

An Evening With Chaya Czernowin





WEDNESDAYS@7
Spring 2012

April 11
Sitar Master Kartik Seshadri

April 25
Soprano Susan Narucki
with baritone Philip Larson
and pianist Aleck Karis

May 16
Flutist Nicole Mitchell
The Art of Improvisation

May 30, June 1-2
Chamber Opera
Viktor Ullman's The Kaiser of Atlantis



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February 15, 2012
UC San Diego Department of Music
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

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Sahaf (Drift) (2008)

Pablo Gomez Cano (guitar), Eric Derr (percussion)
Ran Duan (piano), Curt Miller (clarinet)

Duo Leat (2009/10)

Curt Miller (clarinet), Samuel Dunscombe (clarinet)

Untitled (2012)

Todd Moellenberg (piano)

Manoalchadia (1988)

Stephanie Aston (soprano), Leslie Leytham (mezzo-soprano)
Rachel Beetz (bass flute)

intermission

Roger Reynolds Acknowledgement
Conversation with Rand Steiger

Zohar Iver (Blind Radiance) (2011)

Recorded performance by Bern Philharmonic Orchestra and Ensemble Nikel
Conducted by Mario Venzago

Sahaf (Drift) (2008)

Pablo Gomez Cano (guitar), Eric Derr (percussion)
Ran Duan (piano), Curt Miller (clarinet)

CHAYA CZERNOWIN was born on 7 December 1957 in Haifa and was brought up in Israel. She commenced studies in composition at the Rubin Academy in Tel Aviv and from the age of 25 has lived in Germany, Japan, the USA and Austria. Her teachers were Abel Ehrlich, Izhak Sadai, Dieter Schnebel, Eli Yarden, Joan Tower, Brian Ferneyhough and Roger Reynolds, her dissertation advisor at UCSD. Thanks to a series of scholarships and prizes, she was able to devote herself intensely to the development of her musical language, after the end of her formal studies, while living in various places and experiencing different cultures (Berlin, USA, Tokyo, Vienna). Czernowin's compositions have been performed at more than 60 festivals throughout the world including the Donaueschingen Musiktage, Ultraschall, Maerzmusik, 20th Century Music Festival in Mexico, Musica Viva Helsinki, Archipel, Switzerland, Wien Modern in Vienna, the Asia Pacific Triennial in Australia, Huddersfield, Music Today Seoul, Suntory Summer Festival in Tokyo, Salzburg Festival, and Miller Theatre Portraits in New York City. Czernowin has been in great demand as a teacher. She sees her teaching as directly connected to her compositional work. She taught composition at the Yoshiro Irino Institute in Tokyo in 1993/94 and at the International Summer Courses for New Music in Darmstadt between 1990 and 1998, in 2004 and in 2010. She was professor of composition at the University of California San Diego 1997-2006 then a professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna from 2006-2009. She received invitations to attend as a visiting professor in Göteborg, Seoul Yonsei University, Graz Hochschule, Florida Gainesville, Stanford University, Briham Young University, Singapore National University, and Basel Academy, and gave many guest lectures all over the world. Together with her husband, composer Steven Kazuo Takasugi, she has been teaching at the International Summer Academy for Young Composers in Schloss Solitude near Stuttgart since 2003. The couple has also been teaching at Tzllil Meudcan Festival and Summer Course in Israel. In 2009 Czernowin moved to teach at Harvard University where she is the Walter Bigelow Rosen Professor for Music (composition).

Czernowin has served on many juries, including the ISCM World Music Days Switzerland 2004, Music Today Seoul 2007, BMW Musica viva 2010, Christoph Delz Foundation Basel 2010/11, Isang Yun International Competition Seoul 2011, and IRCAM reading-panel Jury 2011.

