

Bennington College Music Division

Presents

ROBERT BLACK, bass,

And

AMY KNOLES, percussion

In Concert

Monday, September 24, 1990

8:15 p.m.

Greenwall MusicWorkshop

[[[About The Performers...]]]

ROBERT BLACK

Robert Black regularly presents solo concerts throughout the United States and Europe, appearing at major festivals (Huddersfield, England; New Music America; Bang on a Can), on radio broadcasts (VPRO, Holland; Radio Bremen, Germany; WGBH, Boston) and in artist residencies (American Center, Paris; Studio P.A.S.S., New York; Real Art Ways, Hartford). He presently performs on the double bass, the electric upright bass, the electric bass guitar, and the MIDI bass guitar. His work with composers has resulted in over 30 commissioned works (including pieces by John Cage, Christian Wolff, Paul Dresher, James Sellars); music that covers a wide range of aesthetics and styles from the technological to the theatrical, improvisational to the rational.

He performs with the electro-acoustic performance group IRON COW, the soprano, piano, bass trio Hyperion, and the electric string trio Hot Extension Works. He also presents programs of contemporary music to school children. He actively collaborates with dance companies (School of Hard Knocks, NYC), theater groups (Perseverance Theater, Alaska; Music Theater Group, NYC). In addition, he performs with various symphony orchestras, is an active chamber musician, and teaches at the University of Connecticut.

He is the recipient of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts Solo Recitalist Program, the Canada Council, The New England Foundation for the Arts, and the Preston Fund. He has recorded for Neuma Records, Opus One, Folkways Records, and Magnetic Music.

Robert Black received his formal education at the Hartt School of Music as a student of Gary Karr and Leland Tolo, and at the University of North Texas, where he studied with Edward Rainbow.

***Program ***

Count Your Change (1990) ARTHUR JARVINEN
(Bass and K.A.T. Mallet)

Mirrors PAUL DRESHER
(Solo Bass)

Pentagram (1989) GREG FISH
(Solo Drum K.A.T.)

INTERMISSION

Big & Cheap (1990) BLACK/KNOLES
(Bass and Computer/
Electronic Percussion)

Leb Telu* (1990) KEN STEEN
(Solo Bass)

Delicate Switches/Mallet Vectors (1988) PETER OTTO
(Solo K.A.T. Mallet)

T 4 2 (1990) JEFF RONA
(Bass and K.A.T. Mallet)

The Ken Steen work was funded in part by a grant from the New England Foundation For The Arts and Meet The Composer, Inc., with additional support from the Connecticut Commission On The Arts and the National Endowment For The Arts.

AMY KNOLES

Amy Knoles has firmly established herself as one of the foremost percussionists of the contemporary music world. She has been touring extensively with a program of solo percussion and electronics, using computer, an array of samplers and synthesizers, electronic drums, and the K.A.T. MIDI Mallet Instrument (which resembles a marimba with rubber pads that is capable of triggering all of the sounds known to the electronic music world). Amy has recently been working in the realm of creating electronic musical environments for works of art in galleries as well as sound scores for video and dance, the most notable being an evening of music she created and performed for the Robert Longo exhibit "Men In The Cities" at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. She has also commissioned a repertoire of pieces that thoroughly explore the diversity of today's new music world. Composers have written pieces for her that involve live interaction with computer, laser beams triggering MIDI computer sequences, theatrical performance, placing rocks on the K.A.T., rock style drumming, minimalist phasing, vocal synthesis, serialist techniques, and even scratching and rapping. All of this has come together to create many exciting evenings of music as well as inspiring workshops and seminars resulting in the creation of even more varied works for the medium.

As a founding member of the California E.A.R. UNIT, currently Ensemble in Residence at the L.A. County Museum of Art, Amy has worked closely with composers such as Pierre Boulez, Morton Subotnick, John Cage, Morton Feldman, Steve Reich, Elliott Carter, Frederic Rzewski, Louis Andriessen, Joan LaBarbara, John Adams, Bunita Marcus, Henry Brant, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Mel Powell, Earl Brown, Mauricio Kagel, Steven Mosko, Rand Steiger, Arthur Jarvinen, and Kirsten Vogelsang. She has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, The Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, The Ars Electronica Festival (Linz Austria), the Aspen Music Festival, The Montepulciano Festival (Italy), The International Music Theatre

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Arthur Jarvinen
COUNT YOUR CHANGE

"Count Your Change" is one of three short pieces from a collection-in-progress called EDIBLE BLACK INK. The finished work will consist of six or seven duets for electric bass and marimba (or electric guitar), which can be used alone or in various combinations. The pieces are characterized by the independence of the two parts, which only occasionally line up in a clearly noticeable manner, even though their coordination is very precise at all times. I compose each duet by creating the entire bass part first, then writing the other part in reference to it. In the case of "Count Your Change" the bass part is simply a one measure ostinato.

A.J.

Paul Drescher
MIRRORS (for Steinberger bass and electronics)

For several years bassist Robert Black had been requesting I compose a work for him. I had been reluctant to accept, primarily because nearly all my works for many years had been for moderate to large ensembles or for myself as a soloist (on electric guitar) performing with electronics. After I had seen him give a virtuoso performance and when he asked me to compose a work for electric bass and electronics, I felt I could find a way to develop the piece. I was given an extended loan of a Steinberger instrument which I immediately fell in love with and I met with Robert and surveyed in detail his techniques on both the electric and acoustic bass and the various opportunities presented by his particular set of electronic apparatus. Early in the process, I made the decision to continue with my nearly-religious interdiction against utilizing pre-recorded tape and to focus entirely on creating a work that is performed "live".

