

Concert Review

On a Monday night, November 7, 2016, I attended the Kontakte concert at the Old Cabell Hall Auditorium at 8:00 pm. The concert was part of the McIntire Department of Music as well as had special guest artists such as Stuart Gerber and Stephen Drury. The program was divided into four sections: Nasenflugeltanz composed by Karlheinz Stockhausen, Carny composed by John Zorn, Chameleon I written by Eric Lyon, and Kontakte composed by Karlheinz Stockhausen. Stuart Gerber performed Nasenflugeltanz and Chameleon I piece, and Stephen Drury performed the Carny piece. In this review, I will be focusing on the Nasenflugeltanz and Carny piece.

Both Stuart Gerber and Stephen Drury are brilliant performers. Stephen Drury is known to be a pianist and a conductor who has performed all over the world with a selection from Bach to Liszt to the popular music today and at incredible places such as the Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center and etc. Drury has received the honor to be chosen by the Affiliate Artists for its Xerox Pianists Program in 1985. As well as, he was a prize-winner in the Carnegie Hall/Rockefeller Foundation Competitions in American Music, and was selected by the US information Agency for its Artistic Ambassador Program and a 1986 European recital tour. This astonishing performer won other awards such as the Solo Recitalist Fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts and the “Musician of the Year” by the Boston Globe. As mentioned, his compositions ranged from the piano symphonies of Charles Ives to works by John Cage and Frederic Rzewski. Stuart Gerber was also known to be a superb performer and composer. New York Times acclaimed him to have “consummate virtuosity.” Percussionist Gerber has also played around the world especially in US, Europe, Australia, and Mexico. He has been involved in many world-premiere performances such as the Karlheinz Stockhausen’s last solo percussion work Himmels-Tur in Italy and his percussion trio Mittwoch-Formel at the annual Stockhausen-Courses in Germany. Furthermore to his work with Stockhausen, Stuart worked with many prominent composers such as Vinko Globokar, Steve Reich, George Crumb, and many more. As a pedagogue Dr. Gerber presented a lecture-recital at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention and papers at the Midwest Band. Gerber was also founding member of the Bent

Frequency, an Atlanta-based new music group, who performed all over the world as on half of the piano-percussion duo Ensemble Sirius and as an extra percussionist with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

Pieces such as the Nasenflugeltanz and Carny were quite intriguing and different to me. Nasenflugeltanz music piece drew my attention. As I was listening to the piece, I took notes such as plays with three sticks, played on different blocks, steady tempo in the background like an echo almost, plays on a circle instrument that gives off this high frequency in the background, and etc. Nasenflugeltanz was originally written as part of the Luzifers Tanz from the third scene of the opera, Samstag aus Licht. The instruments and dance in the piece represent different parts of the face such as the right eye, the upper lip, the cheeks, and the nose. However, in 1988 Stockhausen re-orchestrated the Nasenflugeltanz to be a solo percussion piece such that the percussionist sings a part of the vocal section that Lucifer sings in the opera. For example, Nase gegen Backe meant Nose against cheek, and Gegen Auge und Braue meant Nose against eye and brow. As I was listening to the piece, I've heard lots of synthetic and processed natural/organized sounds. The natural sounds came from instruments that were not instruments but created this "natural", matching sound such as using the metal foil to create somewhat of high frequency note (I think). As well as I heard many different cyber melodies that kind of resembled how my third project was structured. In my opinion, there was less smooth crossfading, but rather more distinct melodies. In particular, there was a part that resembled an "ahhhh" scream that would be heard in a horror movie, especially with the chimes/bells playing in the background. In the beginning it seemed like there was a pattern of playing with three sticks then four sticks, but all of sudden it seemed like Gerber was somewhat experimenting and just playing sounds that resembled parts of the face which was quite interesting from a non-musical background perspective. Overall, I thought Gerber's technique and composition was beautiful. John Zorn's Carny was commissioned by and written to Stephen Drury with the funding from Meet the Composer in 1991. The Carny piece, at first sounded the opposite from Nasenflugeltanz piece, but after listening to all of it, I have found similar styles between the two. For example, both had this "randomization"

style, and echoes. It seemed to me that Carny was played with more of smooth crossfade (ascends and descends) and only some dynamic, sudden sounds were played such as when Drury played the piano as if he was taking his anger out on the piano. Carny's composition works with the structure of collage of fragments that range from recognizable notes to pure sonic texture, an intercut like tape slicing when different pieces were rammed together to create an emerged rhythm. Some of the key things I remember from this performance is that there were very dramatic notes played followed by soft notes, and that it seemed as if random keys were being played at first, but each key was somewhat jumping and transitioning from one unique sound to another by representing this melody of unpredictable adjacent keys being played. I also thought the Carny was different take on the music I listen to, but perfect resemblance of a cybernetic piano.