

Galerie Mot & Van den Boogaard

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donderdag - vrijdag - zaterdag 14.00 tot 18.30 uur

jeudi - vendredi - samedi 14.00 à 18.30 heures

en op afspraak / et sur rendez-vous

Newsletter 20

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Photo: Anders Edström

België-Belgique
F.B.
1000 Brussel 1
1/1501

Sharon Lockhart

TEATRO AMAZONAS

Fragments of a conversation between composer Becky Allen and Michel Assenmaker

The film shows an audience sitting in the 102 years old opera house Teatro Amazonas, Manaus, Brazil, listening to music. Invited by Sharon Lockhart, they represent all the neighborhoods of Manaus. This audience is photographed from a stationary camera position, on the stage above the orchestra's pit, as a choir is singing.

M.A.: You have been in Manaus, haven't you? You know the sound of the forest, incredible! It's full at any moment, even at night. Full of repetitions and chance sounds. I just saw *Goshogoaka* again. A work between Japanese theater and performance, gestures and dance, music and sounds. No stories, only words as rhythms. No allegorical procedures. The reality as a constant shift. But let's begin: is this your first music for a movie?

B.A.: The first film I worked on was *Khalil, Shaun, A Woman Under the Influence* with Sharon. Our friendship began a year or so before we started collaborating in 1992. We lived together in a loft in downtown LA with several other artists and we eventually started working together. For this film, I composed a simple melodic piano piece, influenced by some of Satie's piano works and the film soundtracks of John Cassavetes. Very different from *Teatro Amazonas*. Prior to this film, I had also worked on several student films while at California Institute of the Arts where I received my Master's Degree in music composition. *Teatro Amazonas* is actually our third collaboration. We also worked on a country song together, *Crush on Du* sort of a spoof of country music with some ironic German phrases tossed into the mix. My part was that of the country singer.

Was *Goshogoaka* the base material for your inspiration? (I don't like this word but...)

When Sharon came to me with the project, she already had an idea of what she wanted having just come out of the post-production of *Goshogoaka*. She knew she wanted a long slow fade of music that was gradually overtaken by the sounds of the audience. From there, I took this idea and developed it. The non-melodic music mirrors the non-narrative content of the film. I decided to use this idea of a slow fade and so I chose a shape that represented that idea, a 3-dimensional cone. I worked with a mathematician to figure out the equations that I could then map to musical parameters. I didn't want there to be a traditional

pulse for one to lock onto either. Rhythm was not one of the chosen parameters. We worked with pitch, volume, quantity of voices and time. My hope was that with slow and gradual changes through time, the listener would have something different to focus on, namely sound as shape.

I just saw the score: long lines of time as a drawing. Performed: a concrete abstraction!

What's unusual about this film is that it was shot in one take in synchronized sound, incorporating the genuine reaction of the audience. Because of this, the audience would cough, laugh, talk, sounds of cars would go by; these were all chance factors in the sound track. These elements and even the technical difficulty in singing this piece overtook the very structurally scored composition.

The choral music is in one way the center of attention - the object - for the audience. This object is made around Brazilian vowels, a twelve-tone cluster, breathing and silence. But there is a shift from the music being the center to ambient sounds being the focal point...

Initially it's true that the music from the choir is the object of attention for the filmed audience. I think a very beautiful part of the piece is the gradual shift from choir to ambient sound. And particularly that you can't tell where the choir even ends. The choir fades over a period of 24 minutes while the audience slowly fills the sonic space. Even though I know where the choir ends, when listening I still can't really tell where they stop. It's so delicate. You almost hallucinate the choir within those last 6 minutes of just audience sound.

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The music you wrote seems to be a continuous mass of sounds? Does it relate to the steadiness of the camera?

The shape of the piece, the cone, does reflect the view of the camera, the site lines of the camera could be considered to be cone-like; the focal point of the camera to the back wall of the theater is a cone shape. This piece is a very stripped down version of some of the sound-mass

pieces in the tradition, for example, of Ligetti, Penderecki and Xenakis. Its development is slow and subtle. There's virtually no form. It is a simplification of many of the musical parameters that we traditionally work with. I think I should mention that Penderecki's *Devil of Loudon* was particularly influential on this piece. Sharon and I listened to the opening choral chord and knew that this was the direction that we wanted to go.

