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1992

ROBERT AITKEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

1993

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MAURICIO KAGEL

Zwei Akte

Morceau de Concours

Die Stücke der Windrose

Guest Artists
Mauricio Kagel, conductor
Brigitte Sylvestre, harp
Michael Riessler, saxophone

his 60th year

 in association with
du Maurier
THEATRE CENTRE
at Harbourfront Centre

96.3 CFMX-FM 103.1

Dear friends and guests,
New Music Concerts enters its twenty-second season with a sustained vision, cultural presence, and the highest consistent standards. We owe this to our reputation for excellence and I personally wish to thank on behalf of all of us at New Music Concerts, the many local performing musicians, the visiting artists and composers, and the many funding organizations, both government and private, for believing in us and helping us to foster with our sister organizations the contemporary arts in Toronto. I hope you enjoy tonight's program. Bring a new friend next time and let's enrich our audience base.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph Macerollo". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping tail on the "o".

Joseph Macerollo
President
New Music Concerts

Sunday, November 1, 1992
8 p.m.
duMaurier Theatre
Harbourfront

Mauricio Kagel

Morceau de Concours (1972) (9'30")

für zwei Trompeter

Michael White, James Gardiner, trumpets

Zwei Akte (1988-1989) (28')

Grand Duo für Saxophon und Harfe

North American première

Michael Riessler, saxophone

Brigitte Sylvestre, harp

Intermission

Aus dem Zyklus

"Die Stücke der Windrose"

North American première

Osten (1988-1989) (5'45")

Nordosten (1990) (8')

Süden (1989) (12')

Südosten (1991) (11')

Nordwesten (1991) (7'30")

Joaquin Valdepeñas, clarinet

Mark Widner, piano

Barbara Pritchard, harmonium

Fujiko Imajishi, Carol Fujino, violins

Steven Dann, viola

David Hetherington, cello

Roberto Occhipinti, bass

Trevor Tureski, percussion

Mauricio Kagel, conductor

New Music Concerts thanks the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne of Montréal for helping to make this concert possible, and for arranging for Mauricio Kagel's visit to Canada.

Thanks to the Canadian Music Centre and David Parsons, regional director, for contributing the birthday cake and reception for the October 4 concert honoring Harry Freedman.

'The roots of Kagel's art,' writes the German musicologist Josef Häusler, 'are to be found in expressionism, surrealism and dadaism. Musically, he has drawn on the serial thought and timbral liberation of the Second Viennese School, as well as the aleatory ideas of Cage.

'His output includes films and plays for radio and the stage in addition to his music, a many-sided activity whose aim has not been the creation of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, but rather an exploration of means by which ideas and forms might be transferred from one medium to another. If his plays and films are subjected to a musical approach implying musical forms, equally he "dramatizes" music.

' "Instrumental theater," of which Kagel has been the most determinant and influential exponent, proposes a music in which the actions of the performer are as important as their sound. The dramatic source for such overlap situations may often be in straightforward everyday activities, while Kagel's predilections in terms of sound are for unusual, low-pitched and exotic instruments. Sometimes the whole musical drama is suggested by Kagel's

experiences under the influence, clinically supervised, of mescaline or LSD.

'Although he has objected to being labelled a "dadaist," an "anti-composer" or on the other hand an innovatory "modernist," the questioning of accepted values is one of the most significant impulses behind his work, directed to making doubt and negation fruitful. Indeed, his work suggests an enlarged understanding which not only covers all sounds, but also phenomena of motion or visual effect. Kagel's rampant fantasy, the vast range of his humor and his love of the recondite and arcane, all have made his work the stimulus of much distaste, disturbance and protest.'

Morceau de Concours

'This piece is a second, revised version,' writes Kagel. 'The main difference from the original 1970 version (for one performer and tape recordings) being the reduction of the instrumentation.

'Originally, the performer played the trumpet, cornet, clarino (baroque trumpet), and tromba da *tirari*. The richness of the tone of these instruments is now replaced by an expanded liping and articulation technique, the function of the tapes being taken over by a second performer. The score makes the greatest demands of the soloists. The fact that the trumpet was originally a signalling instrument can hardly be denied in this *pièce de résistance*.'

