

MACHINE LANGUAGE

music by Dan Trueman, with...

~ BOWS, STRINGS, LAPTOPS, ODD SPEAKERS, AND OTHER STUFF ~

- 1 Machine Language** 19:22
Anna Lim, violin; Dan Trueman, electric violin; Arash Amini, cello
Danny Tunick, percussion
- 2 Traps** 8:36
Daedalus String Quartet, with Dan Trueman, electric violin/laptop
- 3 Counterfeit Curio** 12:35
Non Sequitur, with Dan Trueman, electric violin/laptop
- 4 Spring Rhythm** 12:44
Brentano String Quartet
- 5 Still** 12:44
Courtney Orlando, violin; Dan Trueman, electric violin/laptop
Florent Renard-Payen, cello
- 6 A Cappella** 7:37
Tarab Cello Ensemble

MACHINE LANGUAGE

About this recording:

Machine Language is a collection of chamber works I've composed over the last few years. All but two include me as a performer -- I am still most comfortable playing my own music, rather than hearing it played -- on 6-string electric violin, often with a laptop in tow. The performances are by some of my favorite musicians, many whom I've known for a long time, others whom I've met in the process of making this recording.

I love making chamber music. I've done it for as long as I can remember, beginning with my family playing Corelli, Telemann, and all that other good old 18th-century stuff, and continuing through pieces like the Schubert *Octet* and the Debussy String Quartet. I just love gathering in a small room somewhere with handful of musicians and playing together, listening, breathing, looking, listening.... So one might logically wonder: if you love chamber music so much, what's with this electric violin and laptop? How could you possibly make Chamber Music, really, with all that electricity, and why would you want to anyhow?

Fair enough. But it's a pretty long story, so I'll try to be concise.

I actually got really sick of playing the violin. Or I should say, I got really sick of playing "violin music," but still wanted to play the violin, a lot. I felt there must be other music out there for me to play on the violin, yet holding the violin meant to me, in a very physical way, music from hundreds of years ago and many miles away. I felt trapped by my own instrument. The 6-string electric violin was one of the keys to my escape (the other was the Hardanger fiddle); it felt different enough (requiring several months of intense practice to adjust to) that it didn't

really speak of all that old music that I needed to move away from.

But, the electric violin didn't really speak any kind of music to me, at least not at first. So it was both liberating and frustrating. What to play? I spent years learning to play jazz, playing in rock bands, and I continue to play traditional Norwegian music on Hardanger fiddle, music I've studied for a fairly long time now. I formed a duo called Trollstilt with guitarist Monica Muga and we wrote (and continue to write) a lot of music together for my new instruments and guitar, and it was through Trollstilt that I discovered that the electric violin needed some help if it was going to feel like a Chamber Music instrument; it's a difficult and somewhat ridiculous task to make chamber music with a 200-watt Fender Twin electric guitar amp, or even a tidy little acoustic guitar amp. It's hard for everyone to hear well, and those amps always make the instrument sound like it is coming from some other place (let's heap on the artificial reverb!). And we haven't even started to talk about blend and ensemble sound....

Help came in the form of a spherical speaker, a speaker that radiates sound in all directions, just like good old acoustic instruments. With these intriguing looking speakers, my electric violin could finally sound like it belonged in the room with all the other instruments; everyone could hear it equally well, and it just seemed to fit, to blend. And I could still play the six strings of the instrument I had grown to love, and retain some of the expressive possibilities that amplification creates. I could also keep my laptop, which I had been using for years to make mincemeat of my electric violin sound; the spherical speakers provided a voice for the laptop-as-violin-appendage that also seemed, at the very least, not utterly foreign to making chamber music.

My return to Chamber Music came finally with *Machine Language*, which I composed in 1999 for violin, electric violin, cello, and percussion. This was fol-

lowed by *Still*, my first piece for Electronic Chamber Ensemble; in addition to playing the electric violin, I placed a pair of spherical speakers amongst the ensemble (they actually look like sculptural pieces of furniture), and my laptop was then welcome as well. And I've gone from there, even invading the most hallowed of chamber music ensembles, the String Quartet, with my funny violin and speakers. More to follow....

