

JONATHAN HARVEY

(b. 1939)

- 1 From Silence** (1988) (21:45)
for soprano, violin, viola, percussion
3 electronic keyboards, computer, and tape
Karol Bennett, soprano
Lucy Stoltzman, violin • Marcus Thompson, viola
Dean Anderson, percussion • Kathleen Supové,
John MacDonald, Diana Dabby, electronic keyboards •
David Atherton, sound • Brent Koeppe, Ken Malsky,
Philip Sohn, computers and sound treatments
Barry Vercoe, conductor
- 2 Nataraja** (1983) (10:02)
for flute (doubling piccolo) and piano
Harrie Starreveld, flute/piccolo
René Eckhardt, piano
- 3 Ritual Melodies** (1990) (13:26)
for quadraphonic tape

Notes by Jonathan Harvey

I FROM SILENCE for soprano, violin, viola, percussion, 3 electronic keyboards, computer and tape.

From Silence was the result of a commission and residency at the Media Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1988. Confronted by the daunting, even chilling, culture of M.I.T.'s science I was impelled to turn to the opposite. The timeless world of Christian mysticism was to act as a leaven in my work with the computer. There was no sense of rejection in my attitude, simply an impulse to complete, make more whole. I used four texts, the first and third of my own making and the second and fourth written by the Abbess of an English convent where I have had a retreat, West Malling Abbey. The title is both literal—the beginning cymbal roll is marked “from silence”—and spiritual; spiritual in the sense that “silence” is a state of mind in spiritual parlance. It is the zero state in which deep peace and creativity is experienced. The music of the beginning and between the texts reflects this to some extent in that it is devoid of discourse or musical argument.

When discourse does arise, it arises from this ground of timelessness, always present but not always audible. The discursive structure is based on a chain of interlocking melodies, primary melodies which (as in *Ritual Melodies*) when two are added together make a more complex composite melody, the eighth of the chain interlocking back with the first. These melodies are exposed by the voice when it enters in the first few minutes. The remainder of the work derives from them.

Many of the derivations are effected by electronic transformations.

From Silence

I

transcendent

immensity of starspace

across, reaching through transparent void

beyond, there trembling

radiant beings, together in-loved

electric self-lost presence

I un-self am

immanent

within dark

hidden seed, roots grasping earth

permeating warm descent

imprisoned light, out!

break open prison doors

shatter and scatter prismatic carpets

iciclets and flowers

meadows of ocean spume

flow out

unfurl,

melt this ice soul

Translucent God

II

Wings
outspread to infold
overshadowing

quiet now
look within, see
the mystery waits
there to unfold

Let it be

Spirit filled, inborn Christ
life, death, resurrection,

eternities present in time
timelessly.

III

Lord of energies
dance with my I.
My I dances and twists
It splinters and spirals
Squirms and squashes
Scatters and whirls
Whorls and cavorts
Vaults in vortices
in seas and sprays
atomise, vaporise,
flattened on rock
on skies
flies amok
Pinned and thrust
Joyfully lost.
I dance with my I,
Vapid and fey;
dance of Thy energy.

IV

In deep heart
Christ
Christ uplifted
Christ in-drawing
Christ unfolding Christ
the you, the I,
the all, the pleroma,
till the all is
Christed in the
Fullness of ALL.

The three electronic keyboards use many "distorting" spectra and inharmonic timbres. The live treatment of soprano and violin extends the sounds' characters and tape and live computer sequences vastly enlarge the harmonic structures in time.

I would like to thank David Atherton for his help with the programming.

2 NATARAJA for flute (doubling piccolo) and piano

Nataraja is the name given to Shiva in his aspect as the four-armed dancer whose movements create and destroy matter throughout eternity. He beats the drum of creation, stamps on the demon of ignorance and holds and is surrounded by flames, whose flickerings, like the Indian dance beats, are suggested in the music. The acoustic structure of the flute—its higher notes are the overtones of the lower notes' fingerings—suggested harmonic series parallelism between the flute and piano; the piano, for instance, playing the fundamental of the flute's overtone. The flute's ability to play complex inharmonic sounds (multiphonics) is also exploited and reflected on the piano in an attempt to unify pipe and hammer. The work was commissioned by The Nicholas Yonge Society with funds provided by the South East Arts Association (U.K.), and researched with Phillippa Davies who gave the first performance in 1983.

