

THE MUSIC OF
Christian Wolff



SYMPOSIUM :: TUE. APRIL 23 @6PM
RECITAL HALL

CONCERT :: WED. APRIL 24 @8PM
CONCERT HALL

UC SAN DIEGO
DIVISION OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Christian Wolff Symposium

Tuesday, April 23
6-8pm - CPMC Recital Hall (127)

Format:

6-6:15 – Live performance of Wolff's *Duo for Violins* (1950)

Jennifer Bewerse, cello
Charles Curtis, cello

6:15-6:30 – Introductions and prepared questions
(panel)

6:30-7 – Introduction and initial responses
(Wolff)

7-7:40 – In-depth discussion
(panel + Wolff)

7:40-8 – Questions from the audience
(tutti)

Panel Members:

Michael Davidson (Literature)
Charles Curtis (Music)
Roger Reynolds (Music)
Yolande Snaith (Theater & Dance)
Babette Mangolte (Visual Arts)

Christian Wolff Concert

Wednesday, April 24
8pm - CPMC Concert Hall

Program:

String Trio (1950)
Duo for Violins (1950)
For Prepared Piano (1951)
Duo for Violins (1950)
String Trio (1950)
For Magnetic Tape I (1952)

Batya MacAdam-Somer, violin
Leah Asher, viola
Jennifer Bewerse and Charles Curtis, cellos
Kyle Adam Blair, piano

- short break -

Edges (1968)

Leah Asher, violin
Samuel Dunscombe, clarinet
Nicolee Kuester, horn
Greg Surges, electronic guitar
Christian Wolff, piano

Exercises (1973-74)

#1
#2
#4
#6
#7
#13

Batya MacAdam-Somer, violin
Leah Asher, viola
Jennifer Bewerse and Charles Curtis, cellos
Kyle Adam Blair, piano
Ryan Welsh, celeste
Ryan Nestor, percussion
Anthony Burr, clarinet
Nicolee Kuester, horn

“Your first encounter with the music of Christian Wolff leaves you with the impression you’ve just heard (or played, or read) something totally strange, unlike anything else you know. And yet, upon reflection, you realize it is at the same time something completely ordinary and normal, as familiar in its way as any number of repetitive actions characteristic of everyday life, getting up in the morning, going to school, work, church, washing the dishes, performing the daily tasks of home and family.

Weird little tunes, sounding as if they had been beamed at some remote point in the universe and then bounced back again as a kind of intergalactic mutant music; recognizable melodic and rhythmic patterns, somehow sewn together in monstrous pairings, sometimes reminiscent of the demons of Hieronymus Bosch, composites of animals, fish, flowers, and common household objects: there is order, but also constant interruption, intrusions of disorderly reality upon regularity and lawfulness, combining to create an effect of both familiarity and strangeness: Shklovsky’s *ostranenie*.

You could say this music is surrealist—not reproducing familiar forms, but revealing, behind these, life’s unpredictability. You could say it is political; improvisatory; concerned with collaborative, non-hierarchical forms of social organization; but you can’t really say what it is like (although John Cage came close when he said, after a performance of the *Exercises* in New York, that it was like the classical music of an unknown civilization).”

Fredrik Rzewski

CHRISTIAN WOLFF

Christian Wolff was born in 1934 in Nice, France. He has lived mostly in the U.S. since 1941. He studied piano with Grete Sultan and composition, briefly, with John Cage. Though mostly self-taught as a composer, the work of John Cage, Morton Feldman, David Tudor and Earle Brown have been important to him, as well as long associations with Cornelius Cardew and Frederic Rzewski. A particular feature of his music is the various freedoms it allows performers at the time of performance as well as the variable results possible for any one particular piece, for which various new notations have been invented. Underlying notions in the work are shared freedom, self-determination and democratically-spirited collaboration. The music is published by C.F. Peters, New York and much of it is recorded, on many labels. A number of pieces, starting in 1953, have been used and commissioned by Merce Cunningham and his dance company. Wolff has been active as a performer and as improviser - with Takehisa Kosugi, Steve Lacey, Christian Marclay, Keith Rowe, William Winant, the group AMM, Kui Dong and Larry Polansky. His writings on music (up to 1998) are collected in *Cues: Writings and Conversations*, published by MusikTexte, Cologne. He has received awards and grants from the American Academy and National Institute of Arts and Letters, the Ford Foundation, DAAD Berlin, the Asian Cultural Council, the Fromm Foundation, the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts (the John Cage Award for music) and the Mellon Foundation. He is a member of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2004 he received an honorary Doctor of Arts degree from the California Institute of the Arts. Academically trained as a classicist, Wolff was professor of classics and music at Dartmouth College from 1971 to 1999.

CHARLES CURTIS

Cellist Charles Curtis has opened up a new repertoire for the cello through his intensive collaborative work with composers Alvin Lucier, Eliane Radigue, Tashi Wada, La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela, artists Alison Knowles and Mieko Shiomi and filmmakers Luke Fowler, Raha Raissnia and Jeff Perkins. Rarely-heard works of Terry Jennings, Morton Feldman and Richard Maxfield have also been presented by Curtis. In the 1980's Curtis participated in weirdo rock bands such as King Missile and Bongwater and he performed with the noise formation Borbetomagus. Trained at Juilliard with Leonard Rose and Harvey Shapiro, Curtis received the Piatigorsky Prize of the New York Cello Society. He was for ten years the Principal Cellist of the Symphony Orchestra of the NDR in Hamburg; a former faculty member at Princeton and Brooklyn College, Curtis has been at UCSD since 2000.

