Williams Symphonic Winds

Feminine Beginnings: Music of Love, Loss, and Sacred Ecstasy

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> From Plato to Artusi to Hanslick, anxieties about music's power have been elaborated through metaphors of gender, sexual difference, and sexual allure. The result has been a long tradition of metaphorically associating the control of music with the control of women…. Since the 1970s, sparked by the women's movement that has since come to be called the "second wave" of feminism, feminists who were also musicians or musicologists have asked two seemingly innocent questions about music: (1) where are the women in music, in music's history? and (2) what are the representations of women in music, in the music we love and continually recanonize in our performances, our teaching, our speaking and writing about music?
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> Suzanne G. Cusick: "Gender, Musicology, and Feminism" from *Rethinking Music*

Inspired by feminist music philosophies (in particular, that developed by Susan McClary in her *Feminine Beginnings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*), this evening's concert features the feminine in music in numerous disparate guises. With works *by* women juxtaposed with works *about* women, with vocal and instrumental music spanning the range of over 800 years, and with works exploring distinctions between the sacred and the secular—the spiritual and the physical—*Feminine Beginnings* hopes to provoke thought about the relationship between music and gender.

Hildegard of Bingen: selections from *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum*

Omnis caelestis harmonia speculum divinitatis est,
et homo speculum omnium miraculorum est Dei.

All celestial harmony is a mirror of divinity,
And man is a mirror of all the miracles of God.

-Hildegard, *Causes and Cures*

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) has been called the first medieval woman to reflect on and write about women—Matthew Fox has said: "If Hildegard had been a man, she would be well known as one of the greatest artists and intellectuals the world has ever seen." Born to noble parents in the small village of Bemersheim, she was, at the age of eight, put into the care of Jutta of Spanheim, abbess of a small community of nuns attached to the Benedictine monastery of Disibodenberg near Bingen. In 1141, having succeed Jutta as abbess, she devoted herself to a life of intense and passionate creativity. Exceptional for a woman—since preaching by women was not just uncommon, it was explicitly forbidden on the authority of St. Paul—she undertook four preaching missions through Germany between 1160 and 1170. As Philip of Heinsberg, Dean of the Cathedral of Cologne, remarked after one of Hildegard's sermons: "We were greatly astonished that God works through such a fragile vessel, such a fragile sex, to display the marvels of his secrets." Maud Burnett McInerney believes that this contrast:

> …between her fragile, feminine self and the divine voice which spoke through it, was one which Hildegard amplified, developed, and indeed exploited throughout her life. It became the foundation of an authority which was not subject to the laws of church or state, and which freed Hildegard to devote her extraordinary, erratic, and eclectic intellect to an improbable range of subjects. Abbess, virgin, prophet, poet, theologian, scientist, musician, natural historian, exorcist, excommunicate, and saint—no single figure of the Middle Ages embodies quite so many contradictions.

From the age of five Hildegard experienced visions, and she was famous for her prophecies and miracles. Later described as the "Sybil of the Rhine" and the "feather on the breath of God," she was consulted by and held lengthy correspondences with popes, emperors and other secular and ecclesiastical leaders as well as lower members of the clergy and lay persons, and involved herself in politics and diplomacy at a time of immense political and ecclesiastical turmoil. Among her literary works, she produced two books on natural history and medicine (*Physica* and *Cause et cure*) and a morality play, the *Ordo Virtutum*, which pre-dates all other works in

that genre by some hundred years. Her book of visions, *Scivias*, occupied her for ten years between 1141 and 1151. Her large collection of music and poetry, the *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum*—"the symphony of the harmony of celestial revelations"—which she continued to enlarge and enrich throughout her life, contains some of the finest songs ever written in the Middle Ages. This is a work of deeply engaged artistry—in Hildegard's words, of "writing, seeing, hearing, and knowing all in one manner."

Collection of Hildegard's musical settings of her poetry had begun by the early 1150s but the settings themselves may go back at least to the 1140s. The texts are laden with brilliant imagery and share the apocalyptic language of the visionary writings, while on another level, the songs are meditations upon visionary texts that in turn represent poetically condensed exegesis of complex theological issues, expressed at greater length in the prose trilogy of visions. A distinctly "romantic" strain in Hildegard's aesthetics is revealed by her strong interest in the expressive rather than the formal qualities of music. When compared with contemporary hymns and sequence, Hildegard's chants will sound either primitive or unnervingly avant-garde; Barbara Newman believes that "in a sense they are both." As a Benedictine, Hildegard would have been acquainted with a large repertoire of chant, but she lacked formal training and made no attempt to imitate the mainstream poetic and musical achievements of her day. In her memoirs, Hildegard recalled, with her characteristic blend of diffidence, pride, and wonder, how she began to compose: "untaught by anyone, I composed and chanted plainsong in praise of God, although I had never studied either musical notation or any kind of singing." Newman states that: "Hildegard brought to her songs a directness, an imagistic bravura, that does away with the boundary between dogmatic statement and rhapsodic expression. Her sentences are not concisely crafted, but their irregular flow has a rhythm of its own." An eccentric feature of much of Hildegard's music is the exceedingly wide vocal range—she not only frequently employs large leaps, but many songs have an ambitus of two octaves, and some even of two and a half. Many of her contemporaries, though, were taken with the unique beauty of her music—Dieter of Echternach described it as: "chant of surpassingly sweet harmony."

The antiphon ***Quia ergo femina***—which proclaims the exaltation of woman *per se* on account of Mary—is emblematic of the "curious" position afforded the Marian chants within the *Symphonia*. As Pfau writes: "They hold second place within the hierarchical arrangement of the song cycle…. Hildegard celebrates Mary as the second Eve, the Mother of God who has made good what Eve has thrown into confusion. She is as pure as a resplendent jewel and as luminous matter. Because God has chosen her for the incarnation of his Word, Mary stands among the Trinity." Newman also observes that the phrase "feminea forma" is one of Hildegard's leitmotivs: "it denotes both the Platonic idea and the physical beauty of woman, although it could also have the connotations of humility and weakness, traits that medieval writers generally ascribed to women."

In ***O viridissima virga***, Hildegard skillfully elaborates a favorite motif in medieval manuscript paintings and catherdral windows: Mary as the branch of the Tree of Jesse, which represents the genealogy of Christ. As Christopher Page writes: "Mary's fertility endows the animal and vegetable kingdoms with new life and brings Mankind to God throughout the sheer joy of contemplating the Divine agency." Newman agrees, believing that the first stanza is an analogous verbal icon. As she observes:

> In the remainder of the lyric, the tree image is developed with skill and subtlety, enriched by a plethora of biblical echoes. The medieval singer or listener would no doubt recall the rich spices in the Song of Songs, Christ's parable of the green tree and the dry tree (Luke 23:31), the Advent antiphon beseeching dew from the heavens (Isaiah 45:8), and the great tree of the Kingdom in which the birds of the air build their nests (Matthew 13:32). The "meal" of wheat bread is of course the Eucharist, which is also the heavenly wedding feast. In *Scivias* II.6.26 Hildegard explained that only wheat is used for the sacramental bread, because it is a dry and pure grain, free from pith as Mary was free from "the pith of man."

