

this concert is funded in part by the student endowment for the arts

thank you
any, tom, piper
walt stolowitz
the s.e.a.
nobody is! dpa
isabelle kaplan
noelle rouxel
gavin warschall
sue jones
ida failla
the cool guys at maintenance
su lian fan
fonta hadley
ep!es uol
spious!es ueres
celia elia

sonneries

A VOICE CONCERT BY DAN MOHR



WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 1998

8:00PM

DEANE CARRIAGE BARN

TRANSLATIONS

le lay de la fontienne

1. I never cease imploring
my dear lady
to ease my griefs;
But she esteems herself so highly,
and I find her so stern and proud
and unyielding,
that all my begging
cannot soften her haughtiness

So I am going to make the acquaintance of another
who joy unbounded
will grant me freely
and cheerfully
without inconstant love
without diminishing;
And joy that proceeds from her
no man can assess.

2. And where can a man seek
the joy that cannot lessen
and cannot end
and which only increases
in joyous pleasure?
Not all the world, believe me,
could attain to it
except by loving and cherishing
the Lady who has no equal.

But a soul cannot perish
or come to damnation
if it will spend its days serving and praising her,
steadfastly.
For he who, without flinching,
will remain hers
will reign in glory
that cannot end.

3. It is she who, at the bidding
of the word and by the power
of the Holy Spirit who brought it about,
and by divine decree
issued by command of the Father,
conceived, though a virgin, without violence,
was pregnant, though a virgin, without sickness,
gave birth, though a virgin, without pain
to the Son of God, who took on our likeness
to rescue us all from wretchedness.

...

4. That these three are one, easily
I can prove as follows:
Think of a fountain,
its inflow and its outflow.
They are three, but these three I find
are all one, whether there is much or little (water in the
fountain),
Whether (you measure it) by pints or by barrels;
By all these three channels

there is water of one and the same flavor;
of that I am sure.

Hail, sovereign Queen,
you who shine above all things
more brightly than the pole star!
And so in the darkness of night
the water and the sweet fruit
of life took on human flesh
in your quickened womb.
So he is well rid of troubles
and of worldly misfortunes
whom you guide.

5. ...

In the same way the water of life came
and descended
directly into your womb,
conveyed and led
by the Holy Spirit,
who from it formed
the good, beautiful, wise one
who was the Son of God the Father
who consented
and willed
that he should take on human form and flesh,
and that he should die
and redeem the human race from Hell.

6. But this Trinity
is in eternity,
in possibility,
and in everything else,
in meaning, in quality,
in glory and truth,
one single unity, enclosed in God the Father,

Who through sweet pity
and true humility,
delivered us all
when in you, sweet Queen,
the Son assumed our humanity
in his great love.
This redeemed us all,
leaving Satan discomfited.

7. By the inflow I mean the Father:
By the fountain the Son,
who comes from the Father and was made man;
By the clear sweet outflow
the Holy Spirit; that is the sum total.
The Holy Spirit comes from the Father and the Son.
These six are three, if you add rightly
and with subtle intelligence.

But it would be better to be in Rome
or across the sea in exile
or thrown into the River Somme

or into the Jordan or the Nile,
than to believe anything but what a righteous man
can believe without peril.
For is anything worth an apple
with out God? I say no!

8. And therefore I say that these three
of our faith
made you the firm foundation
when the Son entered into you.
For in that I see
the Old Testament accomplished
and the Holy Sacrament established.
This teaches me
that the source of our religion
and of our salvation
is truly
the fountain—so I believe—

At which everyone drinks who is thirsty,
without hindrance;
And he who forever and ever
would live with the great King—
let him wash
in the stream that flows from it.
That is your true grace, which reaches out
to all those who in terror
often weep and wail
sadly
for the disorder of their sins.

9. Therefore I beg you,
Virgin,
hear my prayer,
for I blame
and renounce
and bewail the sins
that—old and indurated—
are in me.
I tremble at them for in the middle
of my heart they are fixed.

