

Piker
and
Songs and Toods

two solo works by Larry Polansky

Margaret Lancaster, piccolo
Elliot Simpson, Lou Harrison National Just Intonation Resonator Guitar

Center for New Music
sfSoundSalon series
June 13, 2015

Both pieces on this concert are comprised of five pieces, some of which are based on American songs, others are more abstract studies, some are both.

Piker (1997–98)

Margaret Lancaster, piccolo
Giacomo Fiore, guitar and Brian Baumbusch, percussion (in “Piker”)

You’re No Piker!
You’re a Piker
I Know You!
Piker
Daughter of Piker

Piker was written for Margaret Lancaster. “You’re a Piker,” “I Know You!” and “Daughter of Piker” are based on Shaker songs: the first a computer-composed melodic “band-pass” idea; the second a melodic morph; the third the Shaker song (“Love, More Love”) played in three different transpositions based on harmonic series cognates of a single fundamental. “Piker” and “You’re No Piker!” are Rhythmicana-based ideas, with temporal and harmonic structures based closely on the harmonic series. Margaret Lancaster premiered *Piker* and recorded it for New World Records on her CD *io*.

Songs and Toods (2006)

Elliot Simpson, guitar
Giacomo Fiore (guitar) and Tom Dambly, trumpet (“85 Chords”)

Schneidertood
Dismission of Great I
Sweet Betsy from Pike
Eskimo Lullaby
85 Chords (“The Historical Tuning Problem”)

Elliot Simpson is the first to play the complete work and has recently recorded it for the Microfest Records CD *The Wayward Trail*. Written at the request of John Schneider who premiered and recorded one of the pieces, other guitarists — including Giacomo Fiore, James Moore, and Tom Pauwels — have also played various parts.

Each piece uses a different guitar tuning on this already complex instrument, changing its “home key” (except for “...Betsy...”) in sometimes extreme ways. “Eskimo Lullaby” is taken from an old collection entitled *Folk Songs of Canada*. “Dismission of Great I” is from the Enfield, New Hampshire Shaker community (collected by Mary Ann Haagen). “...Betsy...” is of course one of the United States’ most sung songs, a kind of epic with a many versions and verses (those here are from Ruth Crawford Seeger’s *22 American Folk Songs*). The “toods,” both computer-composed, are abstract formal and harmonic studies.

The Performers

Guitarist **Elliot Simpson** has given premieres of works by such iconic and diverse composers as Sofia Gubaidulina, Alvin Lucier, and Michael Finnis, and has collaborated with many acclaimed young composers including Hugo Morales, Ezequiel Menalled, Benjamin Staern, and Sahba Aminikia. He has been a guest of organizations including the Asko|Schönberg Ensemble, the San Francisco Symphony, the New European Ensemble, Ensemble Modelo62, the György Ligeti Academy, and the Verband für aktuelle Musik Hamburg, as well as festivals and concert series throughout the United States and Europe in performances ranging from early music to free improvisation. Originally from New Mexico, USA, Elliot studied with David Tanenbaum at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and with Zoran Dukic at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague. His Master's degree in The Hague, as both soloist and chamber musician, was awarded "with distinction for his extraordinary contribution to new music."

"He is a spectacular player and artist, fully up to the demands of this music. He has an impeccable technique, the intellect to comprehend and convey the works, and enough heart to hear the beauties behind the forbidding exterior... This is some remarkable music making." — American Record Guide

"New-music luminary" (The New York Times) and "leading exponent of the avant-garde flute" (Village Voice), **Margaret Lancaster** has built a large repertoire of new works composed for her that employ extended techniques, multi-media, and electronics, fusing music, theater and movement. Performance highlights include Lincoln Center Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, Ibsen Festival, Santa Fe New Music, Edinburgh Festival, Tap City, New Music Miami, and Festival D'Automne. A member of Either/Or and Fisher Ensemble, she has been a guest of many groups including Argento, American Modern Ensemble, and the New York Philharmonic. She has recorded on New World Records (including her solo disc *io* which features Larry Polansky as composer and performer), OO Discs, Innova, Naxos and Tzadik, and was selected for Meet the Composer's New Works for Soloist Champions project. Noted for her interdisciplinary performances, Lancaster, who also works as an actor, dancer, and amateur furniture designer, presents solo and chamber music concerts worldwide. Recent collaborations include projects with Jean-Baptiste Barrière, ArmitageGone!Dance, BMP's Kocho, and playing Helene in the 7-year worldwide run of OBIE-winning Mabou Mines Dollhouse.
www.margaretlancaster.com

Thanks to sfSound (especially Matt and Kyle), the Center for New Music, Elliot, Margaret, Giacomo, Tom and Brian for making this concert happen.