The floating character of this mass of music, is it that you wanted the music to be open, for other things to happen? That the music would not fix meaning?

I would agree. The music does not work with melody or have harmonic development, in the traditional sense. There is no musical punctuation that might synchronize with the image or gesture. This creates an experience for the viewer in which their expectations are reversed. He or she is paralleling the experience of the audience on the screen. The sound creates a context for this experience.

In an interview with Morton Feldman, F. Esselier wrote: "I have heard a beautiful sentence of Cage on the repetition of the *Song Books* in Paris. All the singers were on stage and amplified their role by various actions. Cage was delighted, it was chaos, there were things happening everywhere. Then, Cage moved apart and said to a friend: 'I'm asking myself what all that has to do with music?'" Cage's modesty was the contrary of the architecture of this theater in Manaus. And to let the audience and ourselves (as the audience of the movie) enter the music you made, is also, in one way, working on what a sound is like and what music is like.

...The *Teatro* is a beautiful building. Its eccentricity within a tropical environment only makes it more lovely. I guess the music, being so structural, does reflect the architecture, but very loosely. The chance occurrences of the audience sounds bring in the Cage element that you mentioned. It eventually overtakes the structured music and we're just left with the random sounds.

Yes, listening to the soundtrack, I'm hearing strange other music...

There are dancing melodies that one hears while listening to the piece. This is a result of the overtones coming from the fundamental tones that the choir is singing. Sometimes it sounds like you are hearing electronic sounds, or bagpipes, or flutes. It's really one of my favorite aspects of the piece.

What about the work on the voices?

One of the most amazing parts about doing the music was working with the conductor Zacharias Fernandes and

choir from Manaus, *Choral do Amazonas*. The choir was made up of 60 women and men. They were incredible to work with; talented, patient and had great spirit. The piece itself is physically very challenging. Imagine singing one tone continuously breathing as little as possible for 24 minutes. To sing this piece you practically have to be a machine. It is so physically challenging that to sing it through more than 2 times in a day is physically impos-

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sible. The energy required of each individual performer is monumental. Each needs to give a strong performance or the piece falls apart. There can't be a weak link in the chain. They worked on the piece for a couple of months before I flew down to work with them. I had given them a basic breakdown of where each group should sit relative to one another for rehearsal and performance. What they did with that was very interesting. They formed the groups into small circles, like small communities and appointed a leader in each group. This leader would point to each of the singers when it was their turn to breath, approximately every second. They listened very carefully to one another in order to blend, the goal being to sound like one voice. Meanwhile, they had to listen to the surrounding groups to stay on pitch. This was very tough considering the tightness of the tonal cluster.

Last but not least (do you say so?): what are you working on now?

Travelling to Brazil greatly influenced my direction and life. It was the first time I'd been outside of our industrial society. Consequently, I started a world music choir when I returned to Los Angeles. We're currently working on music from Brazil, Africa and Bulgaria. As for writing, I'm working on a song project with a great musician, Leon Garcia, from Mexico City. The songs blend styles from Mexico, Brazil, the European Renaissance and America. We hope to be performing in the next couple of months. And I will be going to Rotterdam for the *première* of the film next week. I'm looking forward to being in an audience and experiencing it from the other side!

24 minutes

Becky Allen

Conductor's Score
for 60 voices

Conductor's Score for 60 voices, showing 12 groups (1-5) and time markers.

Time markers: :24, :25, :43, :48, :49

Groups (1-5) and their notes:

- Group 2 (1-5): (i)
- Group 4 (1-5): (a)
- Group 6 (1-5): (u)
- Group 8 (1-5): (e)
- Group 10 (1-5): (o)
- Group 12 (1-5): (i)
- Group 11 (1-5): (u)
- Group 9 (1-5): (a)
- Group 7 (1-5): (i)
- Group 5 (1-5): (o)
- Group 3 (1-5): (e)
- Group 1 (1-5): (u)

Additional markings:

- Group 2 (1-5): :48 (1-4)(u) fine
- Group 1 (1-5): :24 (1-4) fine, :25 (o), :43 (o)

85db



dimin. poco a poco ...