Zwei Akte

'While I was making my preparations for the composition, I asked myself (as well as friends and strangers): what instruments does one naturally associate with female and male?

'So I came up with an unusual instrumentation (harp and saxophone), for which I wanted to write a piece where (by analogy to the relationship between two people) several different situations are played out. However, the combination of these instruments showed me that stereotypes are more amenable to startling transformations than one might expect. So the harp and saxophone change the roles assigned to them, and frequently assume the character and expression of their partner.

'This results in imperceptible transitions and acoustic binds where, as in real life, the listener's interpretation may well differ from mine.'

From the cycle "Die Stücke der Windrose" (The Pieces of the Compass Rose):

Osten (East) 1988-1989

'Which east?

'Not the near nor the far but that diffuse region *ante portas* which starts before the Oder Neisse and ends ... where?

'If I may make use of geographical data somewhat

generously, then the scenario of this short piece takes place somewhere between the Transcarpathia and the Gulf of Finland:

'I am sitting in the fourth-class section of one of those legendary trains which ran between Kishinev and Ivano-Frankovsk, Balassagyarmat and Hódmezővásárhely, Kaments-Podolski and Piotrków Trybunalski. A group of musicians who look as if they had just jumped out of the yellowed photos in old albums is also on the train and begins to play for me. This rolling set demands a brisk performing style: scraps of melody and characteristic rhythms alternate faster than the villages which fly by haltingly. 'Certainly: I always give the eastern direction a bonus in my private musical cosmology.'

Nordosten (Northeast) 1990

'Right at the beginning of my cycle, I intended to change frequently the site of my musical reflections. It may be that this is related to my having been born in the southern hemisphere. When you have spent there that part of your life which is most crucial in your development, then you have certain experiences, yearning, and standard ideas linked to the different directions which are precisely the opposite of the corresponding emotions of Europeans. Even today the south is still not the epitome of heat to me but rather of cold: Patagonia, Terra del Fuego,

Antarctica. On the other hand, the north is anything but cold: merciless sun, thin, sharply outlined shadows as well as muggy humidity or areas of desert and drought.

'The move to Germany upset my sense of direction slightly. I am often fooled on the bank of a river, in particular, because I spontaneously judge the inclination of the water incorrectly. In South America, with the Andes chain in the west, the water usually flows to the east or south (in the Andes countries, however, it is often the opposite). My experience with the term "northeast" is similar. Looked at from Central Europe, it is not easy to define what region is meant. It could be called a typically vague direction. But viewed from southern Argentina, only the legendary "Nordeste" of Brazil can be meant. I am thankful to have become acquainted with the diversity of rhythms and melodic forms in this region. But what would this music be without its omnipresent mixture of melancholy and cheerfulness, of lightheartedness and sadness?

'This third number of my cycle is dedicated to a Cuban writer to whom I owe many ideas and who has been waiting for an eternity for me to honour my promise to compose a musical reflection on South America.

'Therefore in remembrance:

'*Por fin: para Alejo Carpentier.*'

Süden (South) 1989

'This composition is the second number of the cycle *Die Stücke der Windrose* (The Pieces of the Compass Rose), for salon orchestra, which I am thinking about continuing in the course of the coming years. I can hardly assume that the 32 gradations of the four points of the compass will inspire me to also compose as many pieces. And yet, measured by the resonance of the music, every random point of the four quadrants—north, east, south and west—challenges us to undertake a complicated voyage of discovery. For example, the term "Near East" signifies an eastern cultural area for many, while for others living in the Far East it evokes precisely the opposite: a western one. In this connection, we frequently tend to see things in relative terms, to have ideas that are schematic and made up of impressions, memories, trips, things we have read, hearsay, likes, dislikes, and much more. Explained from this point of view, the localities of my salon pieces could be interpreted as a *compositum sui generis*, where analysis and synthesis meet without warning.'