As Claus Spahn (*Die Zeit*) pointed out, the works for music theatre of Chaya Czernowin give "an impressive display of where advanced music theatre can end up – deep down in the dark shafts of subconsciousness, beyond all reality and verbalisation". In these works Chaya Czernowin was able to give her artistic commentaries to some of the most important political and historical questions of our time. The opera *Pnima...inwards*, composed in the

year 2000 for the Munich Biennale, is based on the story "Momik" from David Grossman's book *See Under: Love*. An Israeli boy attempts to comprehend the Holocaust experiences of the generations of his parents and grandparents, but these persons are unable to talk about their traumatic memories. Czernowin has transposed the impossibility of liberating communication into an independent musical concept: the language disintegrates into sounds, the music explores the borders of sonic possibility and the plot remains within the realms of the subconscious. "The music speaks an essence which is present before an utterance of a word pushed it into its conceptual drawer, or after this drawer has eroded" (Chaya Czernowin). Following this line, the musical theatre fragment *Adama* (Salzburg Festival 2006) was created as a contemporary counterpoint to Mozart's unfinished singspiel *Zaïde - Adama*. Instead of completing the Mozart fragment, Czernowin consciously treated her own music as a foreign body, inserting it between the individual numbers of Mozart's score and in this way relocating Mozart's self-contained arias and ensembles within the cratered landscape of her own stridently eruptive music, and so contrasting the Rococo theatre with the hopeless and brutal reality of a contemporary love relationship between an Israeli and a Palestinian.

In addition to music theatre compositions, Czernowin has composed numerous works for chamber music groups, ensembles and orchestras, in which one can study the "vivid physical presence about Czernowin's music, a fascination with sounds as objects in space, and the different ways in which they can be given their own connective logic" (Andrew Clements, *The Guardian*). Under these works one finds *Winter Songs*, a cycle in progress. The three already completed parts - *Pending Light* (2002/03, a commission by IRCAM), *Stones* (2003, Ensemble Modern) and *Roots* (2003, Sospeso) - are based on an identical musical core played by seven instrumentalists which appears in each part in a different tonal guise with the aid of electronics, percussion and samplers. The next *Winter Songs* to be composed will open this material to larger ensembles including voices. In the cycle *Shifting Gravity* (five chamber music pieces composed in 2008 and just released as a Wergo CD) each of the five pieces concentrates on and examines a singular physical gesture, which reveals the strange physical laws of the physical and psychological world where the gesture exists, and the body performing the gesture. The large-scale triptych *Maim* (2001/2007) for orchestra and five solo instruments traces in the same sense the movements of water, followed by the study of snow *The Quiet* (Musica Viva Munich 2011).

Czernowin has received numerous awards for her compositions, She represented Israel in the Unesco Rostrum in 1981, and was awarded the Kranichstein Music Prize (1992), Asahi Shimbun Fellowship Prize (1993), Schloss Solitude Fellowship (1996), the IRCAM

reading panel (1998), Composers Prize by the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation (2003), the Rockefeller Foundation Prize (2004), the Fromm Foundation Award (2008), a nomination of the Berlin Wissenschaftskolleg (2008) and a Guggenheim Fellowship Award (2011).

The first production of *Pnima* won the Bavarian Theatre Prize and was acclaimed by the periodical *Opernwelt* as the “Best world première of the year”. The recording of *Maim* was chosen as one of the best 10 CDs for 2010 on the English magazine *The Wire*. Czernowin has been Composer in Residence in Dresden and Darmstadt in 2004, and in 2005/ 2006 at the Salzburg Festival, and in Stadttheater Basel in 2006. In 2013 she will be Composer in Residence at Bachfest Leipzig, at Impulse Graz and at the renowned Lucerne Festival.

Recent projects and commissions (a selection):

2011 *The Quiet* for BR orchestra

2011 *Zohar Iver (Blind Radiance)* for ensemble and orchestra (Festival Culturescapes, Switzerland Ensemble Nickel and Bern Symphony orchestra)

2012 Orchestra Piece with Counter Tenor Kai Wessel, Cottbus stadttheater

2012 *Gradual Edge* for organ and cello

2013 Work for Guitar and Orchestra, Lucerne Festival, Stephan Schmidt and the SWR Orchestra

2013 A piece for Daniel Barenboim and the Diwan Orchestra

2013 The fourth production of *Pnima* in Lucerne Stadttheater.

2012-16 Several chamber works: San Francisco Contemporary Players (Fromm Foundation Commission), Orchestra 2001 (a commission of the Library of Congress), Calithumpian Consort Boston (Siemens Foundation), ICE New York, Norrbotten Neo (Sweden), Asimasa (Norway), String Quartet with electronics (SWR Experimental Studio Freiburg and Ircam Paris) .

--*Biography* by *Andreas Krause*

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A black and white photograph of the San Diego skyline at night, with city lights reflecting on the water in the foreground. The skyline includes several prominent skyscrapers, some with illuminated windows and signs.

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