3 RITUAL MELODIES for quadraphonic tape

After an initial research period at IRCAM starting in 1985, *Ritual Melodies* was completed there in 1990. It is for tape alone (here mixed down to stereo) and consists only of sounds generated artificially by

computer. There are no recorded sounds in the piece. Jan Vandenheede made simulations of Indian oboe, Vietnamese koto, shakuhachi, Tibetan temple bell, Western plainchant voice and Tibetan chant voice. They were so designed to be able (by means of the FORMES program) to change one into the other, one type of synthesis into another—a revolution in programming. Their innards, as it were, transform. They play 16 melodies, transmuted as they go. The melodies are of the same sort as in *From Silence*; they form an interlocking chain with simple ones combining to form composite ones (A, AB, B, BC, C...etc.). They all use only the harmonic series from partials 6 to 40— one series throughout the piece, except for the low Tibetan chants. At first the melodies are used in polyphony, often in close canon. Later (at 3 minutes 53 seconds) clouds of reverberated melody hang in the air and subsequently form a backdrop to melodic development. At 7 minutes 4 seconds the melodies start to move in parallel chords, though the parallelism is topological, i.e. it stretches to the bigger intervals at the lower end of the harmonic series and contracts to tinier intervals at the upper end. As the melodies become more soloistic and clear towards the end (9 minutes 7 seconds and 10 minutes 7 seconds) so they are simultaneously further transformed by transposition to higher (smaller) or lower (larger) intervals and by glissandi. All the instruments/voices are ceremonial in character, and the constant use of the Tibetan temple bell to be everything from low gong to ethereal “ting” demarcates the structure of this imaginary rite. The work was commissioned by South East Arts and I would like to thank them, IRCAM and especially Jan Vandenheede, my collaborator throughout, for their invaluable help.

Jonathan Harvey's large musical output covers a broad range of instrumental, vocal and electronic resources. In addition to his compositional activities, he has conducted, broadcast frequently on music, and authored a book on Karlheinz Stockhausen. Jonathan Harvey graduated from St. John's College, Cambridge, later earning a Ph.D. from Glasgow University and a Mus.D. from Cambridge. In 1980, he became professor of Music at Sussex University. His music is published by Faber Music, Ltd.

Soprano **Karol Bennett** received her M.M. in Vocal Performance from the Yale School of Music, where she studied with Phyllis Curtin. Since her New England debut at Tanglewood, she has appeared as soloist with the New England Philharmonic and the French Library Chamber Players and has performed recitals at the Longy School of Music, Sanders Theater and the Garner Museum. She was praised for her performance of Tod Machover's *Soft Morning City* at Carnegie Recital Hall, and is featured on a compact disc of Machover's music, *Flora* (Bridge BCD 9020).

Barry Vercoe is Professor of Media Arts and Sciences at MIT. He received his undergraduate education in New Zealand, and his D.M.A. in music composition from the University of Michigan in 1968. He taught at Oberlin Conservatory and Yale School of Music, then founded the Experimental Music Studio at MIT in 1971. He is the author of widely-used computer music systems (Music 360, Music11, Csound), and in 1982 did ground-breaking research on a Synthetic Performer system while on a Guggenheim at IRCAM in Paris. In 1985 he co-founded, with Marvin Minsky, the Music and Cognition group in MIT's new Media Lab.

Harrie Starreveld studied flute with Koos Verheul at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam. In 1978 he was a winner of the International Gaudeamus Competition for contemporary music, along with long-time duo partner René Eckhardt. Today, Harrie Starreveld is widely regarded as one of the world's leading specialists in contemporary flute music, working with many composers including Elliott Carter, Franco Donatoni, and Brian Ferneyhough. He is a member of Holland's *New Ensemble* and with René Eckhardt and bass-clarinetist extraordinaire Harry Sparnaay, forms *Het Trio*. Since 1980, Starreveld has been professor of flute at the Sweelinck Conservatory.

Pianist **René Eckhardt** studied at the Sweelinck Conservatory in his birthplace Amsterdam. He continued his studies at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, where his teachers were Hans Dercksen and Geoffrey Madge. Mr. Eckhardt frequently works with composers to prepare performances of their most recent works, including Karel Goeyvaerts, William Bland, Ton de Leeuw, Franco Donatoni, and Elliott Carter. For more than 20 years he has been a duo partner to flautist Harrie Starreveld. René Eckhardt is also a member of *Het Trio*.

Producer: David Starobin

Engineers: John Newton (*From Silence*), recorded at MIT Media Lab "Cube"; Jared Sacks (*Nataraja*), recorded at the Sweelinck Conservatory, Amsterdam.

Mastering: David Starobin, Paul Zinman

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Liner Notes: Jonathan Harvey

Bridge Records: Becky Starobin, Carolyn Finger

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From Silence was commissioned by the Music and Cognition Group of MIT with funds from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities and realized using the facilities of the Media Laboratory at MIT. Additional assistance from the British Arts Council. The composer was assisted by David Atherton.

Nataraja was commissioned by The Nicholas Yonge Society with funds provided by South East Arts Association, England.

Ritual Melodies was commissioned by The South East Arts Association, England and realized at IRCAM, Paris; with the assistance of Jan Vandenheede.

The music of Jonathan Harvey is published by Faber Music Limited.

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