Generally regarded as one of Hildegard's most beautiful hymns, ***Ave generosa*** is "a testimony of Hildegard's devotion to the Virgin" (Christopher Page) and "a paean to the bride of God" (Barbara Newman). While Mary is hailed in the first stanza as "matrix of sanctity," Hildegard blends her frequently erotic images of flowering and music, revealing that "it is Christ himself, the New Song, who unfolds in Mary, so her womb contains in essence the complete consort of celestial music…. The chase eroticism of such lyrics is a characteristic of medieval mood, no less fervent for being virginal, nor less delicate for being ardent." (Newman)

Henry Purcell: *Funeral Music for Queen Mary* (1695)
(transcribed and elaborated by Steven Stucky, 1992)

> Purcell's *Funeral Music for Queen Mary* arranged by Steven Stucky is dramatic, tense, highly stirring stuff, awesomely beautiful in its simplicity, almost heart-breaking in the intensity of the pleading in the anthems.
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> -Glyn Mon Hughes, Daily Post [Liverpool, UK]

When Queen Mary II (wife of King William III) died suddenly on December 28, 1694, of smallpox, an elaborate, public funeral ceremony was planned. Queen Mary's death was a devastating blow which deeply affected the entire country—Mary had been a much loved monarch and the public demanded a funeral which reflected its devotion, despite Mary's request to be buried "without extraordinary expense." No expense was spared, estimation of the cost being over £100,000. After a two-week lying-in-state at Whitehall, the immense funeral processional moved through the bleak streets of London to Westminster Abbey, the rails lining the path draped with black cloth by architect Christopher Wren. The hundreds of mourners who joined the "Queen's Chariot" (the horse-drawn royal hearse) in the processional included nobility, government officials, the Gentlemen and Children of the Chapel, over 50 musicians (including 30 military drummers), and "three hundred somber old women…dressed in black capes with boys carrying their trains." (Jonathan Freeman-Attwood) As the leading English composer of the day and as organist at Westminster Abbey, **Henry Purcell** (1659-1695) would have been expected to provide music for this solemn occasion—and how perfectly the occasion leant itself to Purcell's evocative and bittersweet music.

Exactly what music of Purcell's was performed, and even when/where it was performed, has been the subject of much scholarly debate. Conflicting eyewitness accounts state the procession was accompanied by music of oboes, trumpets, and drums, but also that the musicians were symbolically silent, simply carrying their instruments during the procession. Most likely, the oboe marches written by Purcell's contemporaries James Paisible and Thomas Tollett were performed during the procession, while Purcell's ***The Queen's Funeral March*** was performed with the four flatt trumpets (reverse slide trumpets which allowed for the performance of music in minor keys) standing in front of the main doors of Westminster Abbey as her coffin was brought up the center aisle. (Interestingly, the March may not have been composed specifically for the occasion, but rather Purcell may have self-borrowed; around the same time as the royal funeral, Purcell also used this music as a prelude for a scene of infernal spirits poised to claim the soul of Don John [Don Juan] in Thomas Shadwell's play *The Libertine*. Regardless, Purcell clearly intended no disrespect—just that "the fitness of the notes and instruments" was constant. [Roger Savage])

During the service, seven funeral sentences from the Book of Common Prayer would have been sung as anthems. Whose anthems were sung, though, is not definitely known. While it has often been assumed that, due to his official status, Purcell's setting of sentences #4-6 were sung during the funeral, it is not clear that is the case. Rather, it seems that Thomas Morley's setting (1552) of the Funeral Sentences were regarded as the official sentences for state funerals from the end of the Tudor Dynasty. However, as Morley's setting was customarily sung incomplete because his setting of the sixth sentence (*Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts*) had been lost, it seems that Purcell composed his celebrated anthem on this text expressly for the Queen's funeral, presumably to have been inserted into Morley's setting. Long admired for the purity of its antique style (set in a conservative homophony rare in Purcell's late vocal music) that perfectly matches Morley's setting, Purcell's anthem is not merely imitative pastiche, but rather utilizes a much more intense harmonic language. In fact, Thomas Tudway, in discussing music suitable for devotion, gives an account of the funeral, and this anthem, in particular:

> compos'd by Mr. Henry Purcell, after y[e] old way; and sung at y[e] interrment of Queen Mary in Westminster Abbey; a great Queen, and extremely Lamented, being there so interr'd, ev'ry body present, was dispos'd, and serious, at so solemn a Service, as indeed they ought to be at all parts of divine Worship; I appeal to all y[t] were present, as well such as understood Music, as those y[t] did not, whither, they ever heard anything, so rapturously fine, so solemn, and so Heavenly, in y[e] Operation, wch drew tears from all; and yet a plain Naturall Composition, wch shews y[e] pow'r of Music, when 'tis rightly fitted and Adapted to devotional purposes.

The anthem included in Stucky's transcription, though, is not *Thou Knowest Lord,* but rather the fifth sentence, ***In the midst of life***. Believed to have been written sometime before 1680, possibly for the funeral of one Purcell's teachers, Christopher Gibbons, this setting is now thought not to have been sung during the Queen's funeral. The text of this sentence is as follows:

> In the midst of life we are in death;
> Of whom may we seek succour but of thee, O Lord?
> Who for our sins art justly displeased.
> Yet, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful saviour,
> Deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

Immediately after the singing of *Thou knowest, Lord* during the funeral ceremony, the ***Canzona*** was performed to accompany the elaborate ceremony associated with the internment of the Queen's body, when officers of her household formally broke their white staves of office, and cast them into her tomb together with the keys and badges that were their official emblems. Its opening phrases were based on the same music of the *March*, but now intricately developed into a four-part contrapuntal piece in imitative polyphonic style for four flatt trumpets. As scholar Bruce Wood writes, the *Canzona* "is a piece so formidably difficult that even the best trumpeters today are not entirely comfortable about playing it live."

As John Eliot Gardiner writes: "Purcell provided surely the most fitting and moving music that has ever been composed for a royal funeral. One feels that in expressing the national mood of mourning, Purcell was also voicing personal feelings of genuine grief." No one could have foreseen that not eight months after the funeral of Queen Mary II, this music would be heard again—this time at the funeral of Henry Purcell. All of musical London attended his funeral in Westminster Abbey, celebrating one of the most important 17th-century composers and one of the greatest of all English composers, who wrote not only influential sacred music, but also monumental theater works such as *Dido and Aeneas*. At this funeral, his own music was performed, including his setting of the sentences, as well as the *The Queen's Funeral March* and *Canzona*.

At the suggestion of Esa-Pekka Salonen, music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, **Steven Stucky** (b. 7 November 1949, Hutchinson, Kansas) transcribed Purcell's music for the winds, brass, and percussion sections of that orchestra. Professor of Music at Cornell University and Consulting Composer for New Music (formerly composer-in-residence) of the LAPO, Stucky admits to being interested in arrangements made by other composers; writing about his relationship to past masters, Stucky writes: "One kind of artist is always striving to annihilate the past, to make the world anew in each new work, and so to triumph over the dead weight of routine. I am the other kind … who only sees his way forward by standing on the shoulders of those who have already cleared the path ahead." In works such as his *Dreamwaltzes* for orchestra, Stucky has created provocative post-modern collage-works that cleverly juxtapose past musics with his contemporary compositional sensibilities, creating engaging, imaginative pieces that are expressively potent. While was a part of two Grammy-winning, Billboard-charting, bestselling CDs by Chanticleer and he won the Pulitzer Prize in 2005 for his *Second Concerto for Orchestra*, Stucky jokes that his most commercially successful work to date is an arrangement of a piece written by a man who died 400 years ago—Henry Purcell's *Funeral Music for Queen Mary*: "It's my greatest hit by far. There are like five different recordings of the Purcell." Stucky has written the following regarding his transcription of Purcell's music:

> In working on this project, I did not try to achieve a pure, musicological reconstruction, but, on the contrary, to regard Purcell's music, which I love, through the lens of three hundred intervening years. Thus, although most of this version is straightforward orchestration of the Purcell originals, there are moments when Purcell drifts out of focus.

Although he humbly acknowledged that "most" of the piece is pure Purcell, Stucky actually did much more than simply assign pitches to new instruments. As Anne Midgette of the New York Times wrote: "Mr. Stucky set off Purcell's music as if in quotation marks, with a sense of distance built in. Sometimes the melody dwindled to a mere outline, like a bald patch in an old tapestry; at other times it withdrew behind a gentle overlay of modern harmonies, which slightly distorted it, as if viewed through rippled glass." Martin Bernheimer of the Los Angeles Times added: "Stucky… added violent percussion punctuation to the solemn Baroque lines. He has also blurred some of the essential harmonic formulas – gently yet deliriously. The result, a modernist's vision of

antiquity, beguiles even when it flirts with stylistic perversity." Stucky has created an urgent dramatic scene out of the juxtaposition of musical selections and with his interpolations; while it seems intuitive that the addition of "modern" sounds into the Baroque world of Purcell might distance us from the composer's affect, in fact, Stucky has heightened the poignancy, creating a sublime expression of noble strength, sorrow, and love.