About the pieces:

In the study of genetic algorithms, computer scientists create virtual species with virtual genetic codes and allow for spontaneous mutations within some kind of Darwinian "survival of the fittest" context. These species reproduce and evolve, doing in minutes what has taken many millions of years for "real" creatures to do, often resulting in an unexpected beast who survives alone, victorious. In one particular case, the test for survival was a wrestling match; generation after generation, virtual wrestlers would tangle, mutate, and (if they survived) reproduce, their bodies evolving into highly optimized wrestling machines. One notably successful (and amusing) species that emerged was an enormously tall, wide and skinny creature that simply fell flat on top of its opponent, smothering it.

Coming in at just under 20 minutes and moving with geological -- as opposed to computational -- swiftness, *Machine Language* is in part an imagination of the sounds of the languages these virtual species might speak, or perhaps of the music they might make. There is, I think, a sense of undirected evolution in the piece, but rather than gradual evolution, we have "punctuated equilibria" -- discrete moments of change followed by lifetimes of relative stasis. And, rather than admiring a celebrating victor, we finish with harmonious (for lack of a better word) cooperation.

Traps is a delicate exploration of a simple process I call, well, “traps.” A trap is a way of forcing whatever note I play to be transposed to a single pitch (or set of pitches); while I play, the computer remembers that last couple seconds of what I have played and then, depending on the note that I play, transposes its memory to the “trap” pitch. So, for instance, when the trap is a high F, if I play an A below that, the “trap” will, some short time later, transpose my remembered A up a minor-sixth, so it sounds a high-F. The only “problem” is that sometimes the trap’s memory might be long enough to remember other pitches I had played prior to the A, say, a low open D-string, so that D will also get transposed up a minor-sixth, to B-flat, yielding a not-quite-simultaneous sonority D-B-flat-A-F. This is precisely how *Traps* begins, and it continues slowly through a series of ascending traps, some of which are single notes, others two-note traps.

Traps was written in the opening days of the 2nd Gulf War; March 2003. Shocked and awed, indeed.

We discover a very old, noisy recording of an unfamiliar tune, a tune that seems archaic, belonging to a distant culture. We listen, analyze, dissect. We use it, appropriate it, and create a new piece that is meant to exhalt it. Our new piece begins with the old recording, and then abstracts it, taking it elsewhere, until we discover our own music in the noise of the old recording.

Well, the story of *Counterfeit Curio* is quite the opposite. The “old, noisy recording,” which ends the piece, is in fact a fake, created in the waning months of 2002, and the tune it holds is in fact original, new, and grows out of the music that precedes it. Rather than serving as a model, a trove of material to be used as a starting point, the tune is a postlude, an incomplete summary of its inspiration. The story of *Counterfeit Curio* is then not in discovering the history of the original

tune, attempting to verify its authenticity, but in discovering the tune itself.

Counterfeit Curio, composed in the Fall of 2002, was commissioned by the Society for New Music with funds provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Spring Rhythm was inspired by two disparate sources: the medieval motet and the famous “spatter” paintings of Jackson Pollock. The textures of Pollock’s paintings seem highly musical to me; it is not hard to imagine the beautiful musical textures we might create if we were to treat his paintings as “scores.” I am impressed by the physicality of his paintings; they convey a sense of gravity and effort. In constructing the textures of *Spring Rhythm*, I imagined how Pollock must have felt working on, for instance, “Autumn Rhythm” (after which my piece is named). After “spattering” an initial texture, I iterated it, and with each iteration, I would subtract one or more of the parts, replacing them with new parts and attempting to do alone what generations of medieval composers might have done with a single motet. Over the course of many iterations, the original texture (or motet) gradually changed into something entirely different; the sense of the original, however, always remained, if becoming ever more distant..

