

From: Daniel <dsgoode@earthlink.net>
Date: October 1, 2005 5:15:23 PM EDT
To: office@jewishfestival.pl
Subject: Dear Janusz

Dear Janusz,

It was a pleasure to talk and to play you my work-in-progress, the Critical Mass. After we talked, I started thinking, too. I may have given the impression that the piece was a simply a political response to the current American president. It's true that my comfortable, philosophical agnosticism was ruptured by the accession of a Born-Again, reformed drunkard as President. But the piece is as I said in my written proposal a critical response to fundamentalism:

Critical Mass (in the tradition of Jewish secularism) for 3 voices, clarinet (Daniel Goode), and keyboard. Expected duration: about 15 minutes.

This work is a response to the world-wide phenomenon of religious fundamentalism. I want to provide a joyful, participative musical ritual that gives expression to a world view that allows individuals to enter an ecstatic state without the percepts of organized religion. It encourages audience participation in the musical/textual performance at certain key points. Instead of thanks to a god, it thanks real individuals, and gives the members of the audience the opportunity to thank whomever they want.

If I were a scholar, I would reel off a list of skeptical rabbis and Jewish philosophers with whom I feel connected. The urban Jews whether "assimilated" or not often had, and have skeptical, agnostic and atheistic beliefs. I know you know this... Quite a few years ago I composed a chant for Martin Buber, whose humanistic "I-Thou" still seems profound and moving to me. I called my chant *I—(y)ou, an homage to Martin Buber's idea of the I-Thou relation*, and it has the chorus use those vowels in a sonic meditation which the verbal score describes. I'm FAXing it to your office. It might be do-able in a large resonant space, maybe even a religious space!!

The Critical Mass would still be my first choice, or maybe both as a pair that comments on each other. It could be looked at as another side to the questing Euro/American Jewish mind. I notice that you have some experimental, even avant-garde, improvising and jazz elements in the festival. I am a big improviser, and may I say it about myself: an ecstatic improviser! The improvisatory sections of the Critical Mass would be a place for me to do some "screaming" around and above the chorus and keyboard.

I know you are thinking about it. We are all thinkers. Now there's a title!
Very best,
Daniel