

Tom Johnson (b.1939)

Organ and Silence 28 pieces for organ (2000)

XVIII

A melodic loop that sometimes plays two notes at once is repeated in a 12-beat cycle, one beat of which is a pause. The cycle is a "self-replicating loop," which enables it to be heard simultaneously five times slower an octave lower and 25 times slower two octaves lower.

Très "neuf heures du matin" – Ricardo Viñes

Erik Satie (1866-1925)

Véritables préludes flasques (pour un chien)

II – Seul à la maison

"Doucement – Avec tristesse – Nocturnus – Illusorius – Substantialis"
17 Août 1912

Tom Johnson

Organ and Silence: XXIV

Silence is the name of a book by John Cage, and many composers talk about the importance of silence in music, but one does not actually hear much of it in the classical repertoire, or any other repertoire. In fact, silences longer than three seconds are extremely rare in all kinds of music. Early in 1999 I had some ideas for short pieces that could sustain the interest despite the fact that they were mostly silence. After I had written these pieces, I found another way of writing music that permitted long and frequent silences, and then another, and another, and before long I was devoting all my time to a collection of organ pieces. My music had always been minimal in some way, but this was quite another way, and now I began really listening to the silence, or rather to the silences, noting how different one could be from another, and enjoying the freedom that silence gives to listeners. At first I had a rule that each piece must be at least ¾ silence, but later I decided that I would simply permit as much silence as possible, without allowing the music to actually stop. TJ

Paul Newland (b.1966)

una corda I (2001)

Through my work I explore the physical presence and innate physical quality of sound. I present these sounds as found objects as physical brute facts. Focusing on the quality of each sound or passing moment, the timing and spacing of sound and silence, I mark the passing and flow of time. Slowing focuses attention on the detailed timbres and shifting textures of these almost static sounds enabling the ear to become absorbed in the sonic moment and to shift its attention across the surface of these almost frozen sonic objects much as the eye may shift and flit across the surface of a work of visual art. I enjoy the pared-down reduced quality of much Japanese art. What is the least we require to create a work? PN

Tom Johnson

Organ and Silence

I

The six notes in this motif can be distributed between two keyboards (colors) in 2⁶ ways, but only 30 are used—the 30 where four notes are played on one keyboard and two on the other.

www.tom.johnson.org

Paul Newland

una corda II (2001)

Paul Newland studied composition with Anthony Gilbert and Sir Harrison Birtwistle (Royal Northern College of Music Manchester), Michael Finnis (Royal Academy of Music), Jo Kondo (Elisabeth University of Music Japan), and Simon Holt (Royal Holloway University of London). His work had been performed and broadcast by ensembles and artists such as [rout], 175 East, Arditti Quartet, Asko Ensemble, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Richard Casey, Jane Chapman, Composers Ensemble, Exquisite Corpse, Rolf Hind, Philip Howard, Huuj Ensemble, Ives Ensemble, Ixion, Jane's Minstrels, Seth Josel, London Sinfonietta, Noszferatu, Psappha, and Opus 20.

Recent projects include an installation for the 2007 *Wired Up* festival at Trinity Laban, *flux/flex/drift/mouth* for bass recorder for performer Ulrike Mayer-Spohn and a new work for solo harpsichord for Jane Chapman.

In 2004 he formed the electric guitar duo Exquisite Corpse with guitarist David Arrowsmith. Exquisite Corpse's focus is the exploration of the physical quality and presence of sound through collaborative performance and structured improvisation. Exquisite Corpse recently premiered *Flex* at the Louise T Blouin Gallery London as part of the galleries James Turrell exhibition. <http://www.bmic.co.uk/alias/paulnewland>

Asperance

late fourteenth century keyboard intabulation of the chanson *Esperance, ki en mon quer*

Groningen: Universiteitsbibliotheek, Incunabulum no. 70, fragment I.2, fol. 1 - 1 v.