Still was composed for the American Composers Orchestra *OrchestraTech* Festival in 2001. *Still* (which originally had the awkward and irritating title dis-(re)locations) was completed on September 11, 2001 -- I was the holding score in my hands as the news of that day came in -- and premiered just a dozen blocks north of the WTC the following month (at the Knitting Factory); I went as close to the site as I could that evening and watched the empty trucks move in and the overloaded trucks move out. While not normally prone to paranormal or meta-

physical thinking, I found it disconcertingly eerie that the kinds of musical ideas I was working with in the piece -- continuity vs. discontinuity, slowly descending, vanishing gestures, recollection, disintegration, senses of place -- were so powerfully -- indeed overwhelmingly -- at work during that day, and yet the piece had been completed earlier, without any knowledge of what was to come.

A Cappella is a short, intimate piece, probably best heard from within the ensemble, where the subtle details of each instrument are transparent, summing up to a meditative, immersive whole. Inspired both by the sheer beauty of the sound of a cappella vocal ensembles (which is surely exceeded by the sheer beauty of eight cellos!) and by the abstract textures of some electronic music, *A Cappella* begins where an earlier piece of mine, *Counterfeit Curio*, finishes, belaboring possibilities that were at first inaccessible. *A Cappella* was composed for the Tarab Cello Ensemble in January 2003.

About the musicians:

Non Sequitur is recognized as one of the most exciting and versatile new-music ensembles emerging today. Known for their adventurous programming, Non Sequitur takes contemporary music as a point of departure and incorporates improvisation, theater, pop, and non-western music into their performances.

The Pierrot-plus-percussion group formed as the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, in residence at the Aspen Music Festival from 1996 to 1998. Over their years together, they have given numerous U.S. and world premieres, and have been recognized for their ability and insight in preparing new works. Non Sequitur has worked closely with notable composers Thomas Adés, John Harbison, George Tsontakis, Bernard Rands, Clarence Barlow, George Crumb, and Paul Koonce. Non Sequitur's performance at the

Ought-One Festival of Nonpop was described as "utterly sensational" and "the finest event encountered..." by David Cleary in *New Music Connoisseur* and *21st Century Music*. The group has toured the Netherlands with funding from The Netherland America Foundation. They have been in residence as guest artists at Dartmouth College, Brandeis, Princeton, and Harvard Universities. Since 2000, Non Sequitur has been the Ensemble-in-Residence at the Walden School for Young Composers. Non Sequitur will soon release a debut CD featuring pieces by Xenakis, Boulez, and original works by members of the group.

The **Daedalus Quartet** (Min-Young Kim, violin; Kyu-Young Kim, violin; Jessica Thompson, viola; Raman Ramakrishnan, cello) took flight in the summer of 2000 at the Marlboro Music Festival. As the Grand Prize Winner of the 2001 Banff International String Quartet Competition, Daedalus is already perched high among America's outstanding string quartets and has quickly become one of the most in-demand young ensembles performing today.

During the 2002-2003 season, the Daedalus Quartet performed coast-to-coast in Canada, including major series in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Vancouver, as well as Japan. The Quartet performs nearly 50 concerts during the 2003-2004 season, including recitals in New York, Washington, Los Angeles, Chicago, Baltimore, Providence, Philadelphia, and the Republic of Panama. They also serve as the Ernst Stiefel Quartet in Residence at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts, and perform Erwin Schulhoff's Concerto for String Quartet with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Sunghae Anna Lim has performed throughout the United States, Central America, Europe and Japan and enjoys a varied career as chamber musician and teacher. She is a founding member of the Laurel Trio, winner of the 1995 Concert Artists Guild Management Award and ProPiano Competition, and violinist of the New Millennium Ensemble, the Naumburg Award-winning sextet. She has participated in Marlboro, Tanglewood, Ravinia and Prussia Cove Festivals, and has recorded for Koch International, CRI and Newport Classics. Ms. Lim received a B.A. from Harvard University in German

History and Literature and completed her Diploma at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. She teaches violin at Princeton University.

