

New Music Concerts presents

Robin Minard: Sounds on Paper

May 29 – June 15, Gallery 345, 345 Sorauren Avenue

Viewing Tuesday–Sunday Noon to 5:00 (FREE) | Opening reception May 29, 7:00 pm

Sound + Poetry in Motion


June 4, Isabel Bader Theatre, 93 Charles Street West | Intro 7:15 | Concert 8:00

Robin Minard and Jaap Blonk in Concert

NMI

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Canadian New Music Network 
Réseau canadien pour les musiques nouvelles

New Music Concerts
Robert Aitken, director

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We would like to take this opportunity to express heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to Edward Epstein and Gallery 345 for the generous donation of time, energy and resources without which the exhibition "Sounds on Paper" would not have been possible. We are grateful for the cooperation of the OBORO Gallery in Montreal where the exhibit was on display in April and we thank Darren Copeland for his technical assistance with the concert "Sound and Poetry in Motion". We are also thankful to our funders at all three levels of government (Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council and the Department of Canadian Heritage) and to the private foundations which provide essential operational support: The Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation; The Julie-Jiggs Foundation; Michael and Sonja Koerner and The Koerner Foundation; The Max Clarkson Family Foundation; The McLean Foundation; Roger D. Moore; The SOCAN Foundation. We also wish to acknowledge and thank our presentation partners of the current season: soundaXis, The Goethe Institut, the Bureau du Québec à Toronto and CBC Radio 2. We'd also like to thank our tireless associate Daniel Foley whose many talents bring a wealth of resources to the organization, our publicist Francine Labelle and photographer Andre Leduc and special mention goes to the newest member of the New Music Concerts team, volunteer Carolyn McGee. Of course none of our activities would bear fruit if not for the dozens and dozens of individuals whose interest, support and encouragement inspires us to continue. Last but certainly not least, we wish to thank the members of the board for all their efforts on our behalf "above and beyond" the call of duty, especially Joseph Macerollo for his invaluable fundraising expertise and advice.



Robert Aitken
artistic director



David Olds
general manager

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37th season | 314th event
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Programme:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Robin Minard | • <i>The Book of Spaces</i> |
| Jaap Blonk | • <i>Experimental Dutch Texts</i> (in English translation) |
| | • <i>Cycle of Poems</i> (1921) |
| | by the Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg |
| | • <i>Improvisations & Pieces in an Invented Language</i> |
| | • <i>Solo for Cheek Synthesizer</i> |
| Robin Minard | • <i>Diary for S.</i> |
| Minard + Blonk: | • <i>Full Circle (Blonk)</i> |



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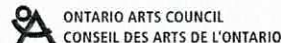
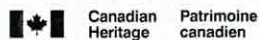
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Robin Minard was born in Montreal in 1953. He studied music composition and electroacoustic music in Canada (at McGill University and the Conservatoire de Musique) and Paris (at the Université de Paris VIII). Since the early 1980's his work has focused in the area of electroacoustic composition and sound installation art. His works have been presented in countless festivals, museums and public venues. From 1992 to 1996 he was lecturer on the subject of sound installation art at the electroacoustic studio of the Berlin Technical University. Since 1997 he has been professor for electroacoustic composition and sound design in Weimar, Germany at the Franz Liszt Academy and the Bauhaus University where he is also director of the Studios for Electroacoustic Music (SeaM Weimar).

Sounds on Paper presents Robin Minard's recent sound objects made with books and paper as well as the sound installation *Silent Music*, a work that has been presented in museums and public spaces worldwide since 1994. Minard's *audio books* (2005) — originally created for the Bibliothèque Robert Desnos in Paris — present small loudspeaker elements superimposed over hand-written texts. The organic-like arrangement of the elements recalls *Silent Music*. The audio books led in 2006 to the creation of *à lire en silence*, a first set of artist-editions consisting of small notebooks with texts and loudspeaker elements, audio CD and presentation box. *à voir en silence*, another edition project, brings together the same elements but on hand-made paper into which loudspeaker elements are directly integrated. The exhibition also includes *Nature Morte*, a new collaborative work between Robin Minard and video artist Susan Meinhardt. This work investigates the use of sound and image in a "non-narrative" context. The audio material of the work is taken from one of Minard's earliest non-narrative works entitled "Music for Quiet Spaces" (1984). The video images were recorded in 2007 and edited in accordance with the music in early 2008. [R.M.]

Susan Meinhardt was born in Zeulenroda, Germany in 1971. Since 2000 she has worked as a television journalist and documentary filmmaker for the German MDR (Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk) creating both short documentary reports and documentary features. In 2006 she began working closely with Robin Minard, documenting his sound projects and collaborating on interdisciplinary art works involving sound and video.