Elizabeth Maconchy: *Music for Brass and Woodwind* (1966)

"You will only get married and never write another note."

While Elizabeth Maconchy (19 March 1907–11 November 1994) was by no means an active feminist, her early career as a composer seems to have been defined to a large extent by her gender. While her first major premiere—an August 1930 performance of her *The Land* led by Sir Henry Wood led at the Proms—elicited The Daily Telegraph's music critic Herbert Hughes to declare the suite "a work of art that is in every way distinguished and masterly," the newspaper's headline simply read: "GIRL composer's triumph." In the same week, Maconchy fulfilled the first half of the admonition—made by the Royal College of Music director as justification for not granting the prestigious Mendelssohn Award to Maconchy in the 1920s—when she married the scholar and medical historian William LeFanu. But, as composer Richard Rodney Bennett wrote in his obituary for Maconchy: "far from 'never writing another note,' she became one of the most distinguished and admirable composers of our time." In fact, by the time of her death in 1994, she was a Dame Commander of the British Empire, President of the Society for the Promotion of New Music, and a much respected leader of her profession. While she would joke that she had to compose between feeds, nappy changes, and bottling homemade jam, Betty (as she was known to her friends and colleagues) created a body of work that have led critics to label her "Britain's first great female composer" and the "foremost British woman composer of the twentieth century." However, although most music critics regard Maconchy as the equal of her two British—and male—contemporaries, Benjamin Britten and Michael Tippett, her music is much less well-known outside of the United Kingdom and has been largely neglected since her death, prompting British journalist Martin Anderson to describe her as "our finest lost composer." Perhaps, as Anthony Burton writes: "If anniversaries are to play a constructive part in the evolution of the repertoire, rather than simply provide an excuse for more recycling of already familiar Mozart or Shostakovich, then the centenary of Elizabeth Maconchy's birth in 2007 should provide the ideal opportunity to make a start."

Ralph Vaughan Williams and Bela Bartók, so strikingly different in their natures, formed the starting-points from which Maconchy's entire individual musical character emerged. The only musician in her Irish family, she began to compose when she was six; growing up far from the musical establishment; she had heard an orchestra only once (in a performance of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony) before her family moved to London when she was sixteen years old so that she could study with Vaughan Williams at the Royal College of Music (1923-1929). Maconchy remarked that studying with Vaughan Williams "was like turning on a light…. [He was] a wonderful man and a tremendous influence." He was a great encouragement and told Maconchy that, "brilliance for its own sake was 'not allowed;' that one must have an adequate technique and express one's ideas in the clearest way." Although her music rarely exhibited the pastoral elegance of her mentor, her ability to use elaborate contrapuntal devices (what she called "dramatic counterpoint") to poignantly expressive ends and her free synthesis of modal, tonal, and atonal harmonic elements certainly stem from his influence. In his final report Vaughan Williams wrote that he was "very sorry to lose her—but I can teach her no more—she will work for her own salvation and will go far." While at the RCM, she became acquainted with Bartók's music, which was a revelation to her and remained an important source of inspiration throughout her life; she followed her instinct towards central European modernism, discovering and being influenced by the music of Bartók, Janácek and Berg. As Burton writes: "Of course, her language developed over the years, the rhythms becoming more intricate and the harmonies more astringent, the forms always invented anew. But her approach remained constant." While Maconchy's musical language evolved over the years, her works always enshrined her conception of music as "an intellectual art, a balanced and reasoned statement of ideas, an impassioned argument, an intense but disciplined expression of emotion."

Maconchy was a composer of great versatility and unfailing integrity. She viewed being a composer as "a wonderful life sentence from which there is no escape…. If one is a composer one cannot get away from it, even if one wanted to—it is the idea for being alive." Describing her mother as "a committed musician,"

composer Nicola LeFanu believes that "the intensity in her musical language is very striking. In her day, people found it challenging; she was criticized—for a woman to be so intellectual and rigorous in her approach! She was no stranger to dissonance, but she used it in an expressive way (not just for angularity). [Her music] was passionate and intense. It reveals more with each hearing; it is not necessarily easy on first hearing, but it is rewarding because the more you listen, the more you get from it." As Anderson observes, Maconchy "often encountered prejudice: the genteel critical fraternity of mid-century Britain found the unabashed, almost ferocious intellectual passion of her music too much to take—'aggressive,' sniffed Eric Blom, unnerved that a woman could demonstrate such wanton muscularity." By the end of her career, however, she was no longer considered the *enfant terrible*; as Anthony Payne wrote in 1995: "Elizabeth Maconchy was not such a radical figure and sustained links with her less modernistic contemporaries. Yet she forged musical processes with an intellectual rigour that matched an intense range of emotion… So personal in tone are [her] works that the composer seems to be talking to you with complete candour, and you are only too ready to be her confidant."

Maconchy once said that she sought in her music a "passionately intellectual and an intellectually passionate discourse;" as Bennett remarked: "She never wrote a note that could not be logically accounted for, nor a phrase that was not 'heard' and 'felt'—a quality that every composer should aim for." While she values logic most in musical thinking, she believed that "emotion is implicit in nature of musical idea," and that the "underlying emotion is the whole purpose of writing music—improving one's technique, using discipline, using everything to express emotion that underlies the idea, the simplicity of the idea." In February 1952, Maconchy elaborated, saying:

> Writing music, like all creative art, is the impassioned pursuit of an idea…. The great thing is for the composer to keep his head and allow nothing to distract him. The temptations to stop by the way and to be side-tracked by fecilities of sound and colour are ever present, but in my view everything extraneous to the pursuit of this central idea must be rigorously excluded—scrapped.

Although her music ranged from opera through vocal, orchestral and educational works, it was in chamber music that her creative voice found its strongest expression—and while her catalogue of chamber and instrumental music includes a number of beautifully-fashioned pieces such as oboe and clarinet quintets, and a wind quintet, Maconchy's particular musical individuality emerges most distinctly in her 13 string quartets, which she described as "my best and most deeply-felt works." She used those words to explain her attachment to the medium, which resulted in an outstanding sequence, spanning more than fifty years (1933-1984) that rivals the series of Haydn, Beethoven, Bartok, and Shostakovich.

While Maconchy professed that her first love was writing for string instruments, her style and language work to spectacular effect in her ***Music for Brass and Woodwind*** (1966). Written for the 1966 Thaxted Festival, the work was conceived to make use of the architecture of the Thaxted Church, described as "the finest parish church in the country" and "the grandest in the county of Essex"—the opening intonations by the trombones were to be played processing up the aisle, while the horns entered from the Lady Chapel. However, since the first performances at Thaxted by the Morley College Wind Ensemble conducted by Graham Treacher, the work lay neglected until revived in 1984 by the RNCM Wind Ensemble conducted by Timothy Reynish.

Maconchy wrote that the form of a piece "must proceed from the nature of the musical ideas themselves—one cannot simply pour music into a ready-made mould. The composer must try to evolve a form that is the inevitable outcome of his own musical ideas and provides for their fullest expression." In the case of *Music for Brass and Woodwind*, the resultant form is a Stravinskian mosaic that is "filled" with blocks of sound that alternate an haunting, almost liturgically stoic brass theme with elegiac woodwind solos and a fleet, biting scherzo. Ann MacNaughton believes that Maconchy's music "gives the impression of pent-up energy and emotion, disturbing and exciting, often vehement"—and this work is no different. In *Music for Brass and Woodwind*, Maconchy's "penchant for terse dialectics" (Bayan Northcott) creates a dramatic dialogue that distills the emotional elegance of her string writing into the sinewy, lean, muscular textures of the orchestral winds and brass sections—and that offers a transcendent, quasi-religious union of her emotional intent and intellectual ideas.