Cellist **Arash Amini** has performed as soloist, chamber, and orchestral musician throughout the U.S., including in Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and Merkin Concert Hall, and throughout Switzerland, France, Germany, Canada, Japan, and Botswana. He has performed at two Isaac Stern Chamber Music Workshops (Carnegie Hall), the 1999 Irene Diamond Concert (Alice Tully Hall), the Steans Institute for Young Artists (Ravinia Festival), the Verbier Festival and Academy (Switzerland), the Rencontres Musicales d'Evian, on the Great Performers (Lincoln Center), the Alexander Schneider Young Artists (Weill Recital Hall), the Schneider Concerts (The New School), and the Museum of Modern Art's Summergarden Series, and for The Creative Coalition, and the Americans for the Arts Gala. Arash Amini has performed chamber music with André Watts, Barbara Hendricks, Kennedy, Cho-Liang Lin, Mischa Maisky, Julian Lloyd Webber, and David Geringas. He is a graduate of The Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with David Soyer, and The Juilliard School, where he received his Master of Music degree, studying with Aldo Parisot. Arash Amini is a co-founder, the President and Artistic Director, and an Artist Member of America's Dream Chamber Artists, a new and exciting chamber music society based in New York City. He has performed countless world and U.S. premieres of solo and chamber music works. Arash Amini performs in the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the American Symphony Orchestra, is Co-Principal of the Long Island Philharmonic and the Riverside Symphony, and has been featured in *The New York Times* and on Voice of America.

Percussionist/Conductor **Danny Tunick** plays rock, classical, and experimental musics, on a wide variety of instruments. He performs wildly, and can be heard on the CRI, Opus One, Little Teddy, Point, New Albion, Capstone, Tzadik, Merge, Wiiiija, Konkurrent, Mystic, Happy Squid, Cantaloupe, Atomic, Red Toucan, Spaced, Rover Japan, and Rock Against Rock record labels, among others.

Since its inception in 1992, The **Brentano String Quartet** (Mark Steinberg, violin; Serena Canin, violin; Misha Amory, viola; Nina Lee, cello) has been singled out for its tech-

nical brilliance, musical insight and stylistic elegance. Within a year's time, the Brentano String Quartet claimed the distinction of being named to three major awards, winning the first Cleveland Quartet Award, the 1995 Naumburg Chamber Music Award and the 10th Annual Martin E. Segal Award. For their first appearance in Great Britain at Wigmore Hall the Brentano was awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award for the most outstanding debut in 1997. The Quartet became the first quartet-in-residence at Princeton University in 1999, and served as quartet-in-residence at New York University from 1995 - 2003. In 1995 they were chosen by The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center to participate in the inaugural season of Chamber Music Society Two -- a program designed for outstanding emerging artists and chamber musicians. Additionally, the quartet had the honor of being quartet-in-residence at London's Wigmore Hall for the 2000-01 season. The Brentano String Quartet has appeared with pianist Mitsuko Uchida at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, at the Library of Congress, at Lincoln Center, and in major cities in Germany, Italy, and Japan. The quartet has also collaborated with Jessye Norman in her 1998 Carnegie Hall recital as well as in the ancient amphitheater of Epidavros in Greece. In the fall of 1998, the Brentano String Quartet performed to great acclaim in various venues across Australia, including the prestigious Sydney Opera House and were featured in a "Live From Lincoln Center" broadcast. The Brentano String Quartet has made appearances in major musical centers in North America in New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, La Jolla, Detroit, Ann Arbor, Toronto, Washington, DC, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Baltimore, Houston, New Orleans, Kansas City, and Boston. In addition the Quartet has appeared in such European venues as Royal Festival Hall in London, the Accademia de Santa Cecilia in Rome, and in Frankfurt, Cologne, Florence, Geneva, Stuttgart, and Paris.

The Brentano's recent and upcoming festival appearances include the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland, Festival Divonne in France, the Bath Festival in England, the Kuhmo International Chamber Music Festival in Finland, Chamber Music Northwest, the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival, Chautauqua, Caramoor International Music Festival, the Taos School of Music, and the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara.