MICHAEL DAVIDSON

Michael Davidson is Distinguished Professor of Literature at the University of California, San Diego. He is the author of *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and Community at Mid-Century* (Cambridge U Press, 1989), *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material Word* (U of California Press, 1997), *Guys Like Us: Citing Masculinity in Cold War Poetics* (U of Chicago, 2003), and *Concerto for the Left Hand: Disability and the Defamiliar Body* (U of Michigan, 2008). His most recent book, *Outskirts of Form: Practicing Cultural Poetics* was published in 2011 by Wesleyan University Press. He is the editor of *The New Collected Poems of George Oppen* (New Directions, 2002). He is the author of five books of poetry, the most recent of which is *The Arcades* (O Books, 1998). He is the co-author, with Lyn Hejinian, Barrett Watten, and Ron Silliman, of *Leningrad* (Mercury House Press, 1991). He has written extensively on disability issues, most recently "Hearing Things: The Scandal of Speech in Deaf Performance," in *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, Ed. Sharon Snyder, et al (Modern Language Association, 2002), "Phantom Limbs: Film Noir and the Disabled Body," *GLQ* 9:1-2 (2003), *Universal Design: The Work of Disability in an Age of Globalization*, *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard Davis (Routledge, 2010), and "Pregnant Men: Modernism, Disability, and Biofuturity in Djuna Barnes," *Novel* 54.3 (Summer, 2010). *Bleed Through: New and Selected Poems* is forthcoming from Coffee House Press, Fall, 2013.

BABETTE MANGOLTE

Babette Mangolte (US born in France) is an experimental filmmaker and a photographer who is known internationally. She recently has worked in film for the movie screen as well as for installation and has published essays, theorizing her practice as filmmaker and photographer with the advent of digital. Among her recent films, *Seven Easy Pieces* by Marina Abramović premiered at Berlinale (2007), Yvonne Rainer's *AG Indexical* (2007) and *RoS Indexical* (2008) and Trisha Brown's choreography *Roof Piece on the High Line* (2011/2012). Her 2012 film, *Edward Krasiński's Studio* premiered at Berlinale 2013 and *Patricia Patterson Paintings* is included in Oberhausen (2013). Among her installations are *Presence* (Berlin Biennale, 2008), *Rushes* (Cologne, 2009) *How to look...* (Whitney Museum of American Art, Biennale 2010) and *Éloge du Vert* at VOX in Montreal in 2013. Mangolte's installations with photographs and films propose architectural spaces conducive to various modes of interactivity for the spectators.

YOLANDE SNAITH

Yolande Snaith graduated from Dartington College of Arts, UK, in 1983 with a degree in theatre and dance. Since then she has been creating her own work, performing, choreographing and teaching internationally, winning several awards including Digital Dance, Time Out/Dance Umbrella and Bonnie Bird Choreography Awards. In 1990 Yolande formed her own company with financial support from the Arts Council of England; Yolande Snaith Theatredance produced 11 full-length works, which toured internationally, including *Blind Faith*, which won the Prix D'auteur du Conseil Generale de la Seine-Saint-Denise in 1998. Yolande has received commissions from dance, theatre, opera, film and television companies, including the English National Opera, Birmingham Dance Exchange, Transitions, Ricochet Dance Company, The Verve, BBC and Channel 4 Television. In 1997 she choreographed Stanley Kubrick's final film *Eyes Wide Shut*, and in 1999 she was the choreographic adviser for David Hinton's film *Birds*, which was the overall winner of the 2001 Monaco Dance Screen Awards.

Yolande joined the faculty of Theatre and Dance at UCSD, USA in 2002, and serves as Head of Graduate Dance Theatre. IMAGOmoves was established in 2006 as an artistic 'umbrella' for collaborative project with other artists and performers. Since its inception IMAGOmoves has created a range of dance theatre works, including large group site-specific events in urban city locations, to intimate smaller group and solo work presented in a range of venues, from the Hungarian State Theatre of Cluj, Romania, to San Diego's alternative performance spaces.

Recent projects include *Ruins True*, a collective creation with theatre director Gabor Tompa, co-performer/choreographers Liam Clancy and Mary Reich, composer Shahrokh Yadegari, and scenic/projection designer Ian Wallace. *Ruins True* was previewed in San Diego 2010, and toured to the INTERFERENCES international theatre festival, Cluj, Romania, 2010, then to Budapest and the Off-Avignon festival, France, 2011. In 2012 Yolande was commissioned to choreograph a re-creation of *Ruins True* with performers from the Hungarian State Theatre of Cluj, Romania, and the piece is now performed regularly as part of the company's repertoire, as well as touring to international theatre festivals.

Yolande Snaith created choreography for Eleanor Antin's production of *Before the Revolution* at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles in January 2012. Yolande's most recent film project was a choreographic commission for *Queens Dream* in collaboration with director Mark Freeman, 2012, which is currently being presented at international dance for the camera festivals. Yolande's most recent solo dance theatre piece, *One Hundred Feet* premiered at Space4art, San Diego in 2012, and will be presented as part of the UCSD Theatre and dance 'Dance Series' on May 3 and 4, 2013. Details of Yolande's work and *One Hundred Feet* can be found at: www.imagomoves.com

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