



PAULINE OLIVEROS

1932-2016

HOUSTON

Oliveros

- moves to California in 1952
 - becomes involved with the San Francisco Tape Music Center

IN 1958 I simply put a microphone in my window recorded the sound environment until the tape ran off the reel. When I replayed the tape, I realized that although I had been listening carefully while I recorded, I had not heard all the sounds that were on the tape. I discovered for the first time how selectively I listened...from that moment I determined that I must expand my awareness of the entire sound field. I gave myself the seemingly impossible task of listening to everything all the time. Through this exercise I began to hear the sound environment as a grand composition. (oliveros, 1984)

"And Don't Call Them 'Lady' Composers"

***New York Times*, 13 September 1970**

That must have been around 1969. *The New York Times* contacted me and wanted to know if I wanted to write about anything. They didn't give me a subject. I said, "Sure!" And then I came up with "And Don't Call Them Lady Composers." Part of that was that I had been to New York several times by that year and Morton Feldman wanted to introduce me to composers at Max Polakov's house-- they used to gather there and hang out. So I went to a gathering, and Morty introduced me as "the world's most famous lady composer." I had to take exception to that. I told Morty that was not exactly how I wanted to be introduced, because it marginalized me immediately. I just wanted to be introduced as a composer. I think that experience and probably many other experiences of the sort that caused me to use that title and to start to point out how imbalanced everything was and how hard it was for women to be taken seriously as creators of music.

Sonic Meditations (1971)

Instead of using standard music notation, the composition consisted of twenty-five sets of prose instructions, ranging from one sentence to a few paragraphs, which presented strategies for listening.



Sonic Meditations

challenge many established conventions of Western art music on several levels:

- **invitation to “untrained” musicians to take part upsets the traditional separation between ‘expert’ and ‘amateur’**
in western music.

(Oliveros herself claims that these pieces are ‘deeply political in that they challenge certain premises in the musical establishment, that they open the way for people to participate who aren’t musicians. That’s pretty political, pretty subversive!)

- **the sounds that are made will not meet the normative expectations of virtuosity**, and this is a desired effect
- **the term meditation replaces the term performance** and its goal-oriented conventions of learning and rehearsing music to be played (eventually) in a concert
(one meditation even tells people to become performers by not performing)

REIMAGINING THE PAST / PERSONAL STATEMENTS / NEW VIRTUOSITIES

Music of the early 21st century

OPERATIC RENAISSANCE ELECTRONICS IN THE HOUSE.....

Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952)

- born in Helsinki, Finland
- initially studied composition in Finland
- moved to Paris to study at IRCAM (state-funded center for electronic arts, headed by Pierre Boulez)
- became a leading figure in the use of computer technology as both a compositional tool and an element of music
- also interested in the related ideas of "spectral" music, which uses the acoustic properties of sound itself (such as frequencies, fundamentals).



Often involves electronic manipulation of sound spectrums, timbres created by manipulations of frequencies in the harmonic series via computer analysis

- "outsider" due to her status as a Finnish composer in France and as a woman composer

L'Amour de loin (“Love from Afar,” 2000)

Saariaho (Excerpt in Anthology)

- very modern musical style
- large orchestra, including electronic music
- atmospheric orchestral writing
- hints at medieval styles, including paraphrases of Jaufré's existing troubadour songs
- long pedal points (low held notes)
- lots of melisma
- difficult vocal lines
- careful attention to changes of pitch and timbre
- “tapestries of sound”
- music is often very slow and challenging to play



**ORCHESTRAL FUTURES?...
PERSONAL STORIES?**

Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)

- born in Brooklyn (spends a great deal of her childhood in Georgia and Tennessee)
- plays percussion in marching band; majored in flute in college at Bowling Green
- artist's diploma from Curtis, Ph.D. in Composition from Penn (studied with George Crumb)
- currently teaches at Curtis Institute
- work often employs:
 - percussion
 - open 5hs
 - tone color (unusual string soli)
- 2010 Pulitzer Prize (Violin Concerto); Grammy (Percussion Concerto)



blue cathedral (2000)

Higden (in Anthology)



opens quietly:

- bell-like percussion playing overlapping patterns of three strokes each with different timbres, durations, and pitches
- four solo strings playing parallel triads (sounds a bit like Debussy)

m. 7:

- strings divide into dissonant diatonic (but tonal) harmonies
- luminous flute solo, response by a solo clarinet
- the two woodwinds dialogue over harmonies that slowly shift pitch collections—also sounds like Debussy—from the major-mode diatonic collection on C to those on E $\flat$, D, A, F, and A $\flat$

m. 52:

- Over open fifths and parallel fifths, the parallel triads of the opening briefly return. As the parallel fifths continue, the English horn picks up the solo line in measure 56, answered by a succession of instruments in short solos, often in dialogue with other members of the orchestra (measures 62–69); Higdon likens this interplay to a person touching the lives of others.

blue cathedral (2000)

Higden (in Anthology)



m. 70: Middle section

- change in tempo and texture
- parallel sustained and pulsing fifths in the low instruments + high winds play parallel minor seventh chords
- Beginning at measure 73, violas, bassoon 1, and first violins play intertwining melodies that start in imitation and then diverge

m. 84:

- faster still, short rapid ideas in the strings and bass trombone;
- percussion includes timpani and tam-tam (a low gong) covered with cardboard to deaden the sound.

m.95:

- melody in parallel triads in violins and horns, rising and falling scales in the winds, descending major triads in the low strings.

m.102:

- brass fanfare

m.122:

- chorale

Thomas Adès (b. 1971)

- born in London
- early success as a pianist, winning 2nd prize in the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition in 1989
- studies music at Cambridge (1989–92)
- vividness of detail with a clear sense of compelling overall design
- often likes established musical genres (chamber opera, string quartet, symphony, concerto)
- drawn to program music / use of titles to establish allusions to extra-musical factors
- distinct, elaborately patterned layers of texture
- possible influences: Ives, Janáček



Violin Concerto (2005)

Adès (new anthology only)



Concerto in three movements

- subtle programmatic aspects: (three movements are titled Rings, Paths, and Rounds)

virtuosic for solo violinist (also extremely idiomatic)

Three fifths related by a major 3rd

- G-D ; B-F# ; Eb-Bb
- at this point, this might remind us of Schubert, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Coltrane, etc
- but here, more like signposts in a post-tonal collection

But really, hexatonic pitch collection

- G Bb B D Eb F#

Baroque influences

- perpetuum mobile (but also influence from Ligeti)
- sinking half-steps almost like chains of suspensions (Corelli?)
- arpeggiations in violin over changing harmonies (Bach?)



Julia Wolfe (b. 1958)



Du Yun (b. 1977)



Kendrick Lamar (b. 1987)

Power

Environmentalism/Climate Change

Technology

Inequality

Blendings

Decentralizing production?

Mashups

Fusions

Retrospectives

New patronage?

Looking to the past....

Who pays for music and how?