Libby Larsen: *Holy Roller* (1997, arranged by John Boyd in 2001)

> Music exists in an infinity of sound. I think of all music as existing in the substance of the air itself. It is the composer's task to order and make sense of sound, in time and space, to communicate something about being alive through music.
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> I'm not sure if it's still true, but in the 70's and 80's, if a student wanted to look up a woman composer in the library system, she could not be found by name under the category "composer". Instead the student had to look under "woman – composer." Strange, but true. The tragic part of all of this is that if it's true that any composer working in any genre organizes sound in time and space in order to communicate something of what it is like to be alive, then in our world of instrumental "classical" music we are missing out on most of the vigorous, truthful and passionately talented voices our time—and in not performing music composed by women we have missed out entirely on what half our population has to say to us through music.
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> \- Libby Larsen

As one of America's most prolific and most performed living composers, Libby Larsen (b. 24 December 1950, Wilmington, Delaware) has been communicating her unique ideas for over 35 years. Larsen's love of the sounds and rhythms of language, both musical and verbal, prevails in her diverse catalogue of over 200 works that speak the American vernacular. As Larsen comments:

> Several years ago I began examining rhythmic patterns, pitch range, tempo and phrase contour in American spoken English. The example I like to use is Jesse Jackson speaking; if you were to analyze the interval of his pitch range, the tempo variations and rhythms, you would find an extraordinary musicality, uniquely American. I strive to understand how these characteristics represent our American lives and emotions, and to use these elements in my music. This, I think, is what makes it "American."

The Hartford Courant recognized Larsen for "assembling one of the most impressive bodies of music of our time." Adventurous without being self-consciously avant-garde, Larsen has written in virtually every genre, from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral and choral scores. Her style is noted for its energy, optimism, rhythmic diversity, colorful orchestration, liberated tonality without harsh dissonance, and pervading lyricism; she has been praised for "her ability to write memorable new music completely within the confines of traditional harmonic language is most impressive" (Fanfare). Although she has written abundantly for orchestras and mixed ensembles, she is attracted in particular to the qualities of the voice; she has been hailed as "the only English-speaking composer since Benjamin Britten who matches great verse with fine music so intelligently and expressively" (USA Today).

Larsen started writing music at the age of 5 ("It was something I thought everyone did"), later studying piano ("We had to take lessons whether we wanted to or not") and playing in a rock band as a teenager; by the time she was ready to attend college, she had absorbed an enormous amount of music, from Gregorian chant to stride-piano, boogie, and rock. When Larsen auditioned for voice study at the University of Minnesota (where she would study with composers Dominic Argento and Eric Stokes) in the late '60s, though, she discovered that her idea of being a musician was nothing like the academic view of the profession:

> Before I entered, a professor friend of mine told me that I would need to prepare an audition piece. He counseled me to prepare a piece that showed my voice to its best advantage. He instructed me in the look and demeanor of a classical singer. I took his advice and even though I felt unmercifully awkward singing in a dress and high heels with proper concert demeanor, I proceeded. I walked into the audition, took a breath and sang my song—"Georgy Girl" [the 1967 hit by the Seekers]. The look of shock, amusement and disdain on the faces of the teachers told me I was doing something horribly wrong, but I plowed on. At my first voice lesson, my teacher kindly explained that I was to sing no more "Georgy Girl." Instead, she gave me "Caro Mio Ben." I was puzzled. Wasn't this the equivalent of "Georgy Girl," only in Italian? It took me my entire freshman year to understand that most, if not all, of the multiple repertoires I brought with me into college were irrelevant to the classical study of music.

A strong advocate of issues such as music education and women in music, Larsen has been a visiting professor and guest lecturer at numerous institutions. From 1983-1987, she served as composer-in-residence with the Minnesota Orchestra, the first woman to serve as a resident composer with a major orchestra; since then she has held residencies with the California Institute of the Arts, the Arnold Schoenberg Institute, the Philadelphia School of the Arts, the Cincinnati Conservatory, the Charlotte Symphony, and the Colorado Symphony. From 2003-2004 she held the Harissios Papamarkou Chair in Education at the Library of Congress, a platform from which she continued to advocate for significant changes to the American music education system; perhaps recalling her own musical upbringing, Larsen proposed that:

> Our ears have become democratic ears. This means that a student may come to us in our schools of music to learn music with the secure knowledge that Mozart is wonderful music, equally as wonderful as reggae, rock, boogie, and Broadway. These students come to us with their CD collections intact, and their passions for music deep and abiding. They come to us with large repertoires, and they want to learn about music itself. Our challenge is to apply everything we know about the classical study of music to the vast and eclectic repertoires of our students.

Recipient of the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a 1994 Grammy, Larsen is a vigorous, articulate champion of the music and musicians of our time. Determined to find a role for the composer outside academe—unlike most composers, Larsen has never held a regular teaching position—in 1973 she co-founded (with Stephen Paulus) the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composers Forum. Larsen's commitment to the wider issue of music in society has led her to activity on a national level: she has served on the boards of the American Symphony Orchestra League, Meet the Composer, and on the Music Panel of the NEA. She has also been Vice President of the American Music Center and a director of the College Music Society. Regarded as a leader in the generation of millenium thinkers, Larsen continues to generate music and ideas that refresh the concert music tradition and the composer's role in it.

Larsen's many commissions and recordings are a testament to her fruitful collaborations with a long list of world-renowned artists, including The King's Singers, Benita Valente, and Frederica von Stade. She wrote ***Holy Roller*** in 1997 for the saxophonist Paul Bro, associate professor of saxophone at Indiana State University and vice-president of the North American Saxophone Alliance. Conceived originally as an alto saxophone and piano duo, Bro premiered the work with Martha Krasnican, piano, at the World Saxophone Congress in Valencia, Spain, September 26-30, 1997; in 2001, John Boyd, director of bands at Indiana State University, transcribed the piano part for wind band. Larsen believes that the saxophone was conceived to encompass the full range and nuance of the human voice, so when she and Bro first discussed the new piece, Larsen professes to being "immediately seized with the idea, an inspiration I think, to directly explore my belief by composing an instrumental work from a vocal perspective. I was and am clear about the fact that this vocal perspective [had to] be of a form which our North American/US culture has evolved, as American English has evolved. Country Western song, …rock and roll, gospel, bellmen's patter, auctioneering chant, cattle herding cooing, chamming—all of these are vocal forms which we've evolved in the good ol' USA." Larsen felt that Patsy Cline's melodic inventiveness epitomized her belief that a culture's music springs from that culture's language(s); however, Sony would not release the rights to her "I Fall to Pieces." As Larsen comments, though: "Once Sony interfered with my original idea, it was an easy leap to Reverend William Seymour…. Revival preaching may be the most powerful of all these forms." In fact, Larsen admits to writing revival sermons into her music since 1975, most recently in her opera *Eric Hermannson's Soul* (1998)—written one year before *Holy Roller*—which dramatizes Willa Cather's short story of the struggle between the love for music and religious zealotry among Norwegian settlers in a village on the remote Nebraska plains of the 1880s. Both the opera and *Holy Roller* exemplify how Larsen incorporates the vernacular into her free-wheeling style. Larsen writes the following about *Holy Roller*:

> The longest running revival meeting in America took place on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California and lasted from 1906 to 1909. Night after night, the Reverend William Seymour preached so passionately that he brought about an ecstatic outpouring from all that were there. They wept, shouted and dropped into dead faints. They spoke in tongues. They jerked uncontrollably. They danced in the aisles. It is said that the Pentecostal movement in the United States was born of this three-year revival meeting.

Holy Roller is inspired by classic revival preaching. To me, revival sermons are stunning musical masterpieces of rhythm, tempo, and extraordinary tension and release. The music flows directly from the language, cajoling, incanting and repeating, at the same time magnetizing and mesmerizing the listener with its irresistible invocations. The music is the language, the language is the music and the result moves the spirit to other states of being.

I love the way the saxophone speaks. Because of its incredible dynamic range and its flexibility a fine performer can make the listener hear words, abstract though they may be. *Holy Roller* is a revival sermon captured in the sounds of the alto saxophone and wind ensemble.

