

The New Music Studio of Budapest performs in concert on Sunday November 24, 1991 at 8 p.m. at Jane Mallet Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts. New Music Concerts, in co-operation with Hungary Reborn, the Hungarian Festival of the Arts, is pleased to present Hungarian composers and performers Barnabás Dukay, Csaba Király, László Sáry and András Wilhelm along with Canadian artists Robert Aitken, Stanley McCartney, Jon Pedersen, Fujiko Imajishi, Douglas Perry and Valdene Anderson in a concert of the latest in Hungarian experimental and avant-garde contemporary music.

'The concept of the New Music Studio, formed in Budapest in 1970, is somewhat difficult to put into words. It carries a different meaning for different groups of people: for the

audiences who encountered the pieces at its concerts; for those who considered the mere existence of the studio to be an aesthetic "cultural political" challenge; for the new generation who grew up in the meantime, since 1956; and of course it meant something yet again for those of us who participated in it.

'The New Music Studio was formed to bring composers and performers together. In Hungary at the beginning of the '70s, contemporary music was rarely presented at concerts, and the newest trends and techniques were not taught at the Budapest Academy of Music. So the Studio became a sort of post-graduate stage of learning, a workshop that offered us the possibility of self-instruction.

There are hardly any styles or trends of the latest musical era that have not been represented in some piece or other at the concerts of the New Music Studio. The Studio was also the only channel for the public to get acquainted with new musical tendencies.

'Naturally, intense emotions clashed around the Studio, which was a group basically independent of the official musical institutions. Interestingly, as opposed to what was happening in other fields of art, those who opposed the existence of the studio were not the almighty makers of "cultural politics." In fact, the minimum budget and rehearsal room needed to keep the Studio alive were

**new
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8 p.m.
jane mallet
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provided by the communist youth organization (KISZ). Rather, every attempt to do away with the Studio came from within musical circles. One reason for this might have been the fact that contemporary Hungarian music had already undergone an upheaval—having earlier been exposed to some newer musical trends during the

relatively free atmosphere after 1956. Most of the younger composers of those years felt it necessary to renew and update their way of thinking and their style. And it was after 1956 that a more modern, eclectic Hungarian school was born. Those very composers were suspicious of the New Music Studio; perhaps they feared that this new body, searching for new orientations, would abandon their artistic ideals. Many of them were perhaps no longer able to face another period of stylistic change and introspection. This split is still somewhat discernable in Hungary's musical life—not as an open confrontation, but rather as a group of tamed co-existing tendencies. As a matter of fact these days, at the relatively low ebb of the performance of contemporary music, the work of the

Studio's composers is at least as equally unknown as the work of their former antagonists.

'Still, the New Music Studio by its mere existence contributed to the formation of significant works. At the beginning of the '70s a new style was established through common efforts, and it would not be an exaggeration to call it the studio's own. This of course does not mean that the studio members' pieces were made uniform by a common dogma. The works of Barnabás Dukay, Zoltán Jeney, László Sály, László Vidovszky, Péter Eötvös and Zoltán Kocsis all show great versatility, and it would be impossible to find the same characteristic features in all of them. However, there is one specific element present in all of these composers' work: collective composition. The idea was developed in 1974, based on earlier experiences with collective improvisation. Collective compositions are pieces by more than one composer, each working independently of the other—but since the composers share certain principles, their music finally belongs together. This genre is the result of a musical trend as well as of a particular situation. Varied efforts meet in seemingly loose combinations of heterogeneous elements; they mutually reinforce one another and achieve unity at certain points.

'Today it is hard to define the place of the New Music Studio in either Hungarian or international musical life. In Hungary it has brought a fresh aspect to the style of composing and will possibly serve as a catalyst—in an age of extreme individualization and stylistic uniformity. It has managed also to create a stylistic ideal that, from the perspective of further decades, may show parallel, familiar features as well.—András Wilhelm

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C O N C E R T S

Zoltán Jeney was born in 1943 and studied composition at the Budapest Academy of Music with Ferenc Farkas, and with Goffredo Petrassi at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome. One of the founders of the New Music Studio, he has been active as a performer

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(of keyboard and percussion instruments), and as a composer. In his *Etruscan Overture*, written in 1989, for oboe, tape and percussion, the oboe plays a fixed melody while the tape produces resolutions of a

constantly altered chord that divides the duration of the oboe melody into six intervals of equal length. Certain sounds are specially emphasized by the percussion.

Barnabás Dukay received a degree in composition from the Budapest Academy of Music in 1976, and teaches theory and solfege at the Béla Bartók Conservatory of Music. Since the early '70s, he has been active in the New Music Studio both as a composer and performer. Included on the program will be his *Invisible Fire in Winter Night*, for two pianos, based on a text from Csuang-ce, and *...Like the Sun*, for two pianos and voice, on a text from Lao-ce.

László Sály was born in 1940, and studied composition at the Budapest Academy of Music with Endre Szervánszky, graduating in 1966. He was one of the founding members of the Budapest New Music Studio, and has appeared both as a composer and performer in many European countries. A visit to Darmstadt in 1972 and his encounter there with the ideas and music of Christian Wolff confirmed his determination to research avenues of compositional thinking and practice other than those traditionally accepted in Europe. The American minimalist school has influenced most of the compositions written since then.

Concerning *Moondog* (*Hommage à "Moon Dog"*) he writes: "I composed the piece in 1990 for an indefinite number and combination of wind and string instruments. The musical theme is composed of a one-part melody in a free-paced tempo. The tempo is entirely defined by each of the musicians. As a result of the various rhythmical solutions, the one-part melody becomes a multipartite one, and the consonance varies from performance to performance."

The basic material of his *Ludus chromaticus* (1987), for piano, six-hands, consists of three kinds of scale: chromatic, diatonic and whole-tone. These scales enter into connections with each other in a number of ways, sometimes even within the same part; the sum of them brings about chromatic progression between the three parts.

László Vidovszky was born in 1944 and studied at the Budapest Academy of Music with Ferenc Farkas. In 1970, he attended the composition classes of Olivier Messiaen in Paris, and courses organized by the Group de Recherche Musicale. One of the founding members of the Budapest New Music Studio, he is active as a performer and composer, and for some years was the head of the music faculty at the University of Pécs in southern Hungary.

Schroeder's Death, an extended work for one pianist and three assistants, was composed in 1975. The title is a reference to the character in Charles Schulz's cartoon strip, *Peanuts*: Schroeder, who never stops practising. In the course of the piece, the assistants gradually transform the sound of the instrument.

Csaba Király was born in 1965, and studied piano at the Béla Bartók Music School and the Liszt Academy, and holds diplomas both in piano and organ playing. He has been the recipient of several prizes in competitions, among the awards at the Ernő Dohnányi competition and the Budapest International Franz Liszt competition. He has given numerous recitals in Europe, and is also a composer and a skilled improviser.

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