

WOMEN
COMPOSERS I

ENSEMBLE
FÜR
NEUE MUSIK ZÜRICH

If only Fanny Mendelssohn or Clara Schumann had been fortunate enough to have a group like the Ensemble Für Neue Musik Zürich (ENMZ) from Switzerland champion their works! While the days when women composers hovered in the shadow of their male colleagues are thankfully over, the playing field is perhaps not yet entirely even.

In the 1980s, the ENMZ (whose members are all men) realized that music by contemporary female composers was not receiving its rightful attention, so they decided to help remedy the situation. For several decades the group has been performing and

recording pieces of diverse aesthetic styles by talented women composers, commissioning new works and supporting the women in their artistic endeavors. The Ensemble performed music by Liza Lim (Australia), Noriko Hisada (Japan), Ada Gentile (Italy), Carmen Maria Cârnelci (Romania), and Katharina Rosenberger (Switzerland) during a tour called "Komponistinnen II" in Switzerland in 2009 and in 2010 at the 16th. International Festival of Modern Art in Odessa "Two Days and Two Nights of New Music".

With this recording, the Ensemble cements its commitment to these composers.

"scatter 2.0" (2010)

A sense of unpredictability keeps the listener on her toes during the aural cat and mouse chase of Katharina Rosenberger's "scatter 2.0," in which eclectic elements intersect and clash with kaleidoscopic zeal. Zurich-born, California-based Rosenberger often writes for interdisciplinary mediums and likes to challenge traditional notions of how sound is produced, seen and heard. In "scatter 2.0" the musical chase accelerates, pauses and regroups, as if to allow the

participants a chance to catch their breath. Instrumental lines swoop up and down, colliding and intersecting in a frenetic soundscape. Brief pauses in the relatively subdued middle section heighten the tension, as does the clash of low and high sonorities. The pursuit dissolves towards the conclusion of the work, when the sporadic outbursts become more infrequent, the high pitched, agitated fragments eventually scattering into silence.

“piccolo studio da concerto” for piano solo (2004)

Pianists are among the few musicians who never have to worry about playing out of tune – but they have their own set of problems to deal with, such as how to tease a range of colors and sounds from a percussive instrument while executing finger-twisting runs. Ada Gentile reveals her background as a pianist in her alluring “Piccolo studio da concerto” for piano solo, a two-part work that grapples with technical problems inherent to the keyboard. The

first section opens with cascades of virtuosic runs and brilliant passages à la Ravel, before a brief pause leads to spare and meditative musings. Elusive fragments of melody emerge from this impressionistic, gauzy haze. The plot thickens with thicker, sonorous textures that fade back to stark, introverted passages. The somber mood is shattered by an explosion of rhythmically driven and colorful pianistic fireworks – another test of the pianist’s virtuosity!

“OMENS.Thesaurós” for sextet (2009)

Carmen Maria Cârnci takes the listener on an aural treasure hunt with “OMENS.Thesaurós,” a work that unfolds like a musical map, with signposts that hint at hidden meaning embedded in the score. Colorful gestures emerge like omens from the mosaic-like canvas – a piano or flute fragment, a shimmering percussion arch, an aggressive violin outburst or meditative

piano motif. The gestures are rendered more vivid by vibrant contrasts in dynamics and unexpected pauses in the score. According to the composer, the ornaments and metallic timbres of the music evoke jewelry, coins and weapons. The broken percussion lines suggest the exploration of old coffers containing jewels in this musical feast for the imagination.

“Sonorous Body” for clarinet solo (2008)

A feeling of loneliness and agitation pervades this piece for solo clarinet by Liza Lim, an Australian born composer of Chinese heritage – whose music often reflects her interests in traditional Asian culture, Aboriginal art and non-Western music. The voice of the clarinet soars into a meditative sonorous arc at the beginning of the work, whose warm colors evoke gentle landscapes. The mood soon turns stormy with shifts of increasing intensity, as the

clarinet line is embellished with trills, colorful roulades, dramatic shifts between high and low registers and percussive effects. The title of the piece, which resets fragments from Lim’s opera “The Navigator,” is inspired by Scene 4 of the libretto: “Horizon and water / could never be lovers / horizon adores only distance / sonorous water / searching for its sonorous body.”* The clarinet’s agitated yearnings eventually fade away into a watery stillness.

