

Todd Moellenberg
DMA I Solo Piano Recital
May 15, 2014 7pm
UCSD CPMC Concert Hall

Première Sonate (1946)

I. Lent - Beaucoup plus allant

II. Assez large - Rapide

Pierre Boulez

article 1 to 3 (2003)

[the]

[aleph]

[a]

Rozalie Hirs

Learning from the Laughing Man (premiere)

for piano and four-channel tape

Ori Talmon

-pause-

torsion (2008)

Katharina Rosenberger

Cantéyodjayâ (1949)

Olivier Messiaen

for Shayna

Composers' notes on the reverse side.

Notes from the Composers:

article 1 to 3 (2003) has three movements, entitled [the], [aleph] and [a].

These movements investigate the harmonic spectrum on fundamental note B, situated far below the piano range, as well as the properties of the grand piano:

[the] concerns itself with resonance properties of (the body and strings of) the grand piano

[aleph] is a meditation on the piano keyboard, the relative positioning of its keys, and on weightlessness

[a] is based on a small cell of Debussy's Prélude "Feu d'artifice"

Learning from the Laughing Man (2014)

In this piece the physical volume of the instrument's body stands for - and is being metaphorically treated as - the volume of the human mind. And in order to experience this from up close, the listener is placed "inside" the piano.

torsion (2008)

torsion tells of winding and twisting curves, more precisely of the curvature of parabolic spirals, as they are found in the florets arrangements of sunflower heads. Spirals define the structure of the composition: On a local level by easily perceivable fast accelerating or decelerating scales, and globally, by a collection of pitches that stretch throughout the entire piece, outlining a spiral, which is the backbone of torsion's harmonic evolution. Each one of these pitches is a fundamental of a rich spectrum of which a pool of chords and pitch configurations are drawn, attuned to the well-tempered system.

torsion adopts a model of notation that leaves the performer great liberty in shaping and sculpting the rhythm and temporal unfolding of the curvatures. A general time frame is given within which the pianist is enabled to decide on the expressive character of the twisting scales defined by speed, dynamics, articulation and distinct gradations of resonance.

On Flamboyance and Rigor:

“When the eighteen-year-old Boulez arrived in occupied Paris in 1943, we may assume that he was mindful of at least one precedent for the radical self-reinvention that he was about to undertake. He was intensely interested in...[poet] Rimbaud: the role-model for every precocious, emotionally intense adolescent who finds no social ‘representations’ through which adequately to interpret his feelings and perceptions. Rather than collapse into teenage confusion, Rimbaud sought out the aesthetic discipline required to body forth representations through which he could reinvent himself: in his case through a ‘systematic derangement of the senses’ given meaning through an extension of Baudelaire’s theory of sensory *correspondances*. That which convention would classify as metaphor was, for Rimbaud, a new personal reality.

“Boulez likewise gave a further turn of the screw to the most radical aesthetic example of the previous generation. But the discipline that he imposed upon himself was couched in strictly technical terms: the subversion of Schoenbergian organicist serialism so as to engender a ‘universe in perpetual expansion’ in which nothing ever repeats. Rimbaud’s maxim ‘*Il faut être absolument modern*’—a battle cry against the formation of the self around familiar habits—here found its miniaturized correlate within the universe of the work. If its effect upon the listener was to forge a new vision of subjective potentials, this had no necessary relation with the employment of specific technical means...But the fact that both Boulez and Rimbaud, each in their very distinct way, chose to work their way through to a new vision of subjective potentials by an arcane and private discipline is perhaps no accident.”

—David Osmond-Smith, “Gay Darmstadt: Flamboyance and Rigour at the Summer Courses for New Music”