

Batya MacAdam-Somer
April 9th, 2011
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Sonata for Solo Violin (1944)
Tempo di ciaccona
Fuga
Melodia
Presto

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

-short pause-

Four Songs (2011)
(on the) east coast
do it to me
poisonous forest
out of time

Bob Pierzak (1984-)

-short pause-

Sequenza VIII for violin (1976)

Luciano Berio (1925- 2003)

Partita No. 3 in E Major, BWV 1006 (1720)
Preludio
Loure
Gavotte en rondeau
Menuet 1
Menuet 2
Bourrée
Gigue

J. S. Bach (1685- 1750)

Listening.....

Is it an easy thing to do?

I have been trying to listen to myself more as I play.

Not in a critical fashion- more in line with listening as someone who can't change the sounds that are being created.

It's a tricky thing, not critiquing during performance.

I find listening to Bartók's *Sonata for Solo Violin* easier when I play it slower.

In fact, I feel this way about most music I'm playing.

Would you ever attend a concert performed in slow motion?

Bartók writes a dizzying array of chords and double stops in this piece; the harmonies change drastically from one beat to the next.

The challenge is to find a way to make these shifts in color heard as the chords fly by.

Even in sections where there is an absence of chordal writing, the melody never seems to rest in one tonal world for long.

Bob Pierzak's *Four Songs* are in some way the easiest pieces on this program for me to listen to.

Having little experience as a vocalist, I've been surprised at what I hear as I sing and speak.

This unpredictability breaks my usual listening habits and forces my ears to be more open.

He writes:

It is interesting to watch someone vocalize while trying to hold a violin at their neck near their throat. Visually, the violin looks like some kind of weird growth or super-vocal box of the singer/violinist. The violin's voice becomes an extension of the human voice and vice versa. I want to thank Batya for the opportunity to work with her while writing it, her committed dedication to it, and her willingness to be vocally vulnerable on stage. This piece is also for Bethany, who for some time was my voice.

Listening to the Berio *Sequenza VIII* reminds me of a professor at the Manhattan School of Music who spoke of "off by one" being a technique used in musical composition.

Berio writes unisons that become "off by one" by morphing into clusters of pitches that surround the original unison note by a half or whole step.

Bach does an amazing thing with melodies where he ends one phrase and starts another at the same time.

I first noticed this in a Bach Cantata I played years ago, *Gott ist mein König*.

It also occurs in the *Loure* of the *E Major Partita*; the first notes you hear become the connecting material between statements throughout the movement.

I end up lost in the seamlessess of the lines.

(on the) east coast

i'm not
because i won't
tomorrow

ha ha ha

today however...
stop it

do it to me

everyday sometimes
my eyes ache
and sometimes
it reminds me of all the times
i wished i wasn't like you

but then you do it to me
oh how you do it to me

everyday sometimes
my body aches
from looking down at you
and you're lying still wishing
you still knew how to make love

but then you do it to me
oh how you do it to me

after all the stars burst,
i'm gone too

poisonous forest

the wit with which she closed her sound out in the
round forest
the wit with which she closed her mouth out in
the round forest
the witness which closed her mouth out in the
round forest
the witness closes her mouth out in the
surrounding forest
the coy witness closes her mouth out in the
surrounding forest
the boy witness closes his mouth out in the
surrounding forest
the boy cloisters his mouth out in the surrounding
forest
the boy cloisters his mouth out in the surrounding
poison
the boy cloisters his mouth out in the sounding
poison
the boy cloisters his mouth out in the noisy

poison
the boy cloisters his loin out in the noisy
poisonous forest
the boy cloisters his loin in the noisy poisonous
forest

he'll be stripped bare there
he will be fed marginally
through his pores
then
he'll probably die

and then

stomachs on the floor!
stomachs on the floor!
stomachs on the floorses!

out of time

i fell in a diamond well
owned by a midas
down the line
i had toed of what remained
some might say
scary
my balance at peak,
but i carried a box which seeked me out,
in turn carrying a bell,
in turn carrying a heavy secret from you

so i slipped

that's the first time i hurried

when you left town
all i heard were
deafening bells
coming from the ground
but then the cage around me
argued endlessly about
whether a coat is louder
or a song is louder
and after i thought for some time
i told it i can't hear anything

you're my hand and you were my sleep
which means no more crevices in your room

you're my tree and you were my dream
which means no breathing

you're my eyes and you still are
which means so many intersections
cut up red
and cloudy
and throwing beetles
into the mist
by the train
and sometimes

we'd hit it
and together we made
a body without organs
actually never
but virtually always

i'm out of time
i can't see you

seven days of masterful aversion and one hour of pity in
my favorite corner
eight months of cutting paper cranes and two seconds of
quietly singing the witness song
thirteen years of sky and thirteen more years of nothing
but sky
then nothing

time holding you
time holding back
time's holding me back

the river you know
the one i know
the one i float down
when i need an alibi
the one swathed mostly in eternity,
mostly in song,
lastly in fields,
it runs deeply past
the fast-trap azure
and i think i saw a
tapped lark sing
choking on the agua.
it was more of a gesture
than a song
it was more of a locked box
than an afternoon of speculation

i'm out of time

pepper flakes
by your face
by your eyes
buy your eyes some time
to face the stake
to make some
naked accusation to
buy your eyes some
more time to lie.
sometimes eyes lie,
but i won't abide

i'm out of time

and i passed by your house
to see
and i passed by your house
just to see if
if i was still there
sitting with you hand in hand
in the fire we made

but you weren't even there
you took your dark ravens
and had them fly you
out of sight
out of touch

and i'm out of time

if there are any scents after sleep, i don't want to know.
if there are any suppers after flying, i don't want to know.
if there is solace in touching a made face, and it whispers
to you and gives you its color, i just don't want to
know.
if there are any women after dark, i don't want to know.
if there is religion after the fact, i don't want to know.
if there is any number after one, i don't want to know.

my name is bobby and i live in the forest.
and i walk with my hands behind my back, my back, my
back in the forest.

i wish i had a glove, because then i could show everyone
the suitcase i packed with one hand instead of two.

i wish i had a timer, because then i could show everyone
how the circular track encloses all the faces I've known.

i wish i had a lap, because then you could sit on it
and whisper the relevant trinkets on the table to me.

and i wish i had started it all with a starling in my
hands, because then i could show everyone
the beautiful silence of the blood streaked sky.

i wish i had winter, because then i could show everyone
a champion born under the blanket.

i wish i had a family, because then i could show
everyone.

it's my birthday today.
how old are you?
infinity.

were you in the war?

i was in all the wars.

is that why you live in the forest?

no, but that's why i walk with my hands behind
my back my back my back my back