**Lyrics by Patricia Sykes*

“Yellow Axis” for sextet (2009)

Modern music is sometimes criticized for not being expressive enough, but no one could make that complaint about Noriko Hisada’s vivid “Yellow Axis” for Sextet, a gripping work of intensely contrasting moods. According to Hisada, who usually avoids overt references to Japanese art music in her scores, “Yellow is a color of the same warm color group as red and orange, and it is said that it influences the pulse, breath and the blood pressure.” Your

pulse might beat faster after listening to this expressive piece, a kind of mini concerto for violin. It begins with a mournful, solo high note repeated in the violin then morphs into minimalist patterns. The violin soars over the ensemble’s chugging rhythms, before an introspective middle section featuring striking microtonal harmonies and a vibrant interlude with colorful percussion. The drama of the piece slowly dissolves with the violin’s final, solitary whisper.

Vivien Schweitzer, February, 2011

Thank you! Whether this is your first recording from Hat Hut Records, or your Xth, we want you to know how proud we are to have you as a member of our growing, world-wide community of listeners. We hope that you enjoy this recording, it represents our constant aim to bring you the music of the future to discover. What you hear is what you hear!

Werner X. Uehlinger

If only Fanny Mendelssohn or Clara Schumann had been fortunate enough to have a group like the Ensemble Für Neue Musik Zürich (ENMZ) from Switzerland champion their works! While the days when women composers hovered in the shadow of their male colleagues are thankfully over, the playing field is perhaps not yet entirely even. In the 1980s, the ENMZ (whose members are all men) realized that music by contemporary female composers was not receiving its rightful attention, so they decided to help remedy the situation. For several decades the group has been performing and recording pieces of diverse aesthetic styles by talented women composers, commissioning new works and supporting the women in their artistic endeavors. *Vivien Schweitzer*

WOMEN COMPOSERS I

First recordings by

ENSEMBLE FÜR NEUE MUSIK ZÜRICH

Hans-Peter Frehner *flute*, Manfred Spitaler *clarinet*, Lorenz Haas *percussion*,
Viktor Müller *piano*, Urs Bumbacher *violin*, Nicola Romanò *cello*

Andreas Brenner *conductor*

- 1 Katharina Rosenberger (CH) „**scatter 2.0**“ for sextet (2010) 11:24
ISRC CH 130 1000635
- 2 Ada Gentile (I) „**piccolo studio da concerto**“ for piano solo (2004) 5:32
ISRC CH 130 1000636
- 3 Carmen Maria Cârnci (RUM) „**OMENS. Thesaurós**“ for sextet (2009) 12:03
ISRC CH 130 1000637
- 4 Liza Lim (AUS) „**Sonorous Body**“ for clarinet solo (2008) 9:15
ISRC CH 130 1000638
- 5 Noriko Hisada (J) „**Yellow Axis**“ for sextet (2009) 10:09
ISRC CH 130 1000639

Total Time DDD ²⁴Bit 48:59

Recorded by Peter Pfister at Kongresshaus Aarau, Kammermusikaal
on June 27th, 2010 tracks 2 & 4 and on October 2nd & 3rd, 2010 tracks 1,3 & 5;
Liner notes by Vivien Schweitzer; CD-master by Peter Pfister; Graphic concept by fuhrer vienna;
Produced by ensemble für neue musik zürich; Executiv production by Werner X. Uehlinger.

Special thanks to Stefan Zwicker.

2011, 1st edition
Printed by Gantenbein AG., CH 4127 Birsfelden
www.hathut.com

File under: *New Music/Contemporary Music*

hat
[now]ART

Earle Brown
Synergy
hat[now]ART 164

Luc Ferrari
Piano & Percussion Works
hat[now]ART 165

Pierre Boulez & John Cage
Structures & Music For Piano
hat[now]ART 175

Karlheinz Stockhausen
Plus-Minus
hat[now]ART 178

Galina Ustvolskaya
Piano Sonatas 1-6
hat[now]ART 179



© + © 2011
HAT HUT Records Ltd.
Box 521, 4020 Basel,
Switzerland. All rights reserved.
Unauthorized
duplication is a
violation of
applicable laws.
Made in Switzerland.