Agenda

Eija-Liisa Ahtila: Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London, 21/10-20/11 (solo); Salzburger Kunstverein, 28/10-5/12 (solo); Am Horizont, Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld, 21/11-27/2

Pierre Bismuth: 8e Biennale de l'image en mouvement, Centre pour l'Image Contemporaine Saint-Gervais, Genève 5/11-12/12; Let's get lost, Saint Martin's School of Art, London, 9/11-20/11; La Partie, MK2 Project Café, Paris, 20/11-20/1

Manon de Boer: Exit, Chisenhale Gallery, London, 4/12-31/1

Rineke Dijkstra: Regarding Beauty, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, 7/10-17/1

Honoré d'O: Hundstage, Kunstverein Bremen, 25/11-6/1

Dora Garcia: Galeria Juana de Aizpuru, Madrid, 1/12-10/1 (solo); Lost in Sound, CGAC, La Coruña, 2/12-12/3; Cartografías a finales del Milenio, Sala de la Comunidad de Madrid, Madrid, 2/12- 2/2 (cat.); Los Años 90, Galería Luis Adelantado, Valencia, 8/12-30/1 (cat.)

Douglas Gordon: Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 12/11-9/1 (solo); h:min:sec, Kunstraum Innsbruck, 2/10-31/12; Peace, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich, 7/11-9/1

Sharon Lockhart: Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 20/11-6/2, solo (cat.); Galerie Mot & Van den Boogaard, 25/11-5/2 (solo)

Albrecht Schnider: Galerie Bob van Orsouw, Zürich, 27/1-22/1 (solo)

Uri Tzaig: 00:00 / 1-12_12-1, Galerie l'Aquarium, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Valenciennes, 1/12-12/1 (solo); Institute of Visual Arts, Milwaukee, dec./jan. (solo)

Changement d'air, Musée d'Art Moderne de Lille Métropole, Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2/10-10/1, met/avec Rineke Dijkstra, Honoré d'O, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Pierre Huyghe, Uri Tzaig e.a.

Close-ups. Contemporary Art and Carl Th.

Dreyer, Nikolaj, Copenhagen, 6/11-9/1 (met/avec Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Richard Billingham, Matthew Buckingham/Joachim Koester, Pierre Huyghe, e.a.)

Locally interested, National Gallery for Foreign Art, Sofia, 27/10-28/11, met/avec Douglas Gordon, Uri Tzaig e.a.

Galerie

Tentoonstelling / Exposition 25/11-5/2

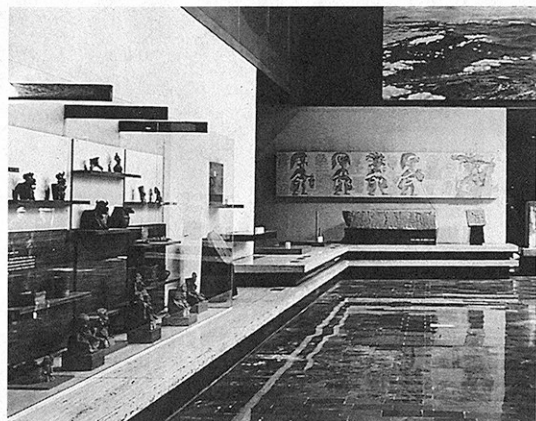
Sharon Lockhart:

«Chronicle of Masonry work in the Oaxacan Exhibit Hall, National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City» 1999

Receptie in aanwezigheid van de kunstenaar
Réception en présence de l'artiste
4/12, 17-19 u/h

Galerie gesloten van 24/12 tot 5/1

Galerie fermée du 24/12 au 5/1



Cinema

Sharon Lockhart:

«Teatro Amazonas», 1999, 35 mm, 37 min.
zaterdag/samedi 4/12, 12.00 u/h

«Goshogaoka», 1997, 16 mm, 63 min.
zondag/dimanche 5/12, 12.00 u/h

Cinéma Arenberg - Galeries
Koninginnegalerij 28 Galerie de la Reine
Brussel / Bruxelles
Gratis toegang / Entrée gratuite



Sharon Lockhart

25/11-5/2

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zaterdag/samedi 4/12, 12.00 u/h

Projectie/Projection «**Goshogaoka**», 1997
zondag/dimanche 5/12, 12.00 u/h

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Met dank aan / Remerciements à: Duvel Moortgat; Restaurant Bonsoir Clara.