Erik Satie

Sonneries de la Rose + Croix (1892)

II – Air du Grand Maître Le Sâr Joséphin Péladan

For a short period Erik Satie was appointed official composer for the esoteric Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique du Temple et du Graal, founded in Paris by the flamboyant mystic 'Sar' Joséphin Péladan. The first Salon de la Rose-Croix was held in March 1892, at which Satie's solemn Trois Sonneries De La Rose+Croix were performed for the first time. Satie also composed music for Péladan's play Le Fils des Étoiles (Son of the Stars), as well as two préludes for a chivalric play, Le Nazarién. Satie subsequently broke from the Order in August 1892.

Laurence Crane (b.1961)

The Swim (1992)

Solo electric organ – written for the film 'A Parting of the Ways'

<http://www.bmic.co.uk/alias/laurencecrane>

Jürg Frey (b.1953)

Sam Lazaro Bros (1984)

There is a music in which the time-space of sound and the time-space of silence appear in their own particular realms. Even when the sounds are often very soft, the music is not about falling into silence. The sounds are clear, direct and precise. Because they have left musical rhetoric behind, there is instead a sensitivity for the presence of sound and for the physicality of silence.

Permeability, which is the physicality of silence itself, consists of the impossibility of saying anything about its content. Sounds can approach this permeability, but cannot achieve it. Sounds always occur as a formation or a shaping. They come into being by crossing a border which divides them from all others. At this border, everything formed becomes particular. Silence does not know this border. There is no silence through production. Silence is just there, where no sound is. JF (translation: Michael Pisaro)

www.wandelweiser.de

Christian Wolff (b. 1934)

Tilbury 2 any Instrument(s), with or without amplification (1969)

Minimalism involves drastic limits set on one's material. In the early 50s I had restricted pitches used to as few as three for, say, a five minute piece. In Tilbury 1-4 and Snowdrop (1969-70) restrictions are also, and primarily, in the compositional process itself. The idea is that sounds come in fixed cycles, like planets in a solar system. For example (the simpler case), sound x appears at a more or less fixed duration every 54 beats, sound y every 29, sound z every 11, and so forth. (...) In Tilbury 1 the basic material consists of single pitches in a narrow range (one octave plus semitone). In Tilbury 2 the pitches are widely scattered. In Tilbury 3 the pitch material, the planets of the solar system, takes the form of arpeggiated pitches appearing cyclically at cyclically varying speeds, including some very slow ones (hence the long single sounds). CW

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Sonata No.58 in C Hob. XVI/48 (1789)

I Andante con espressione

John Cage (1912-1992)

Souvenir (1983)

Has Mr. Cage ever, just for a change, felt like returning to his earlier style of precisely notated works, with set meters and recurring themes?

"Not really," he said. "I did it once recently, in a piece for organ called

'Souvenir.' When the organist who commissioned it told me that was what he wanted, I sent the check back. But he insisted, so I did it.

"But I try to do what I feel is necessary to do. And my necessity comes from my sense of invention."

Tom Johnson (b.1939)

Organ and Silence for Piano (I-VIII) (2002)

VII Toward the Silence

If another pianist had asked me to consider a piano version of Organ and Silence, I would certainly have said no. This collection of 28 short pieces is true organ music, and depends greatly on sustained sounds, multiple keyboards, and color contrasts that are impossible for piano. But when John McAlpine asked me, I had to consider the possibilities. I had known him and his playing for many years, and appreciated his ability to transform simple transparent textures into something quite elegant. He is completely unafraid of one-finger melodies and long silences, and plays such things with an understanding that goes over the heads of the cadenza specialists, and he would know just what to do with this music. TJ

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Eleven Chorale Preludes op. 122 (1896)

No 11 *O Welt, ich muss dich lassen*

Tom Johnson

Organ and Silence for Piano – VI For the Silence

I went back to the score and found that, while many movements could never be effectively reproduced on the piano, seven of them could make a short piano suite. John made many suggestions, convinced me to add an eighth piece, and soon I began to feel that these selections were as well suited to the piano as to the organ. The adaptation sometimes required strange octave doublings, register changes, new tempos, new titles, and curious pedalings, and the result might better be described as a rewriting, rather than an arrangement. There are no cuts or additions, however, and the organ is somehow still there in the music, as in the title: Organ and Silence for Piano. TJ