Larsen defines sacred music as "any music that celebrates and reveres creation and mysticism beyond humans' ability to analyze and/or control." With her choice to begin with unaccompanied saxophone, establishing the saxophone as the preacher, and then with her incorporation of three hymn tunes—"Shall We Gather at the River," "God Be With You 'Til We Meet Again," and "When the Saints Go Marching In"—into the melodic fabric to portray the ecstatic religious fervor of the congregation, Larsen has created in *Holy Roller* an expression of sacred love built from elements of the American vernacular.

If thirty years of consistently working in public, on a national and international scale, and speaking my professional mind out loud in public combined with raising a family can be considered feminism, then yes, I consider myself a feminist.

Joan Tower: *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman No. 5* (1993)

Hailed as "one of the most successful woman composers of all time" in The New Yorker magazine, Joan Tower (b. New Rochelle, NY, 6 Sept 1938) was the first woman ever to receive the Grawemeyer Award in Composition in 1990 for her orchestral work *Silver Ladders*. Tower, in fact, relishes this description, writing: "I think some people are not aware that there are no women composers on their concerts. So for that reason, I do like to be reminded this is a woman composer. 'Have you ever heard a woman composer? Oh, yeah, come to think of it, no.' I think that's an important reminder. Other than that, the music is the music and the fact that I'm a woman doesn't make a difference to the music." Among her numerous other awards, she was inducted in 1998 into the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Letters, and into the Academy of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University, she won a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1977, and she has received commissions from the Koussevitzky, Fromm, Jerome and Naumburg foundations; in the fall of 2004, she was the first composer chosen for the ambitious new "Ford Made in America" commissioning program—the first project of its kind to involve smaller budget orchestras as commissioning agents of a new work by a major composer, organized by a collaboration of the American Symphony Orchestra League and Meet the Composer, which led to her 15-minute orchestral piece *Made in America* being performed by orchestras in every state in the U.S. during the 2005-07 seasons.

Tower's bold and energetic ouevre, almost exclusively instrumental compositions—she only recently wrote her first choral piece—has been informed by and reflect her experiences as a performer accustomed to close interaction with a small chamber group; in fact many works have been composed with particular performers in mind. Discussing her first attempts at composition, Tower—who describes herself as a "choreographer of sound"—has said:

The reasons why I compose are tied up with so many issues. I started as a pianist, and I played the piano for many years. Then at Bennington [where she was a student 1958-1961] someone asked me to write a piece. I was eighteen, and I wrote this piece, and when I heard it, it was such an incredibly experience—as if I was looking at my musical soul hanging on the wall. Boom! There it was with all its problems: too long, too high, too loud. I was very vulnerable to the external object coming back at me. So I was hooked. I had to do it again and again and again.

From 1969 to 1984, she was a founding member of the Naumburg Award-winning Da Capo Chamber Players, which commissioned and premiered many of her most popular works. As Tower comments, though: "I played the piano [in the ensemble]. I couldn't conduct because at that time a woman conducting was… forget it! This was in the '60s." Since 1972, Tower has taught at Bard College, where she is Asher Edelman Professor of

Music; she has also served as composer-in-residence with the Orchestra of St. Luke's since 1997, at the Deer Valley Festival in Utah since 1998, and with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra (1985-1987).

Described as "among the most original and forceful voices in modern American music" by The Detroit News, Tower came of age as a composer when 12-tone serialism was the ticket of admission to "highbrow" new music circles and the academe. Her works of the 1960s are serial, influenced by contemporaries such as Babbitt and Wuorinen. But like many of her peers, she reached the point where she had to break with orthodoxy. "Very simply, I just didn't understand it musically," she explains. "Sure, I had written and performed very virtuosic serialistic music. But I felt like an acrobat—it was a sport, it wasn't being a musician. So I pulled out." Commenting on the classical music tradition in an interview with Bruce Duffie, Tower remarked:

> I'm beginning to think that we have to blur the lines [between classical and popular musics] more. Because I think that classical music is suffering under the weight of being too much in the past as compared to pop music that is very much in the present and is a quite healthy art, at least in that sense. That new stuff is being presented all the time and tossed around and competed with and bought and sold. But classical music is still too much living in the past. I don't think it's healthy for the dead composers, actually. I think Beethoven needs someone next to him that reminds you the music is vulnerable rather than it's just a masterpiece and so therefore why should we even bother to think about it.

As Tower pulled away from the "womb" of academic serialism in the 1970s, she found a new sustenance in the burgeoning feminist movement. "I know it was incredibly naïve, but until then, I hadn't really been aware of the fact that almost all the music I played was by men." Even today, Tower still organizes and participates in festivals of women in music; she says that "there's less fear of being wrong or ridiculed, and more freedom to pursue questions about intuition, sexuality, and physicality in music—all these things I never thought about before." Nowadays, if she's asked to recommend someone for a post, award, or commission, Tower will usually name a woman. "It's kind of sexist, but actually I'm just trying to balance things out a little bit." Yet Tower keeps her feminism separate from her actual composing. "I don't think you can play a piece and say whether it's written by a man or a woman…. Unless it has lyrics, I think music is genderless."

While many of Tower's works pay homage to her favorite composers—her Piano Concerto No.1 (Beethoven), Petroushskates (Stravinsky), Night Fields (Shostakovich) and Très lent (Messiaen), for example—it is her series of works inspired by Copland that have been her most enduring and popular. Her five *Fanfare(s) for the Uncommon Woman* have been played by over 500 different ensembles, and the first, written in 1986, is still her most performed work. As Tower says: "I'm very proud of that because I'm a great admirer of Copland. I wrote *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* [as] a takeoff on his *Fanfare for the Common Man*." What Tower may not have intended, though, was that the work would come to be regarded as a feminist answer to Copland's "male" fanfare. As Tamara Bernstein writes:

> The classical music world isn't exactly overflowing with strong, positive-musical images of women, so it's hardly surprising that the gutsy—one is tempted to say kick-ass—*Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman No. 1* quickly became a hit, and an historic, feminist statement in music…. The fact that brass sections of symphony orchestras tend to be the last stronghold against women adds a delicious irony to most performances—and a special celebratory note when some of the players, at least, are women.

Tower has since written four sequels to her "blockbuster" fanfare, most recently in 1993 when the Aspen Music Festival invited Tower to write a fanfare for the opening of the Joan and Irving Harris Concert Hall. Busy with other projects, Tower reluctantly agreed, replying: "Okay: four trumpets, and it will be really short." As Bernstein writes:

> The resulting piece captures the festive mood of the occasion brilliantly, and seems designed to set the new hall ringing. The composer instructs the four trumpeters to position themselves as far apart as possible, in pairs; a spirited dialogue ends in a unanimous, jazzy flourish. Tower dedicated the piece to Joan Harris—the female half of the couple whose generosity made the construction of the new hall possible. Tower recalls her relief when Irving Harris, instead of being irritated by his exclusion, was moved to tears by this long-overdue recognition of his wife's role in their joint philanthropy.

