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I live in pain David Lang (b. 1957, Los Angeles)

The composer writes, “I wrote *I live in pain* as a present for my friends Donald Nally and the excellent Philadelphia chorus ‘The Crossing.’ The piece is a love song, and the text describes an intense longing for a lover who is no longer there. I was inspired to write the text by my attempts to read the works of the 12th-century troubadour, Beatriz de Dia, often referred to as the Contessa de Dia, probably the most famous woman troubadour. I say my ‘attempts to read’ because she wrote in medieval Occitan, the antiquated version of a regional language of a small area in Southern France, which I don’t speak or read. Luckily I found a translation of some of her texts into Italian, which I also don’t really speak or read, but which I know at least well enough to push me in the direction of the text I finally made.”

I live in pain
For someone I once had,
For someone I once wanted
For someone I once knew
For someone I once loved, without measure.
I see now that he left me
Because I did not give him all my love
I see now I was wrong
And now I sleep alone

I want to hold him
In my naked arms
I want to lie beside him
In my bed
I want him more
Than any long-forgotten lovers
ever loved before
I want to give him everything
My heart
My love
My senses
My sight
My life

Good friend, kind friend, fearless friend
When will I have you?
When will you lie beside me?
When will I give you my love?
You know how much I want you.
Promise me
You will do what I say
Please.
Do what I say.

- David Lang, after Contessa de Dia
(fl. late 12th century, Provence)

I want to live David Lang

I want to live was originally a movement in a 70-minute collaborative work by the three composers who began Bang on a Can: Michael Gordon, Julia Wolfe, and Lang. Gordon writes: “In classical music, it is quite unusual for composers to collaborate, but it wasn’t like that among Flemish Renaissance painters – if the painter in the studio next door did better angels and you painted better flowers, it wasn’t unusual for a collaboration to ensue. In my case, however, the requests for collaboration have often come from others, and Julia Wolfe, David Lang and I found ourselves embarking on our third collaborative piece in 2004, courtesy of the Cologne-based musikFabrik ensemble and the Brooklyn Academy of Music’s Next Wave Festival. We reunited with Deborah Artman, who had written the libretto for *Lost Objects*. Like *Lost Objects*, *Shelter* is a staged oratorio, but with smaller forces: three sopranos and a large mixed ensemble.” *I want to live* is for the three sopranos alone; combined with Lang’s compositional language, the result is music that is raw, immediate, and mesmerizing.

I want to live where you live.
- Deborah Artman



odd about that. Apart from the interest in space and texture, I have inherited his sensitivity and kept his childish and naïve outlook to my work. In my opinion this is one of the cardinal virtues. Even if life can weigh heavily, where experience peels the spontaneity away, for most people there is a little reservoir of innocence at the bottom of their soul. I believe that I, through my music, have managed to retain a certain childish delight. And I have also inherited from my father the quest for the perfect form. I know that it can't be found, but I shall continue to try. I think that there is in each work a meaning, a dream, that the layers can be peeled away to reveal."

Epic text:

- i. morning a face a coast
- ii. jump a morning a face
- iii. haze a jump a morning
- iv. eye a haze a jump
- v. coast an eye a haze
- vi. face a coast an eye

Statements:

- i. it is and it is enough
- ii. I make statements and that is all.

- Hans-Jørgen Nielsen, trans. by the composer

Echoes Paul Fowler

Echoes was written for The Crossing and premiered at the January 2010 concert which inspired this recording. The composer writes, "The poetry of *Echoes* is from Naomi Rose's children's book on Tibetan themes, *Pema's Goodnight*. The poem aligns nature's transformation at nightfall with the echoing of the famous mantra from the Heart Sutra, *gaté gaté paragaté parasamgaté bhodí svaha*. In chanting this mantra, a practitioner explores emptiness as the gateway to compassion – gone, gone, beyond gone, beyond completely gone, enlightenment, so be it. This piece was inspired by The Crossing's warmth, artistry, and otherworldly sound; it is offered as a gift."

Snow peaks turn golden.
Fragrant petals.
Butterflies.
The crimson skies
melt into night.
Silver stars
and sailing moon.
Echoes of a chanting tune.
Gaté gaté paragaté parasamgaté bhodí svaha.