The Quartet is named after Antonie Brentano, whom many scholars believe to

have been Beethoven's mysterious "Immortal Beloved," and to whom he wrote his famous love confession. The quartet maintains a strong interest in the music of our time and has commissioned and premiered works by Milton Babbitt, Chou Wen-chung, Charles Wuorinen, Bruce Adolphe, Steven Mackey, and Jonathan Dawe. In addition, to celebrate its tenth anniversary the quartet commissioned ten composers to write brief companion pieces to Bach's "Art of Fugue." The quartet has collaborated in recent years with Pulitzer-prize winning poet Mark Strand, commissioning poetry for performances of Haydn's Seven Last Words of Christ, and are currently working with Strand on a program combining poetry with works of Mozart and Webern.

The quartet's recordings include a CD of music by Bruce Adolphe, one of Haydn's Op. 71 quartets, and one of works by Steven Mackey.

Violinist **Courtney Orlando** is regarded as a versatile musician, with a repertoire spanning the Renaissance to the music of today. Her involvement with the new music ensemble Alarm Will Sound, of which she is a founding member, led to her recent Carnegie Hall debut with the Steve Reich Ensemble and David Robertson. Other projects with Alarm Will Sound include the 2002 CD release of Reich's "The Desert Music" on Cantaloupe Records, and performances at the Bang on a Can marathon, Columbia University's Miller Theatre, and Merkin Hall for the WNYC "New Sounds Live" radio series. Courtney is also a member of the jazz fusion quintet Neos, which has upcoming performances across the United States. Additional collaborations include those with John Adams, Michael Gordon, David Lang, David Liptak, Brad Lubman, Paul O'Dette, and Helmuth Rilling. A native of Allentown, PA, Courtney is a graduate of Temple University (BM) and the Eastman School of Music (MA, DMA). She currently resides in Baltimore, where she is a professor of ear training at the Peabody Institute.

Florent Renard-Payen was born in Paris to a family of professional musicians. He studied in France with Annie Zakine-Cochet and Michel Strauss. In 1990, he moved to Boston where he studied for five years under the direction of Andrés Díaz. In 1996, he received the Pi Kappa Lambda award for musical achievement from Boston University. He has played in master classes for Pieter Wispelwey, Yo-Yo Ma and the late Joseph Gingold.

Since 1999, he has been teaching cello at Colgate University and chamber music at Hamilton College. An advocate and active performer of music of the 20th and 21st centuries, Renard-Payen is the founder of the Tarab Cello Ensemble and a guest performer for the Society for New Music in Syracuse, NY. He has commissioned and premiered solo cello works by Todd Coleman, Aaron Travers, Gregory Mertl and Garrett Byrnes. In addition, he has collaborated with composers such as Larry Bell, David Liptak, Lukas Foss, Brad Lubman, Augusta Read Thomas and Dan Trueman. Renard-Payen holds a doctorate degree from the Eastman School of Music.

Recognized for its artistic creativity, the **Tarab Cello Ensemble** is dedicated to the commissioning and performance of new music written for eight cellos by American composers, with the overall goal of establishing a vital contemporary repertoire for this richly deserving instrumentation. The ensemble welcomes works that not only demand consummate virtuosity, but also demonstrate a wide variety of styles such as Minimalism, Neo-Romanticism, and eclectic genres.

The ensemble derives its name from the Arabic musical tradition. The word "tarab" describes an intense emotion, often ascending to a state of ecstasy, brought about by deeply powerful melodic lines. By engaging in the performance of music, musicians evoke in the audience a sense of "tarab."

Since its inception in 2000, the ensemble has commissioned works from Larry Bell, Garrett Byrnes, Dennis DeSantis, David Liptak, Brad Lubman, Gregory Mertl, Joe Michaels, Sam Pellman, Martin Scherzinger, Aaron Travers, and Dan Trueman; the ensemble's repertoire also includes such works as Pierre Boulez's *Messagesquise* and Arvo Pärt's *Fratres*. Tarab Cello Ensemble has performed concerts in New England, New Jersey, New York, and France; their broadcast performances have included those for public radio stations WXXI (Rochester, NY) and WCNY (Syracuse, NY). Recently, the ensemble was invited to participate in the Boston Conservatory New Music Festival and was a guest ensemble in residency at Princeton University, hosted by the composition department and Friends of Music at Princeton.

In 2002, the Tarab Cello Ensemble received a grant from the Howard Hanson

Institute for American Music for its accomplishments in the performance and creation of contemporary American music.