Michael Daugherty: "Oh, Ken" from *What's That Spell?* (1995)

> Like the energy that radiates from the icons housed in our European museums and art galleries, Michael Daugherty's music successfully releases the poetic power of American icons.
>
> Enzo Restagno, Artistic Director
> Settembre Musica in Torino, Italy

Composers have frequently found musical inspiration in folklore, fables, and historical figures—Michael Daugherty (b. Cedar Rapids, IA, 28 April 1954), Professor of Composition at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), finds his inspiration in American pop culture, creating a niche in the concert world uniquely his own. Since winning the Kennedy Center Friedheim Award in 1989 for his *Snap!* (a jazz tribute to the golden age of Hollywood and the panache of James Cagney's tap dancing in the 1937 film *Something to Sing About*), Daugherty has become one of the most performed and commissioned American composers of his generation. Daugherty came to international attention when his *Metropolis Symphony* (1988-93)—a tribute to the Superman comics of the 1950s and 60s—was performed in Carnegie Hall and recorded for Argo/Decca in 1995 by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra led by conductor David Zinman. The symphony inaugurated a series of works concerned with American icons, which now includes: *Desi* (1991), a Latin big band tribute to Desi Arnaz in the television show "I Love Lucy;" *Sing Sing: J. Edgar Hoover* (1992), featuring the voice of the infamous FBI director and written for the Kronos Quartet; *Elvis Everywhere* (1993) for three Elvis impersonators and string quartet; the bassoon concerto *Dead Elvis* (1993); the piano concertino, *Le tombeau de Liberace* (1996); and *Niagara Falls* (1997), *Rosa Parks Boulevard* (2001), *Bells for Stowkowski* (2002), and *Brooklyn Bridge* (2005) for symphonic band. Daugherty explains his obsession with writing pop culture-inspired pieces:

> For me icons serve as a way to have an emotional reason to compose a new work…. In fact, before I can write a note of music, I have to have a visual image—an American icon like Elvis, a pink plastic flamingo, or Jackie Kennedy. Just like an actor, I like to research my "role" before I compose…. I use icons like Superman, Liberace, Jackie O, and Elvis in composing because they allow me to play with "public" vs. "private" emotion, "external" vs. "internal" feeling, "fake" vs. "authentic" representation…. I get ideas for my compositions by browsing through second bookstores, antique shops, and small towns that I find driving on the back roads of America. The icon can be an old postcard, magazine, photograph, knick-knack, matchbook, piece of furniture or roadmap. Like Ives and Mahler, I use icons in my music to provide the listener and performer with a layer of reference. However, one does not need the reference of the icon to appreciate my music. It is merely one level among many in the musical, contrapuntal fabric of my compositions.

Given Daugherty's childhood experiences—as a keyboard player in jazz, funk, and rock bands; a percussionist in drum and bugle corps, a synthesized-keyboard improviser for silent films; an organist for county and state fairs in Iowa; and a pianist in cocktail bars—it is perhaps not surprising that he does not have severe distinctions between "high art" and "popular culture." However, from 1979-1980, he studied with Pierre Boulez at IRCAM in Paris; as Daugherty comments, though, the music being written at IRCAM:

> … was abstract, based on scientific, arithmetic, or philosophical formulas, and pieces would be simply the result of a system. That didn't appeal to me, because I was used to playing popular music, interacting with other musicians. In jazz you create the music on the spot with other players, so it's not abstract. I wanted to combine my interest in American pop culture and classical music in a serious and sophisticated way, but that approach was very unfashionable at the time.

Daugherty, though, found an odd pairing of mentors: Gil Evans and György Ligeti. While Evans helped nurture an interest in timbre and a fascination with the sounds of chords (as well as incidentally teaching "that it isn't enough to be a genius in music—one has to be practical as well"), Ligeti convinced him that the ultimate compliment was to be called "original"—and the worst criticism to be called "academic" or "not original." Daugherty, then, has developed a unique style that juxtaposes a fascination with the vernacular with the use of dense polyrhythmic layering and sophisticated compositional techniques to develop melodic motives. As Daugherty continues, underscoring his penchant for deliberately and precisely constructing large forms from seemingly trite or insignificant materials:

> When I am writing the music I am extremely serious about putting the notes, the dynamics and the articulations, the timbre, the structure and the counterpoint. When I compose, I think in a very structural logical way as Webern and Bach did.
>
> As a student I was told, "Don't write clichés—write what instruments *can't* do." Well, as I got older, it became obvious to me that *everything* is a cliché. In other words, a nineteenth-century gesture is just as much a cliché as twentieth-century one. To me, extended instrumental techniques offer no more surprises than baroque instrumentation, at this point. So, if one takes all gestures as equal, it means that the individual gesture is meaningless. What has meaning is how the gestures are put together.

"Oh, Ken" is the fourth movement of Daugherty's *What's That Spell?*, a pop cantata for two Barbie-sopranos backed-up by a rock and roll chamber orchestra commissioned and recorded by Dogs of Desire, conducted by David Alan Miller. While in the other movements, the two sopranos pose in the roles of cheerleader, ballerina, and drum majorette to sing about the fate of American plastic dolls, in "Oh, Ken" the Barbie soprano sings a mock-serious, lyrical lament accompanied only by oboe, and glockenspiel—just because they are both plastic doesn't mean their love isn't real!

Carl Orff: selections from *Carmina Burana* (1936)

There is probably no more recognizable piece of 20th-century classical musical than the opening of *Carmina Burana*—"O Fortuna" has enjoyed tremendous popularity in the mass-market media, being used in films from *Excalibur*, *The Doors*, *Glory*, and *Natural Born Killers* to commercials for credit cards and aftershave to introductions for numerous metal bands and athletic teams. Likewise, the name Carl Orff (1895-1982), along with Suzuki and Kodaly, is likely one of the most famous in childhood music education. While Orff composed many works, only his scenic cantata *Carmina Burana*—its full, and unwieldy, Latin name is *Carmina Burana: Cantiones profanae cantoribus et choris cantandae comitantibus instrumentis atque imaginibus magicis* ("Songs of Beuern: Secular songs for singers and choruses to be sung together with instruments and magic images")—is frequently performed. *Carmina Burana* is part of *Trionfi*, the musical triptych that also includes the cantata *Catulli Carmina* and *Trionfo di Afrodite*.

The text is a collection of 24 songs ("O Fortuna" bookends the work as movements 1 and 25) about wine, women and love, based on poems from the Burana Codex—a manuscript collection of over 1000 songs and poems dated 1280 found in the Benedictine monastery of Beuren, and now housed in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. The pieces are almost entirely in Latin, though not in Classical Latin meter, with a few in a dialect of Middle High German, and some snatches of Old French; many simply are macaronic, a mixture of Latin and German or French vernacular of the time, and most appear to be the work of Goliards, clergy (mostly students) who lampooned and satirized the Church. As Uwe Kraemer reports:

> Alongside religious plays and attacks on the decline in moral standards and other failings endemic among the clergy and persons in authority, there are texts which, ribald and sensual by turns, sing of the love joys of eating, drinking, gaming and love. Orff was a Bavarian by birth and temperament and, as he himself admitted, the "infectious rhythms and vividness of these poems and, not least, the musicality and peculiar concision of the Latin language, with its high density of vowels" so stirred him that he spontaneously began to set a number of the pieces to music.

As soon as he finished these *beuren* songs, Orff promptly repudiated and suppressed all of his earlier works—including numerous songs and song cycles to texts by many of the great German poets—reflecting "the conviction that they were not representative of his true gifts, with extravagantly overdeveloped harmonies and elaborate, dense instrumentation betraying a debt to the late-Romantic tradition." (Jeffrey Duban) An examination of those early works, however, reveals that Orff was working purposefully and consistently toward the stylistic goal of *Carmina Burana*. Under the influence of Bartok and Stravinsky, he sought to introduce an archaic, folkloristic element into his work, simplifying his musical language and delving into subliminal levels of cultic magic. In contrast to other composers of generation—such as Hindemith, Prokofiev, and Milhaud—Orff stuck closely to stylistic devices that, seemingly long since exhausted, risked making him appear regressive and reactionary. As Thomas Kahlcke asserts, however:

> At a time when composers like that arch-Romantic, Richard Strauss, were striving to produce increasingly sophisticated sonorities and when Arnold Schoenberg had long since achieved notoriety with his highly conceptualized twelve-note system, Orff staked everything on the appeal and expressive power of music at its most elemental. His aim in *Carmina Burana* was not to create a modernist masterpiece, nor even to conjure up the world of the Middle Ages. Rather, he used medieval poems and a magical musical language to appeal to an aspect of human existence which, independent of the age in which we live, is fundamental to our character: here is a world of elemental feelings, a world of tender desires and outbursts of passion, a world of love, longing, and suffering.