My soul I give to you
and grant it without delay,
and I choose you
above all others.
Be now my refuge
and be with me
against the Enemy,
for no friend
at all
have I in my misery.

10. But neither from such comfort
nor from weeping sorely
have I any comfort,
Virgin, unless you give me assurance
that you will soften the anger
of your Son...

Alas! Now I am at the port
of all discomfort
when I remember my sins

and so greatly am I discomforted
that I cannot express it,
for sin is killing me;
The Enemy never sleeps
but makes every effort
so that , when I am dead, in the book of death
He can write my name.

11. Ah! Fountain of blessing,
conduit of mercy,
stream that washes and heals
many sinners, river of sweetness,
hear my complaint:
Keep sin from gnawing me
so that the Enemy shall not bind me
with his fetters and his ropes,
for in you are all my goings
and my comings.

...And my heart desires and grants you
that it will remember your sweet salvation
so that from my heart there will rise and spring
a fountain of tears
and grief.

11. With it I will
wash away and cleanse
the vices that give me occasion
to commit sin.
Virgin, may I gain your grace,
so that I shall not stumble
into Satan's cauldron
or be caught in it.

Further I pray you,
Queen and light
of the angels, that your kindness will beg
of your dear Son
that his anger do not strike us
on the day of the Last Judgment
and that he will grant us
the perfect joy that has no end.

sonneries

THE PROGRAM

le lay de la fontienne (the lay of the fountain. lai no. 16.)

guillaume de machaut

(arranged by dan mahr)

amy williams prepared piano

tom bogdan voice

dan mahr voice, toy piano

piper maui suit

sonnekus²

john cage (with songs by erik satie)

amy williams piano

tom bogdan scribe

dan mahr voice

piper maui costumes

matt stolowitz parasol

I'll be brief here, so as not to give you, audience, too much reading material. Also, I don't want to give too much away. This concert began as I was watching a concert at the New England Conservatory this winter. It was some Haydn piece (don't like Haydn so much), and had me thinking of other things. My thought processes lead me to juxtapose these two pieces. They are remarkably similar in numerous ways—their dealings with the sacred, the French language, and a sort of abstract musicality—vocal music as music, not as *drama* (though both indeed have very dramatic characteristics)—all sort of brought themselves to light as common bonds. I thought I'd make the two as much as possible temporally, and artistically indiscernible—

I'll stop here. Please find the imagery in the texts and in the performance fodder for analysis. Let this music (not to be cheesy) speak to you. I do have something to say in performing tonight, but would rather you gleaned that from my actions than my preface.

Thank you for coming.

Dan Mohr

...The theatrical character of the piece is to suggest (not heavily) both church and cabaret.

The singer will make a program including silences of any lengths (and changes of dress) that presents all nine of these songs in the auditorium space. Elsewhere with accompaniment any cabaret songs by Satie may be performed (at a distance from the audience)...

The texts are derived from the first book of Moses, *Genesis*. They use MESOLIST (a program...which lists all the words in a source text that satisfy the Mink rule for a pure 100% mesostic, that is between two capitalized letters neither of the two appears) in conjunction with I (a program...which simulates the *I Ching* coin oracle and relates the numbers 1—64 to any other numbers 1—262, 144). They are called *Sonnekus* in reference to Satie's title *Sonneries de la Rose + Croix*.

—John Cage, from the performance note to *Sonnekus*².

TRANSLATIONS²

sonnekus²

Sarai
yOur body

aNah
aNd
with mE take food
of phaRaoh
hIs

bEgot
my Son

and Said
tO jacob their father

aNd
bowed himself to the grouNd

and said
thE
then you will be

Released

saId
bowEd
conceived and bore a Son

to jacob here iS this heap and here is this pillar
and tO his father's household i will go up and tell pharaoh

iNdeed he shall be blessed
aNd
thE men who went with me

then they made the pResent ready for joseph

our father Is old

crossEd over penuel

among hiS

the

diScerning and wise as
yOur body

please let your servaNt speak

abraham took the wood of the burNt

thEn abimelech said

now my loRds

please turn

theIr

blood from your hand

father'S
with yOu

the birds

with me

aNd he searched

but

afraid sayiNg
yoursElf and jacob

sand of the sea until he stopped counting

foR
and entered hIs
hE

killed him

dayS

then god remembered noah

tendrement

of a love
tender and pure
just so that you remember:
here is my heart
my trembling heart
my poor infant heart...
and here is a pale flower
that you have made open—
my soul, dying for you,
and for your eyes which are so sweet.

