

SONOKLECT '04-'05
A Concert Series of Modern Music
Terry Vosbein, Director

MILLing in the ENNIUM

featuring

The McLean Mix music/media performance duo

Priscilla and Barton McLean

Washington and Lee University
Keller Theatre • 8:00 p.m. • 5 March 2005

PROGRAM

MILLING in the ENNIUM

Barton McLean

Stereo sound with video

Music composition: Barton McLean

Video collage: Priscilla McLean

Commissioned and premiered by MASS MoCA (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art), in conjunction with the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. Additional consortium funding from Hamilton College, SW Missouri State University and Wake Forest University.

JEWELS OF JANUARY

Priscilla McLean

Stereo Electroacoustic Music & Video by Priscilla McLean

JULY DANCE

Priscilla McLean

Stereo Electroacoustic Music & Video by Priscilla McLean

Commissioned by iEAR Studios of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

— INTERMISSION —

AUTUMN REMEMBRANCE

Barton and Priscilla McLean

Live processed electroacoustic music performance with video.

Barton and Priscilla McLean, vocals, flutes, clariflute, violin, balloons, harmonica; assorted percussion Priscilla McLean; video Joseph Reinsel, technical consultant

Made possible through a grant from a 2004 American Music Center Composer Assistance Program.



PROGRAM NOTES

MILLing in the ENNIUM is an audio-video excerpt from the 60-minute work comprising station #1 of the installation, "The Ultimate Symphonius 2000," a huge 8-station audience-interactive multimedia premiered at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) for the Millennium celebration in February of 2000. To accompany the video, Barton McLean composed a music collage with synthesizer obligato. The collage technique, with a particular homage to Charles Ives, employs a constant stream of musics from many centuries and cultures, with the idea of seeking out their common denominators. All musical excerpts are taken directly from the various sound stations of the installation. Priscilla McLean's video, subtitled "A Celebration of Fire, Earth, Air, Water and the Arts," has a similar plan as the music—an historical collage of dance, artists in motion, drama, singers and instrumentalists performing, represented through the modern media of video and film and artfully mixed with the basic elements which allow for all life through the millennia to exist. This video excerpt is taken basically from the last section, where a large collage of music-producing hands are superimposed, and dancers are performing inside other dancers, and inside piano interiors!

JEWELS OF JANUARY is the first of a set of four video and music pieces by Priscilla McLean entitled "Symphony of Seasons." The video was taken in two locations: the icy January brook in front of the McLeans' farmhouse in the Taconic Mountains of New York, and a group of large hanging icicles on Route 22 heading towards the Vermont border a few miles away. The video took three years to film, in order to get the exact right ice images in the ever-changing brook. The technique of combining images is accomplished through the Videonics Analog/Digital Mixer and is the first video work created by McLean that uses all her own images. The music, realized on the StudioVision and Vision Sequencer, is a combination of recorded live performance, samples, and the WaveStation Synthesizer. A large metal sheet, loaned to the McLeans by artist Anne Lindsay, is suspended by hooks and bowed with a bass bow, creating a series of icy long pitches that underlie the work. Piano, clarinet, ringing glacial rocks and wind chimes are used extensively, and the piece ends with the actual stream sounds, but when melted in the spring.

JULY DANCE is a brief frolic with summer with all the Northeast in celebration, from jiving birch trees to children playing with balloons. The composer accompanies all with her *ad hoc* percussion "table" of skinned firewood logs and croquet posts strewn upon resonators and placed in a neighbor's 200-acre field, to dance with the blowing wind

as she plays. The main video instrument used is a Videonics Digital Video Mixer. Some of the other unusual visual effects were created thanks to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY, and their artist-in-residence 2001-2 McLean Mix commission and use of the iEAR Electronic Arts Studio. Priscilla McLean worked with Joseph Reinsel and the Photoshop Video After Effects computer program, which allowed McLean as percussion player to roll up in a ball and blow away in the wind! Besides the logs, other sounds are a wooden recorder and ocarina, a microphone cord and balloons squealing, a metal pizza pan, flexatone, violin—all performed by the composer, children laughing, and the Korg WaveStation Digital Synthesizer.