Südosten (Southeast) 1991

'In accordance with my intention of frequently changing the site of my acoustic reflections in composing the cycle, my view is here from Cuba over the Caribbean in the given direction. Folk and popular music of the most varied origins is mixed together in this region, which begins in Columbia and stretches over Venezuela, Surinam, and Guyana to the Amazon. They only appear to co-exist beside one another but in reality interact with one another, merge into unique mixtures, and form movements which can also set the tone for a long time or be forgotten. Afro-american dance rhythms and melodic expressions of Spanish tradition, Creole dialects and ones heavily emphasizing percussion instruments, subversive transformations of pious ceremonies and sixteenth-century European ballads in Indian languages: which of these ingredients can maintain itself permanently in a scene which is constantly changing as a result of invention and use?

'In writing my piece, it was far from my mind to intend to copy such diversity. Accordingly, I limited myself to two essential features. One is introduced right at the beginning and is based on a typical accompanying figure which—accompanied by a second figure—becomes the main voice. A little

later a second motive appears which—similar to diatonic melodies for the balafon and zansa in a few regions in Africa—is based on the repetition of a single interval and, with a falling tendency, always ends on the same fundamental note. Both thematic elements are embedded in a choral polyphony which links them like a refrain.

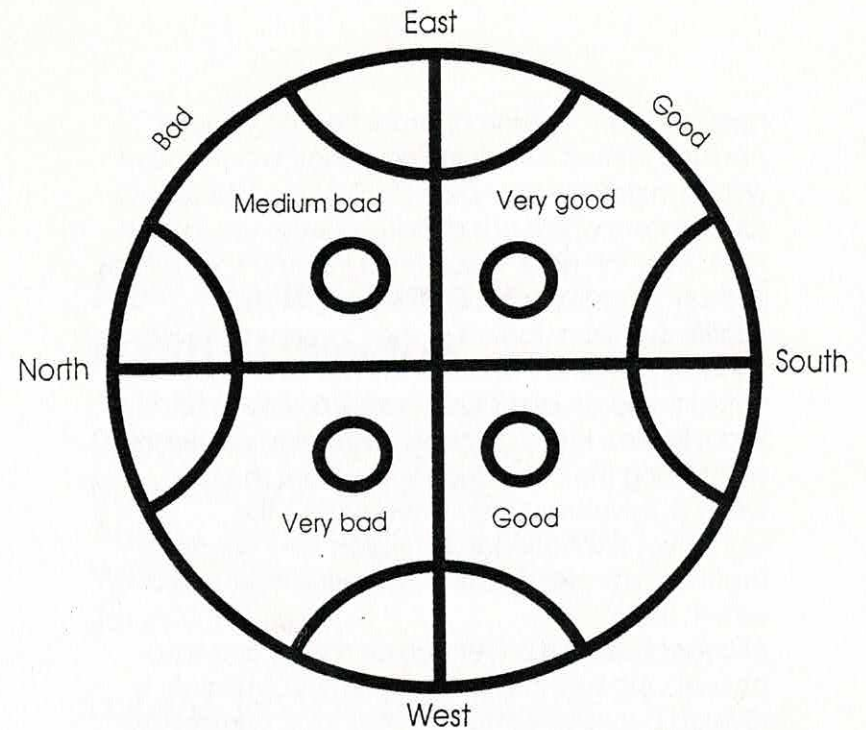
'During the course of the piece, the performers' playing becomes increasingly independent until only the rhythmic variations of a single tone series are left. The parallel polyphony emerges from the melody which remains always the same: Southeast has travelled over the Atlantic to its ethnic sources, and it is the latter which in the last analysis infiltrate the score systematically.'

Nordwesten (Northwest) 1991

'In this piece I refer for the first time to the autochthonous music of the Andes which I have often heard over there as well as first-, second- and, if you want, third-hand in Europe. I find the fact that in this case this takes place through an ensemble whose instrumentation is far removed from the authentic sources thoroughly appropriate in a time in which transparency and interaction have become the central concepts in the study of musical languages and cultures. On the other hand, illusion

listener feels, even after only a few bars, that he or she has been placed in the indicated geographic position, then he or she will enrich the atmosphere of the piece with bits of musical memories or experiences on the spot.