The Book of Spaces

The Book of Spaces is a collection of multi-track pieces in which the spatial representation of sounds plays a major role. The main parts of the work were composed in August/September 1998 (making up the work “4 Räume”) and in July 2001 (making up the work “Sutra”). In the spring of 2004 unifying elements – including an introduction, several bridge sections and some additions to the original pieces – were composed. This formed *The Book of Spaces*. The work is divided into eleven sections, each of which proposes a different type of “sound space”:

- i) Introduction
- ii) Sutra I (with recordings made in l’Église de la Trinité, Paris)
 - iii) Bridge I
 - iv) Circles
 - v) Bridge II
- vi) Hommage to Schaeffer I
- vii) Bridge III
- viii) Sutra II (with recordings made in the Great Paris Mosque)
 - ix) Bridge IV
- x) Hommage to Schaeffer II
- xi) Conclusion

The Book of Spaces was realized at the Electronic Studio of the Berlin Technical University. Spatial movements were composed with Sigma I (APB-Tools, Berlin). Parts of the work composed in 1998 were commissioned by the Berlin Inventionen Festival and Sender Freies Berlin for concerts celebrating 50 years of “musique concrète” – hence the homages to Pierre Schaeffer. Other parts of the work were commissioned by the Friedenskirche Jena, Germany with the support of the German “Kulturfonds Foundation”.

Diary for S.

Diary for S. uses sounds collected from my surroundings as material for the composition. This includes various outdoor recordings, excerpts from some of the music I listen to – especially ethnic music – and the sounds of my writing with pen, pencil and paper. These recordings of writing are the main theme of the

composition and appear in many variations throughout the piece. In the work, an imaginary protagonist writes down thoughts about his everyday experiences. These thoughts, and the environments contemplated, slowly melt into the sounds of the composition. The theme of writing in the work is closely related to the gallery exhibition “Sounds on paper,” presented in conjunction with the concert for which *Diary for S.* was commissioned.

The outdoor recordings used in *Diary for S.* provide either spatial coloring or concrete soundscapes within which events take place. The musical excerpts employed are for the most part transformed beyond recognition with spectral delays and strong resonance filtering. This provides the glassy harmonic timbres that characterize the work. Here, ethnic music was especially interesting to process due to its rich spectral content. All of the sound processing used in the piece was written in MAX/MSP.

Diary for S. was realized at the composer’s current home in Weimar, Germany. The work was commissioned by Réseaux des arts médiatiques (Montréal) with support of the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA).

Full Circle (Blonk)

Full Circle (Blonk) is a work for vocal performer, four-channel audio and live-electronics with texts by Jaap Blonk. A first version of *Full Circle* was composed for the German sound poet Gerhard Rühm in 2007 and was premiered within the e.poesie festival in Berlin. Following the completion of this piece, a second version was composed in 2008 for Toronto New Music Concerts and their guest, the renowned Dutch sound poet Jaap Blonk. This version incorporates new live-electronic elements and consists of a much freer temporal structure than the original composition.

All sound elements in the piece are derived from vocal sounds. Sound elements particular to the Blonk version are taken from a selection of Jaap Blonk’s sound poems and vocalizings including “Geen Krimp”, “Kulo Quasi”, “Just a Thought” and “Rhotic”. Although the general course of the composition remains largely predetermined, the recomposing of the music into openly structured moments serves to extend the communication between the vocal performer and the live-electronics as well as to allow elements of improvisation to enter into the piece. Sound processing and the temporal structuring of the composition are written in Max/MSP.

Jaap Blonk (born 1953 in Woerden, Holland) is a self-taught composer, performer and poet. For almost two decades the voice was his main means for the discovery and development of new sounds. From around the year 2000 on Blonk started work with electronics, at first using samples of his own voice, then extending the field to include pure sound synthesis as well. He took a year off of performing in 2006. As a result, his renewed interest in mathematics made him start a research of the possibilities of algorithmic composition for the creation of music, visual animation and poetry. As a vocalist, Jaap Blonk is unique for his powerful stage presence and almost childlike freedom in improvisation, combined with a keen grasp of structure. He has performed in many European countries, as well as in the U.S. and Canada, Indonesia, Japan, South Africa and Latin America. With the use of live electronics the scope and range of his concerts has acquired a considerable extension. Besides working as a soloist, he has collaborated with many musicians and ensembles in the field of contemporary and improvised music, like Maja Ratkje, Mats Gustafsson, Nicolas Collins, Joan La Barbara, The Ex, the Netherlands Wind Ensemble and the Ebony Band. He premiered several compositions by the German composer Carola Bauckholt, including a piece for voice and orchestra. A solo voice piece was commissioned by the Donaueschinger Musiktage 2002. On several occasions he collaborated with visual computer artist Golan Levin. Blonk's work for radio and television includes several commissioned radio plays. He also makes larger-scale drawings of his scores, which are being exhibited. He was the founder and leader of the long-standing bands Splinks (modern jazz, 1983-1999) and BRAAXTAAL (avant-rock, 1987-2005). He also has his own record label, Kontrans, featuring a total of 15 releases so far. Other Blonk recordings appeared on Staalplaat, Basta and VICTO.