Orff's *Carmina Burana* is in three sections—In Spring, In the Tavern, and The Court of Love—with "O Fortuna" bookending the others songs; of the 25 movements of the total work, only the penultimate two movements will be performed, in arrangements made especially for this evening's concert. In No. 23 "Dulcissime" the soprano sings a brief, but fiendishly demanding, four-measure aria, in which she submits to her young lover: "Boy most sweet, to you I give myself complete!" The final chorus, "Blanziflor et Helena: Ave formoisissima," is of Dionysiac intensity, a stirring expression of jubilation with a suggestion of the ecstasy to come.

Louis Andriessen: *Hadewijch* (1988), part II of *De Materie* (1985-1989)

> The best way of learning a language is to fall in love with someone who doesn't speak your language. At the beginning it isn't necessary at all, but at a given moment, the medium of language does turn out to be useful after all.
>
> -Louis Andriessen, Catholic University Nijmegen, 1997

Louis Andriessen (b. 1939, in Utrecht, Holland) is, without question, the most significant living Dutch composer—and, by most accounts, he is one of Europe's most eminent and influential composers. His music blurs the boundaries between "high" and "low" arts, not just in his choice of instruments (often dominated by wind, brass, pianos, and electric guitars), but also in his musical language, which combines a jazz/rock aesthetic with post-WWII intellectualism. He has explored, in relation to music, the subjects of politics, time, velocity, matter and mortality in five works for large ensemble: *De Staat* (1976), *De Tijd* (1981), *De Snelheid* (1983), *De Materie* (1985-88), and *Trilogy of The Last Day* (1996-97).

When asked how he became a composer, Louis Andriessen will usually answer: "I merely joined my father's business." The Andriessen family boasts generations of musicians, beginning with Louis's great-grandfather Cornelis (1816-1893), a choir conductor and music teacher, and his grandfather Nicolaas (1845-1913), a prominent Dutch organist. Louis grew up hearing the music that was admired by his father Hendrik (1892-1981) and brother Juriaan (1925-1996), both composers and his first two teachers. As Louis recalled, his father "favored a French classicist approach to music. Music was extremely important as an objective beauty, and we should therefore realize that we are not important, it is the music that is important. That means that almost any French composer was better than any German Romantic composer. He also liked Stravinsky a lot..." Juriaan was influential in introducing Louis to American jazz of the 1940s and 50s, especially the music of Count Basie and Stan Kenton. As Andriessen readily admits: "I must say that what was the most influential on my music, when I look back now, was the big-band culture: the writing, settings, arrangements, the harmonies of large groups of brass instruments. It all came from Stan Kenton, Dizzy Gillespie, and others." Additional influences on the development of his unique compositional style were Kees van Baaren (the first Dutch serialist and his first non-familial teacher) at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, and Luciano Berio, with whom he studied for two years; Andriessen also professes an admiration of Maurice Ravel, whom he believes to be the first truly avant-garde composer, and for Olivier Messiaen, with whom he "shares a fascination of harmony." Beginning in the 1970s, Andriessen began to accept minimalism as an important influence, incorporating aspects into his style for both political and aesthetic reasons. Andriessen, however, does not believe his music sounds much like American minimalism: "It has not the cosmic sound of those pieces which Reich and Glass wrote at the same time. What is different from my music is that in America there is not enough angst! I'm much more aggressive, I would say." As K. Robert Schwarz, author of *Minimalists* (1996) writes: "Louis Andriessen…. achieved the most startling synthesis of all, forging a unique language informed as much by European modernism as American minimalism…. Andriessen remains very much a European modernist, and so [his] scores possess a gritty dissonance and a spiky chromaticism that speaks as much of Stravinsky, Messiaen, and Ligeti as of Reich."

Andriessen describes his musical style: "From Stravinsky to Steve Reich, from the gamelan to Miles Davis and Stan Kenton, this is all part of my musical language. But one thing is clear: I almost completely shied away from the nineteenth century [Romanticism]." He takes as the ultimate compliment the indictment made by Dutch playwright Karst Woudstra: "That Andriessen is a bloody classicist!" As the epitome of the Hague School (which is characterized as writing loud, aggressive, rhythmically energetic music devoid of all neo-Romantic sentiment), he has developed a musical language marked by extremes of ritual and masquerade, of monumentality and intimacy, of formal rigor and intuitive empiricism.

A self-professed Marxist and Catholic, Andriessen was very involved in socio-political movements in the 1960s and 70s in the Netherlands. He played an active role in the increasing politicization of the arts put into practice during the Holland Festival in 1969 with the collective work *Reconstructie*, a music-theatre morality based on Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and the life of Che Guevara, composed jointly with four other former students of Van Baaren. Later the same year Andriessen was involved in the infamous *Notenkrakersactie* ("Nutcracker"), the disruption of a concert by the Concertgebouw Orchestra, whose artistic policy the protesters regarded as reactionary. (Andriessen and his colleagues leapt onto the stage, papering the hall with leaflets while sounding noise-makers, during a performance of the Flute Concerto by Quantz, creating a minor riot.) This controversial act has since come to be seen as a turning-point in postwar Dutch musical life, as what has been termed the "ensemble culture" of Holland emerged.

For Andriessen it led to a near-permanent abandonment of the medium of the symphony orchestra and a revaluation of the "materials and methods of musical production." In 1971, together with his friend jazz saxophonist Willem Breuker, Andriessen assembled a band of nine musicians (three saxophones, three trumpets, and three trombones, with Louis on piano)—some of whom were jazz players, some of whom were classical players—who were committed to creating musical experiences that would point to a different conception of society. After a wildly successful debut performance, the ensemble decided to remain together; and so, when a flutist, hornist, and bassist joined the group after the premiere, the Orkest de Volharding was born: a thirteen-member, democratic ensemble that performs standing shoulder-to-shoulder, dedicated to the creation of new music and the development of new socio-musical relationships. Andriessen is fond of labeling the project of Volharding as "de-hierarchizing," music, or in the words of Tira Gijs, removing the "ludicrous discrepancy between the two forms of music, jazz and classical." In an attempt to create the "Terrifying Orchestra of the Twenty First Century," Andriessen intended Volharding to be "an orchestra that vigorously and vociferously breaks with the division between 'high' and 'low' art."

This dialectical synthesis of extremes—high art versus low art, reason versus instinct, consctuctivism versus spontaneity, doctrine versus entertainment, concert hall versus theatre—not only informs Andriessen's entire compositional output, it is explicitly thematicized in ***De Materie***, in which Andriessen examines the relationship between matter and spirit from four discrete perspectives. His pursuit was inspired by Marx, who believed that the spirit of man was determined by social forces, writing: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness." Andriessen, an anarchist who studies Marxism, states that in *De Materie*: "I try to show that it is somewhat more complicated than Marx had thought. I won't say that the spirit can change matter, but it can be very influential on the organization of the psyche… The mind really does have a significant influence on your material being, on your attitude towards the world and on your position in the world." Matter as a philosophical concept and a Marxist, artistic, and scientific notion, inspired the Andriessen to write four musical essays that he views as musical analogues to Brecht's *Galileo*, which he describes as "an exemplary combination of spirituality and matter and that's what I was after. I wanted to show, in four different ways, how the mind, the person, deals with tangible surroundings." The four sections of the "non-narrative music-theater piece," premiered on 1 June 1989 at the Holland Festival in a production directed by Robert Wilson, offer different perspectives on the relationship between matter and spirit by examining topics ranging from ship-building and pasteurization to mysticism, from boogie-woogie to theosophy. A review in the Guardian of the premiere performance announced "...there's no doubt that *De Materie* is Andriessen's finest work to date, and one of the most significant scores produced by a European composer in the last 20 years." Elmer Schönberger (co-author with Andriessen of a book about Stravinsky entitled *Apollonian Clockwork*) has provided the following succinct synopsis of *De Materie*:

> The dramaturgy is that of a *tableau vivant*, peopled by (mainly Dutch) historical figures; they sing their own historical words thereby continually throwing new light on the subjects. These figures are united by their scientific, religious, artistic, and political idealism, as well as their common willingness to pay the price exacted by their ideals. In part 1, Gorlaeus, the early seventeenth-century philosopher who died a young age, reinstates the ancient Greek theory of atomism. In part 2, Hadewijch, the thirteenth century poetess from Brabant, sings the praises of the *unio mystica* in music rooted in a rational compositional architecture based on the proportions of a cathedral dating from the same century. Both part 2 and part 3 ("De Stijl") suggest that despite its title *De Materie* is mainly concerned with the limits of rationality. In "De Stijl," whose form and instrumentation were modeled on Mondrian's *Composition with Red, Yellow, and Blue*, the emphasis is on the metaphysical inspiration of Neo-Plasticism. Finally part 4 once again takes up the theme of science—this time personified by Marie Curie—but also the themes of love and death as expressed by the Dutch symbolist poet Willem Kloos.