MIRRORS (Cont'd.)

I have written this piece as much as possible in the spirit of my own solo works with electronics. Thus the composition is a framework of harmonic, rhythmic/metrical, timbral and technical elements that are the basis for a certain amount of choices made in the moment of performance. I am reluctant to call this improvisation because the choices are within a narrow range. It is more like an "elastic" form in that the performer can choose to repeat or vary certain sections as long as it is holding musical interest and working in concert with the overall form and proportions of the work. The principle difference in a performance of this type is that the task of the performer is less to proceed through the score than it is to listen to the results of the performance of the score (including the performer's sense of the audience's response) and then to respond within the range of options presented by the score.

I want to give thanks to Robert Black for both his persistence and then patience with my working process and also to Ned Steinberger for creating such excellent instruments.

Paul Dresher
September 24, 1989

Greg Fish
PENTAGRAM (1985, revised 1989)

First written as a dance piece, Pentagram also exists as a modern dance video created in collaboration with L.A. choreographer Adria Wilson and cinematographer Lon Thompson. This version, which now includes live Midi drum controller was commissioned by and revised especially for percussionist Amy Knoles.

The work reflects the composer's interest in high contrast material and also features a velocity sensitive FM vowel instrument. Pentagram has been performed at a number of festivals including American Music Week in Atlanta and Boulder, the 1988 New Music and Art Festival at Bowling Green State University, and was second place winner of the 1987 Third Coast New Music Project in San Antonio.

Black/Knoles BIG & CHEAP

"Big & Cheap" is a bi-coastal collaborative composition born in Orono, Maine on March 9th, 1990, written by Robert Black and Amy Knoles. This piece is an exploration of the bass, electronic percussion, reverberation, digital delay, harmonization, sampling, computer rhythm programming, human tendencies, and the phrase "there's no accounting for Hole Flow".

Ken Steen
LEB TELU

Leb Telu is a work composed for the Steinberger/Photon MIDI Bass Guitar with a Yamaha TX-81Z FM Tone Generator, Yamaha SPX-90 DEP and other electronic devices. It was composed specifically for Robert Black. A true hybrid, this instrument is a combination of fretless electric bass, electric guitar (the MIDI Bass is tuned in the same octave as the electric guitar) and a synthesizer controller. The point of departure for this work is the synthetic extension of the guitar. Rather than compose a piece that exploits the resources of the TX-81Z by itself (with additional processing), I chose to use it as well as all of the other devices as extensions of the bass/guitar. Virtually all of the synthesizer timbres used are ones which grow out of or are initiated by the timbre of the bass/guitar. Others take on the character of a resonance being melded with the timbral quality of the bass/guitar. First and foremost, though, I wanted to compose a piece that was technically well suited to the bass/guitar and that as an electro-acoustic piece would be performed entirely in real time. I use the term bass/guitar to represent the hybridized nature of the instrument even without being hooked up to a synthesizer. Depending on the techniques used, the instrument can take on the timbral qualities of both bass and guitar, as well as combinations of the two.

The commissioning of this work was made possible through support from The New England Foundation for the Arts, Meet the Composer, Metroplex and additional individual support.

Peter Otto

DELICATE SWITCHES: MALLET VECTORS

Mallet vectors is an exploration of real-time, interactive instrumental possibilities. Through out the work the computer "listens" to the player and issues a variety of responses. Sometimes these responses echo the player, sometimes they are accompanimental, and often they are "extensions" of kinetic gestures that cross into the realm of physically unplayable figures, using compositional algorithms.

Mallet Vectors was written using Robert B. Dannenberg's Carnegie Mellon University Midi Tool Kit. The piece is dedicated to the memory of Morton Feldman and was written for Amy Knoles.

Jeffrey Rona

' T 4 2 '

"T 4 2" is a revised version of the piece "T" written for Amy Knoles. "T" gave me an opportunity to explore some rhythmic possibilities made feasible only by the unique instrument for which it was written. From this process I have endeavored to create a work which flows in some unexpected ways and elicits a joyous texture. Digital samplers, such as the one used in the piece, can be used not only to capture simple sounds, but also rhythms and phrases which can be played as an "instrument". The piece uses a single, simple repeating rhythmic motif as its sonic foundation as was written to explore a wide variety of polyrhythmic and harmonic counterpoints. The bass serves both as a counterpoint and a rhythmic support for the electronics.

Institute (Paris and Amsterdam), The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and was a soloist on The Ojai Festival (California). Ms. Knoles is a faculty member at California State University-Los Angeles, and conducts creative workshops on electronic music for men and women in state correctional facilities.

Highlights of previous tours were performances at Yale University, Ball State University, the N.A.M.E. Gallery (Chicago), the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, the New Music Festival (Bowling Green), L.A.C.E. Gallery (Los Angeles), S.E.A.M.U.S. Festival (Seattle), the Musica Da Camera Series (Milwaukee), and the Contemporary Directions Series at the University of Michigan. Amy will be performing a solo piece written for her by Mel Powell at the Kennedy Center this October. Ms. Knoles received a Brody Grant to commission new works for her tours, and is currently on the California Arts Council Touring Roster.