

Rebekah Heller



100 names

Watching Rebekah Heller dominate a stage and transfix an audience, it comes as no surprise that new vehicles for her virtuosity would be swiftly exhausted. Rebekah is not simply an instrumentalist. She is a red-blooded performer. There is an audacity in her approach to the bassoon that finds a parallel in a project as brazen as constructing a new wing on the bassoon library. This is not a single commission sandwiched into a recital, but five compositional roundhouse kicks carving out real estate in the new music canon.

The first arrives by way of an ICE commission by Edgar Guzmán entitled, ∞¿?. Crackling into life like the corroded wires of an abandoned electric chair, the bassoon twists around a low B-flat, pulling into and out of earshot before launching a full-scale multiphonic attack against the electronics from which it was sparked. The effect is one of anxiously observing a centuries-dormant, interplanetary craft brought back online. A sense of awakening also permeates Dai Fujikura's **Calling**, with its dark, primordial pool of bass textures gurgling up through the bedrock. From it, a gorgeous, microtonally-constructed aria is unfurled, its resonance sustained as though sung inside a sea cave, before receding back into the ooze.

100 Names is an album forged through intimate collaboration between composer and performer, and for **Qualia II**, Rebekah and Marcelo Toledo engage in wild collusion. Shrieking and cackling at any conceits of etiquette, the piece rages in the ears like a mad summons back to a primeval temple. In a more secretive realm, Marcos Balter encircles Gertrude Stein's verbal maneuver, **Tender Buttons**, in a constellation of delicate percussion and fluttering tremolos, inspiring the author's words to cavort unexpectedly.

As the eponymous track, Nathan Davis' ***On speaking a hundred names*** reveals the crux of the album. Like the multitudinous monikers ascribed to a single deity in some religious traditions, the copious attributes and personalities of the bassoon are meditated upon in this score. Realized through an inspired artistic exchange and kinship, the album is a vigorous personal salvo. All formidable works, all vital additions, the contemporary solo bassoon repertoire has been elevated by a multiple of five.

Doyle Armbrust

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Daniel Lippel & Claire Chase

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|---|---|-------|----------------|----------|
| 1 | ∞¿? (2008)
for bassoon and tape | 4.16 | Edgar Guzmán | (b.1981) |
| 2 | Qualia II (2011)
for bassoon and tape | 8.42 | Marcelo Toledo | (b.1964) |
| 3 | Calling (2011)
for solo bassoon | 12.49 | Dai Fujikura | (b.1977) |
| 4 | ...and also a fountain (2012)
text by Gertrude Stein | 8.26 | Marcos Balter | (b.1974) |
| 5 | On speaking a hundred names (2010)
for bassoon and live processing | 11.06 | Nathan Davis | (b.1973) |

(bonus track by Du Yun: *10pm, lxtab*)

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