(*De Materie* can be performed either as a theater or concert piece, and the two middle movements can also be performed as independent works; complementing this evening's performance of *Hadewijch*, the Symphonic Winds performed *De Stijl* in February 2005.)

Hadewijch is concerned with mysticism, or the spirit materialized in the body. (Andrew Weeks in his *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein* defines mysticism as "divinely inspired knowledge of divine truth.") The text is the Seventh Vision of Hadewijch (hä´dvkh), expressing her passionate vision, spiritual and physically erotic, of union with Him. It this controversial nature of Hadewijch's vision—expressing the most elevated spiritual experiences in explicitly physical and sensuous terms—that attracted Andriessen to this text. While Hadewijch is thought to have written music (although, sadly, none is extant), Andriessen did not set out to write a piece that "sounds" like thirteenth-century music; as he remarks: "At the end of the day, I am not a historian, but a composer who sometimes dives into history to make it real and to make connections which create some sense of ownership."

While we know a great deal about Hildegard von Bingen, we know conclusively almost next to nothing about Hadewijch, a 13th-century Dutch mystic. We do know that she was not a nun, but rather that she was a Beguine—that is, she was one of the devout women of her day who chose to lead a life of apostolic poverty and contemplation without taking vows as nuns. (The movement came into being toward the end of the twelfth century, in the larger towns of Flanders, southern Germany, and northern France—Antwerp, Cologne, Strasbourg, and Bruges. Originating largely among women of noble and patrician families, they opted for an intentional religious life while apparently rejecting the strict obligations of the nun in the cloister.) It is believed that for a time she headed a small contemplative group of likeminded women, and that her voluminous writings—arranged as Letters, Poems in Stanzas, Visions, Poems in Couplets, and believe to be dated 1220-1240—were for the instruction of her charges. Paul Mommaers regards Hadewijch as "undoubtedly the most important exponent of love mysticism and one of the loftiest figures in the Western mystical tradition," while Barbara Newman calls her "the greatest mystical poet of the thirteenth century." Hadewijch's descriptions of experiencing the in-being in God belong to the most convincing and daring that mystical literature has to offer. As Mommaers continues: "God is such that he allows himself to be possessed in an incredibly intimate manner. But you can seldom find a mystical author who—at the same time—throws such light on God's transcendency as Hadewijch does."

Hadewijch must have come from a wealthy family: she had a wide knowledge of literature and theological treatises in several languages, including Latin and French, in a time when studying was a luxury only exceptionally granted to women, and her familiarity with chivalry and courtly love, and the refinement of character she invariably displays, permit little doubt that she belonged to the higher class. Her poems themselves are proof that she had mastered the troubadours' art; Hadewijch used the poetry of courtly love to express the emotional tensions of the longing for God, showing an unfailing mastery of all its techniques. In addition, the striking feature of her prose writing is its artistry—she has a sense of literary structure, of emphasis and subordination in the development of her thoughts, and she has a rich vocabulary that gives both variety and a wide range in choosing the precise word. While the mystical texts (visions) are expressed poetically rather than systematically, they are still deeply theological. Of Hadewijch's fourteen visions, Mother Columbia Hart, O.S.B. writes that they:

…are distinguished from the rest by their lofty seriousness, power of imagery, and metaphysical-mystical meaning. Her visions have something of the apocalyptic character of those of Hildegard, but Hildegard's vast complexity of images and moral reflections bring us the teachings of a prophetess, whereas Hadewijch's intensity and the deep impact of each phase of a vision as she tells it offer us an entrance point into her contemplative experience.

Elizabeth Dreyer (author of *Passionate Spirituality: Hildegard of Bingen and Hadewijch of Brabant*) agrees with the distinction Hart makes between Hadewijch's and Hildegard's visions, asserting that "Hadewijch's descriptions of her encounters with God and with Love are boldly erotic. Her poetry reflects an intensity of passionate experience. Hildegard, on the other hand, tends toward the cerebral. Her elaborate and powerful images are described and explained allegorically with an eye toward understanding." Speaking of his decision to set Hadewijch's Seventh Vision (set in the original 13th-century Dutch—which even he did not understand without expert assistance!—to communicate the unintelligibility of trying to comprehend God), Andriessen writes:

The essence of my choice to set one of Hadewijch's Visions to music is that these two elements—courtly love and divine love—are not in conflict with one another…The seventh vision, which I have set in its entirety to music, is an account of a development from physicality to spirituality by way of a few meetings which very much resemble erotic encounters…I regard this combination of religious or mystic ecstasy and eroticism not as a contradiction but, in essence, as the expression of the same sort of feeling.

In addition, *Hadewijch* is "built upon" the structure of the Reims Cathedral in France, as if Hadewijch was walking through the cathedral to the altar (and, in almost Berliozian fashion, one can "hear" Hadewijch ascend the stairs of the altar at the moment of the *mystic union*); as Andriessen writes: "The intervals of time between the chords of the pianos, tuned percussion [including pitched gongs] and guitars, which ring through the canvas at set points, have the same proportional relationship as the distance in space between the cathedral's pillars"—as Hadewijch passes a pillar, sounds of granite interrupt the ethereal harmonies. In a lecture reprinted in *The Art of Stealing Time*, Andriessen continues, commenting on the intellectual rigor with which the piece was built:

The large measure of formalism that forms the basis of *De Materie* does not in itself offer any guarantee that the work will be beautiful. I don't want to say 'on the contrary' because that isn't true either. I believe that, in art, there is a need for some sort of organization; organization is, in fact, the friend of chaos and chaos is an essential characteristic of art. A work like *De Materie* in particular is put together quite strictly and yet it often sounds as though it has been hurled onto the canvas in a joyous, Karl Appel-ish sort of way. Appel did, of course, take a quick look to see where the mess would land before he allegedly threw the paint onto the canvas. There was no question of his "just making a mess."

Further levels of symbolism include his use of Christian numerology: since the number 3 represents God and all things spiritual while the number 4 represents all things earthly—and *Hadewijch* is concerned with the spiritual dimension—the movement is largely built from three-note chords (which eventually expand to six- and nine-pitch chords), set in triple meter (3/4) and generally subdivided into triplets (in feel, the movement is in triple compound meter)—and then, at moments of the *mystic union* (the melding of the physical with the spiritual), Andriessen juxtaposes and alternates meters of 4 and 3. In addition, the notes of Hadewijch's intimate final song are identical to the same notes which begin *De Stijl*, which in Andriessen's words is "gruesome and ironic, to connect the holiest moment of *Hadewijch* with a "common" theme)—although here the "common" theme employs a *Piccardy third*. Even the instrumentation choices seem symbolic; as Schönberger writes: "Illustrative of the inclusive character of the work, in which the "upper" and the "lower" strata of class-ridden musical society are inextricably intermeshed, are the growling triplets of the bass and contrabass clarinets which roam the hallowed sound of Hadewijch's vision like stray dogs in the church interiors of old Dutch paintings"—a music of grotesque "animalian sounds" which reinforces that medieval cathedrals, rather than being austere and silent, often resounded with crude and busy sounds. As Hadewijch proceeds through the cathedral, her physicality is at first emphasized, but this layer of earthly sounds gradually disappears during the course of the work, indicating the mystic's transition from the physical into the spiritual sphere—by the work's end, Hadewijch is in ecstasy, oblivious to the external world.