my soul is the chapel
where night and day
in front of your immortal grace
my faithful love prays on its two knees.
in the shadow and the mystery
it sings lovingly
a sweet prayer
pagan and so light—
it is your enchanting name.

the roses have blossomed
in the garden of my heart...
these roses are less pink
than your adorable blossoming lips.
with your cruel hands
of which I am jealous,
pluck the most beautiful petals that you can:
the garden is yours.

l'omnibus automobile

It was during the horror of Bastille Day,
it was hot, very hot, in the place Pigalle.
A big balloon, without sound, went gravely along
through the celestial road, unique and national.
One was thirsty, and the little trickle,
slave to fate, was going up from bottom to top.

It was about 9:35.
The sweet soft night had fallen with grace
and the little trickle was crying in its fountain,
When I saw going through the middle of the square
an omnibus, automobile, do you hear,
with the large red and green eyes of an owl.

The omnibus was empty, and the sign said "Full"
the seven flaming letters stood out against the blue
I followed, galloping, the monster, who was passing
running over, with expressions of hippopotami
women, children, dogs, and cops
deputies and plenty of other animals.

At last it stopped at the square of the Opera
and I saw that it was loaded with bags of plaster.
Those bags, the driver told me, those bags are there
to replace the obnoxious passenger;
We have been experimenting for more than twenty months
and these bags are to us as many important people.

But why, said I to the good driver of the bus,
who had just flattened these anonymous pedestrians,
Why bags instead of these dear people,
It is, he responded, in a portentous tone,
to avoid the accidents of those who might be inside.

It was during the horror of Bastille Day,
it was hot, very hot, in the place Pigalle.
A big balloon, without sound, went gravely along
through the celestial road, unique and national.
One was thirsty, and the little trickle,
prisoner of fate, was going up from bottom to top.

he Set him
a reckoning frOm
for you are eveN

like
aNd his
thE

blessed because abRaham obeyed

I
and you did not allow mE to
which
Shall tell you

brotherS
Of
husbaNd

egypt aNd
yoursElf and jacob

caught him by his gaRment

joseph and saId
to you and you may tradE in the land

then it happened

old and hiS

hiS feet and the feet
the lOve he had for her
they came to haraN
leah's maid zilpah bore jacob a soN

and sEt it up
loRd
to dwell wIth

garmEnt
tubal-cain

waS naamah

then lamech

and daughterS
and mOther

his haNd
aNd said
this is
thE people whom they had

the fouRth

Isaac
his namE

reuben
to do indeed Seven

je te veux

I understand your sorrow
dear beloved
and give in to your desire
make of me your mistress.
get us away from good sense
no more sadness
I long for the precious time
when we will be united
I want you.

I have no regrets
and only one desire
close to you, very close
to live all of my life
let my heart be yours
and your lips mine
your body mine
and all my flesh yours.

yes, I see in your eyes
the divine promise
that your enamored heart
will come with my caresses
we shall lay entwined forever
burned by the same flames
in dreams of love
we exchange our two souls.

la diva de l'empire

underneath her large Greenaway hat
casting the gleam of her smile
her fresh and delightful laughter
of a wondering baby who sighs
little girl with velvet eyes
it is the "Diva of the Empire"—
the queen who has smitten
the gentlemen and the dandys of Picadilly.

in a single yes she uses so much sweetness
that the snobs wearing heart-shaped vests,
welcoming her with frenetic bravos,
throw bouquets of flowers upon the stage,
without noticing the sardonic smile on her lips.

She dances almost like an automat
and lifts oh! so rhythmically
her petticoats and frills
those legs, revealing the quivering—
it's both very, very innocent, and very, very exciting.