AUTUMN REMEMBRANCE was created as a result of a McLean Mix artist residency at the iEAR Program at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 2001-2. Its "requiem" thematic content was originally inspired by the tragic yet renewing nature of the fall season in the USA Northeast, with all its beauty, starkness, death, and eventual rebirth. The visual images are directly taken from Priscilla's camera work during September of 2000 in the Mt. Kathadin area of Maine, and in Rensselaer County, New York, in October. As the tragedy of September 11 unfolded, a new heightened awareness of the ideas of tragedy and renewal was in the minds of the artists as they continued to create their "requiem," although a decision was made to not directly involve this event in specific details of the work. Various texts are used, including one describing the requiem of autumn by Henry David Thoreau from his "Journal." The familiar "Dias Irae" melody is also performed, plus other references to autumn which the listener can identify.

The images and sounds, although derived from and inspired by one of the greatest displays of nature and color in the world, are nevertheless made more abstract, allowing the work to exist on many levels of perception, all of which can be realized and enjoyed simultaneously or upon repeated hearings. The video portion was created in the McLeans' home studio, with additional support from the iEAR studios in working with the Adobe "Aftereffects" video processing system. One of the main benefits of the residency was to enhance the McLeans' repertoire of audio processing capabilities; and to this end, Barton McLean fashioned a powerful audio processing system using elements of MAX/MSP software. The resulting live audio processing involved a gamut of delays, pitch shifting, sampling, resonators, filters, and granular synthesis (derived from Dan Trueman's "Munger" patch), controlled live via a Slidemate MIDI controller. This work is carefully through-composed, with elements of improvisation as well.

THE MCLEAN MIX



Photo: Karl Korte

The McLean Mix has performed extensively throughout the U.S. (in 40 states) and around the world in such forums such as the Zagreb International Muzicki Biennale, Asian Composers League (Tunugun-Manila), and the Athens International Film Festival. They have most recently been in residence at the iEAR Studios at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where they collaborated on and produced "Autumn Requiem," and at a summer residency as Artists in Residence at the Rocky Mountain National Park. Collectively they have been the recipients of five NEA Composer Fellowships and a Media Arts Grant, as well as awards from the Rockefeller, Ditson, IMC-Rostrum, Bourges Festival and Asian Society. Their music has been performed at most of the major festivals, including Warsaw Autumn, Graz, Gaudeamus, Bourges and New Music America.

Priscilla McLean has recently been Visiting Professor at the University of Hawaii. Her orchestral work, "Variations and Mozaics on a Theme of Stravinsky," was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and recorded by the Louisville Orchestra. Her music has been featured throughout Europe on public radio and in the U.S. in such public radio forums as *All Things Considered*, *Morning Pro Musica*, *The Environment Show*, and *Totally Wired*.

Barton McLean, as recent director of the University of Texas-Austin Electronic Music Center, developed one of the largest and most modern computer and electronic music centers in U.S. universities in 1981 and has recently served as guest lecturer and artist in residence I-EAR studios of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Recent residencies of The McLean Mix have included the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA), MacDowell Colony (five times), Banff Centre for the Arts, Relache Ensemble at Yellow Springs, Chautauqua Institution, Buffalo North American Music Festival, Universiti Malaysia in Sarawak (Borneo), and the Tunugan '97 (ACL) festival in the Philippines, as well as numerous universities in the U.S. The McLeans reside and compose in an 1830 vintage restored home in Petersburg, N.Y., and can be reached at mclmix@aol.com or by calling (518) 658 3595, or on the web at <http://members.aol.com/mclmix2/index.html>

The McLeans have a total of 17 recordings, tapes, and CDs on the labels Folkways/Smithsonian, CRI, Louisville Orchestra, Orion, Opus One, Advance, MLC, Centaur, New World Records, with seven new CDs released on the Capstone, CRI, and Centaur labels.