Excerpts from an Interview with Jaap Blonk by Bryan Sentes (Montreal, 2000)
(complete interview available at www.jaapblonk.com)

BS: *How did you come to sound poetry?*

JB: In the late seventies, I had been in university for about five years doing mathematics and physics and I quit not too long before finishing. So I was doing several odd jobs, cleaning offices and things like that, thinking about what I would like to do. I was playing saxophone at that time and already had begun writing some little pieces which were like simple jazz tunes, which were the first kind of compositions I did. I was working at that time with a group of people who recited poetry, not their own poetry but from rather well-known Dutch poets, and I came into that group to make music on the saxophone and to write pieces in between the poems or to set some poems to music. There was one member of the group who was a singer, and there was a piano player, and that was nice for me, because at that time it gave me a chance to write something and have it performed immediately, not put it on a shelf and look at it. So, it was a good way to start music for me. I also took some courses. In the seventies you had lots of "expression" workshops and courses you could do, like "body expression." There was also poetry reciting, and in that I remember, I think it was 1979, I saw a sound poem for the first time. This was one of Hugo Ball's six sound poems, actually "Sea Horses and Flying Fish." There was a little presentation after the workshop, and I chose that poem to perform.

Not long after that I heard a performance of Kurt Schwitters' "Ur Sonata" and I found that very interesting. I went to the Institute of German Literature and made a serious copy of the whole piece and started to practise it. But it took more than two and a half years—I was just playing around and not planning of making a big performance of this piece, but I noticed that I almost knew it by heart, so at a friend's birthday party I stood up and performed this piece. People liked it. Then I was asked to perform in cafes and other places. At first it was actually separate from what I was doing with the saxophone. I had founded a little jazz group playing our own compositions. When I look back to that, I note I can see that I was more and more inclined in my improvisations on the saxophone to use sounds that were actually like a voice. But then all of a sudden there was a breakthrough. It was after I had attended a workshop of actors from Poland, a voice workshop, very physically oriented, strong body work. When I got back and was sitting in my living room (I just had an attic room in Amsterdam), I put on a free jazz record by, I think, Archie Shepp, and all of a sudden I improvised along with it with the voice, and I noticed I was still doing that when the record had long ended, and it kind of felt really good, but of course I had no idea of what other people would think. I was not aware of other people doing this kind of stuff, but I soon found some improvising musicians in the Amsterdam scene who enjoyed improvising with me on instruments, so I could develop it. And out of these improvisations, the first little sound poems came.

Then I started to make longer pieces, and after a few years I trained myself to work with the international phonetic alphabet for a little bit more opportunities for structure and writing larger pieces and add more variety in the sound poems, not using just the pronunciation of one language but mixing several languages and also more possibilities, finding notations for many sounds I was making in my improvisations, although many sounds are not expressible in the phonetic alphabet. Improvisation is not usually associated with sound poetry, and at this time in the international sound poetry community, there are only very few people who improvise.

BS: *In 1916 Hugo Ball's "poems without words" were met with derision and boos and catcalls at the Cabaret Voltaire, while, today, you give some six performances a month, which are politely and appreciatively received. What happens to sound poetry when it loses this shock of the (apparently) radically new? Is it "Dada" anymore, or is it just "another kind of poetry" beside the sonnet or the lyric, popular and otherwise?*

JB: It was important for me starting out with these people like Ball, Schwitters, Khlebnikov, and so on, who were in anthologies and were printed and respected now, they gave me a kind of legitimation to be on a stage and perform these pieces, and even when people raised protest or even threw things at me, which sometimes happened at the beginning, going on and finishing, which I would not have done so easily, if it would have been my own work. The reception is so dependent on the context you are invited into. Especially in the earlier years, I had many performances where people got angry. For instance, in clubs where I was the opening act for a rock band, the biggest example being opening for The Stranglers in a big concert hall in Holland for 2,000 people in 1986. Six guards before the stage were struggling to keep people from hitting me, and people throwing beer at me all the time. I have no doubt that the same thing could still happen now.

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