You Don't Say?...

— Harald Dünnebier

Casting Coach

Come a little closer, girl—I'm not going to bite
 Be nice to a tired old man on a lonely night
 I could do so much for you—you're so lovely—gifted, too
 All you need's a guiding hand to show you what to do

How can I stop when you're driving me mad?
 You can't refuse when I've got it so bad

He turns off the engine and my hands are cold to touch
 I tell myself—savagely—that it doesn't mean that much
 Compared to what he promises, nasty moments such as these
 Will be things to laugh about when I am a star

What can I do this is my only chance—
 I'll close my eyes and it won't be so bad

I try to hide my sickness at the sight:
 Fish-belly white, zipper down
 His hands are warm, warm like a bloody bath
 Wet like a bad dream

When he entered I was tense: he didn't stop to woo me
 Suddenly dropped all pretense, as if he never knew me
 Aj! Aj! Aj! Aj!
 I bite my lips and scratch his back, quivering like a wire
 He digs in and picks up speed, taking it for desire
 Aj! Aj! Aj! Aj!

When I am a grown-up girl, I will show them all
 I will make them jump for me and kick them when they fall
 If only I could just forget why I'm feeling so upset—
 If only he would let me go so I could go and cry...

Over at last—why is my mouth so dry?
 I force my lips to form in a smile—
 He takes me home—he tells a feeble lie—
 He cannot meet my eyes.

Disclaimer #2:
 This is a true story.

— Mantra Ben-Ya'akov

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MORE!

The Composers' Cafeteria will present its next concert at some date in the future. Please sign mailing lists so that you may receive pleasing bulk mail.