'At the same time, *Die Stücke der Windrose* deals with the fluctuating significance of the directions and their inherent relativity. The illumination of this relativity in conjunction with a changing location is one of the main messages of this cycle. I was more than slightly surprised to read some time ago, a musicological treatise on the shaman drum, the *Kultrún*, a single-skin drum with a semi-circular sound box which the Machis of the Araucanian Mapuche culture in the south of Chile use. Maria Ester Grebe describes the symbolic microcosmos of the instrument which "simultaneously represents the universe of this aboriginal people and its transcendental functions." The colors and drawing on the surface of the skin "symbolize the four planes of the vertical concept of the world, the four directions of the horizontal gradations between good and evil."



'The vertical concept of the world in this description of this imagined world fascinated me greatly. It is precisely this aspect that is important in my salon pieces, because I assumed namely that the different directions are as if they were on a map which is standing upright in front of us: north at the zenith, east on the right, south at the bottom, and west of the left. Consequently, each of these pieces ends with the performers staring silently at the destination as if the expressions on their faces were frozen signposts.

'In *Northwest*, after the first part, in which an imagi-

nary Indian procession approaches the concert podium, there is a concluding dance which I have written in perfect poly-pentatonics as a tribute to a tonal system which has definitely remained foreign to us. May the gods which have inspired the *Kultrúns* illustration forgive me this alienating music.'

Brigitte Sylvestre studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris, and has devoted the large part of her career to new music. Berio, Boulez, Kagel, Globokar, Xenakis and Bussotti are among the composers with whom she has worked. Sylvestre currently teaches at the Conservatoire National de Région de Paris and teaches a masterclass at the International Academy in Nice.

Michael Riessler is a German clarinetist and saxophonist who lives in Cologne. His musical career is divided between written music, jazz and improvisation, and most notably, he has worked closely with Rzewski, Globokar and Kagel. On the jazz scene, he can also be heard with Chris Newman and the quintet of Gérard Siracusa and Claude Barthélmy.

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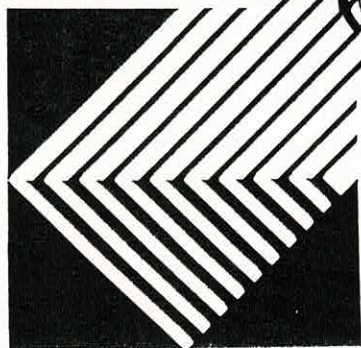
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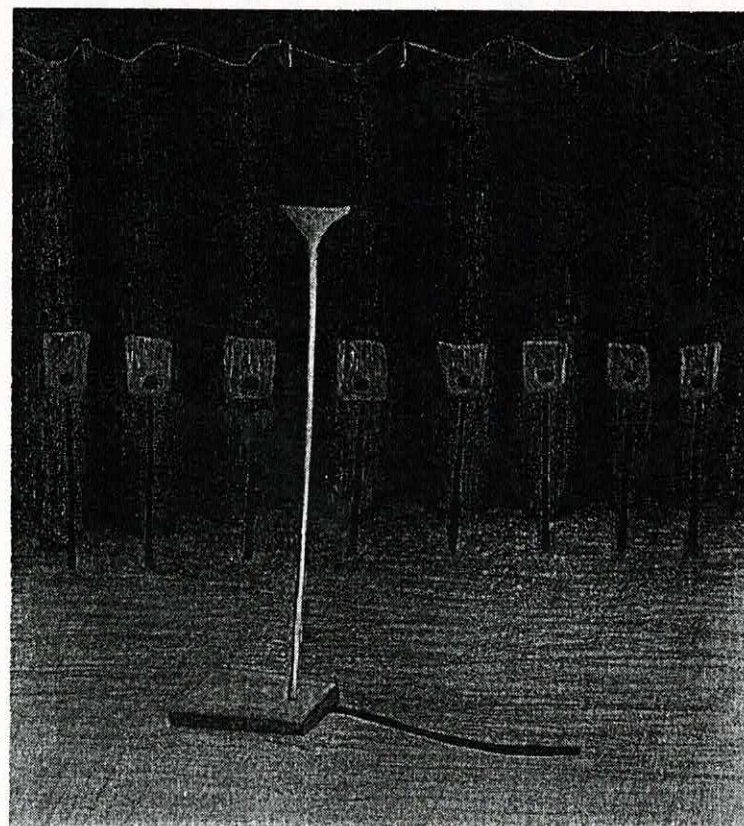
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