The members of the ensemble are Annie Barley, Elizabeth Brown, Adam Carter, Susie Kelly, Caroline Kang, Kevin McFarland, Florent Renard-Payen (founder), and Ben Wensel.

Dan Trueman is a composing performer on both the 6-string electric violin and the Norwegian Hardanger fiddle. His duo Trollstilt (with guitarist Monica Muga) released its first CD of original tunes in 2000, inspired by his activities as a traditional Hardanger fiddler, and has performed widely at both contemporary music festivals (such as the Bang-on-a-Can Marathon) and folk music festivals (in Norway and the US); their 2002 performances in Norway were supported in part by a grant from the Arts International "Fund for U.S. Artists." While many of Dan's compositions are for his own ensembles, he has also worked with the Brentano, Cassatt and Amernet string quartets, the Paul Drescher Ensemble, and others. He has completed commissions from the American Composers Forum (Hardanger fiddle and orchestra), the Society for New Music, and the Tarab Cello Ensemble, and others. As an improviser, he performs regularly with interface, an electronic improvisation ensemble (with Curtis Bahn and Tomie Hahn). Their first CD, ".swank," was released by c74 Records in early 2001, and in 2003 Deep Listening Recordings released a DVD of improvisations and dance pieces—"Recording Field, H"—with guest Pauline Oliveros.

Dan has been active as an experimental instrument designer, and has built sensor bows, spherical speakers, and the award-winning Bowed-Sensor-Speaker-Array (BoSSA). His software synthesis/signal processing toolkit PeRColate (co-authored with R. Luke DuBois) is widely used. Dan studied physics at Carleton College, composition and theory at the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati, and composition at Princeton University. He worked at the Columbia University Computer Music Center for two years before becoming Composer-in-Residence and Director of the Digital Music Studio at Colgate University. Dan joined the composition faculty at Princeton in the fall of 2002, and lives in Princeton with his wife Monica and daughter Molly Clare.

Producer: Dan Trueman

Engineers: Mary Roberts, Jim Moses (*Spring Rhythm*)

Art Work: Judy Trueman

Typography: Alexis Napoliello

Liner Notes: Dan Trueman

Special Thanks

I would like to thank all of the wonderful musicians who joined me on this record, and also: Mary Roberts (for her ears, and for her tireless and excellent engineering work), Judy Trueman (for the artwork, based on engineering sketches from my grandfather's notebooks), Ted Coffey, Jim Moses (recording engineer for *Spring Rhythm*), Steve Mackey, Paul Lansky, Perry Cook, Barbara White, Dmitri Tymoczko, the Princeton University Council on Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the Composers Ensemble at Princeton, the New Jersey Council on the Arts, the smart folks at Cycling74 (makers of Max/MSP, the software that I use), Eric Aceto (for his beautiful 6-string electric violin), and everyone at Bridge. Last but hardly least, Monica Muga and Molly Clare Trueman, my magnificent muses. --DT

Executive Producers: David and Becky Starobin

For Bridge Records: Ashley Arrington, Kelly Ferriter, Alexis Napoliello, Daniel Singer and Robert Starobin

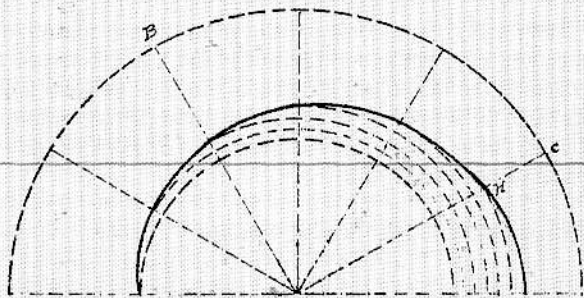
Bridge Records, Inc

200 Clinton Avenue

New Rochelle, NY · 10801

Email: Bridgeec@bridgerecords.com · Web: www.BridgeRecords.com

Robert Starobin, webmaster



- CONSTRUCTED WITH BOWS, STRINGS, LAPTOPS, ODD SPEAKERS AND OTHER STUFF -