-Pema's Goodnight, Naomi C. Rose

Six Mediaeval Lyrics William Brooks (b. 1942, New York City)

Six Mediaeval Lyrics was composed for the three solo voices of Trio Mediaeval in 2006 and recomposed (expanded in scope and texture) in 2010 for the women's voices of The Crossing. The composer writes: "The texts, drawn from Peter Dronke's landmark study, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of the European Love-Lyric*, span the full range of poetic styles. "Mens mea" is an elaborate game of wordplay the intricacies of which are untranslatable; "Langueo" is an instance of the compact snarls of syntax that Latin grammar makes possible. At the other extreme are "Anima mea" and "Vale, dulcis amice," both more epistles than poems, and both speaking directly from the heart. In between are more conventional but very affecting poems: "Tu vite subsidium" and the remarkable "Aprili tempore." The musical styles likewise range rather widely, although all are grounded in a synthetic system of quasi-medieval modes. Techniques range from the purely intuitive (in "Anima mea") through somewhat systematic homophony ("Vale, dulcis amice") to tightly regulated rhythmic counterpoint ("Langueo")."

I. Mens mea

Mens mea se nescit, in me dolor iste senescit.
Cur spiro? Cur sum? Non tendo quo volo cursum.
Si pereo, rea tu, si sanor, es absque reatu.
Cur in amore tepes? Maneat qui fert retro te pes.
Res procul amote tristes, si dicis "Amo te."
Liberor a morte! Mea, iam meus urit amor te.
Mors retrahit morsum: quia dicis "Non tibi mors," sum.
Qui meus est, noster sit amor. Beat hoc ita nos ter.

My mind does not know itself, in me this sorrow grows old.
Why breathe? Why exist? I cannot take the course I wish.
If I die, you are guilty, if I am healed, you are cleared.
Why in love are you tepid? Restrain that which makes you back away.
All is banished that is sad, if you say "I love you."
I am freed from death! My own, now my love burns you.
Death retracts its sting: because you say "no death for you," I live.
What is mine, ours shall be: love. It thereby blesses us thrice.

II. Anima mea

| | |
|---|---|
| Anima mea consummabitur dolore e merore repleta, | My soul will be destroyed, filled by undiluted |
| quia a memoria tua funditus videor deleta, | sorrow, |
| que fidem et dilectionem | because from your memory I seem utterly |
| semper a te sperabam, usque ad vite consummationem. | expunged, |
| Numquid care mea est enea, | I who for faith and love |
| aut mens mea saxea, | always from you hoped, even to the end of life. |
| aut oculi mei lapidei, | Do you think my body is made of bronze, |
| ut non doleam malum infortunii mei? | or my mind of rock, |
| Quid feci? Quid feci? | or my eyes of stones, |
| In quo invenior rea? | that I should not lament the severity of my |
| Vale, vale . . . | misfortune? |
| | What have I done? What have I done? |
| | In what am I found guilty? |
| | Farewell, farewell . . . |

III. Tu vite subsidium

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Tu vite subsidium | You, life's sustenance |
| mortisque suplicium | or death's torment |
| esse poteris: | can be; |
| Tu me deseris, | If you desert me, |
| mori pateris; | to death you expose me; |
| Dulcis et amena, | sweet and lovely, |
| serena, | serene, |
| Tu me noli despicere. | Do not disdain me. |
| Scis quod amo, | You know that I love you, |
| quod inclamo te. | that I call upon you. |
| Scis quod volo, | You know that I aspire, |
| quia colo te. | because I cherish you. |
| Scis quod nosco, | You know that I understand, |
| quia posco te. | because I ask for you. |
| Scis quod spero, | You know that I hope, |
| quia quero te. | because I seek for you. |

lights firmament heaven day night signs seasons days years
lights firmament heaven light earth
lights light day light night stars
firmament heaven light earth
day night light darkness
evening morning day

waters creatures birds earth firmament heaven
sea-monsters creature waters birds
waters seas birds earth
evening morning day

earth creatures cattle things beasts earth
beasts earth cattle every-creeping-thing
man image likeness dominion fish sea birds air cattle earth every-creeping-thing
man image image male female
earth dominion fish sea, birds air earth every-creeping-thing
herb seed earth tree fruit tree seed
beast earth bird air earth every-creeping-thing life herb
every-thing evening morning day
- David Lang, after *Genesis* 1

Statements Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen (b. 1932, Denmark)

Statements is based on three poems of Hans-Jørgen Nielsen. Here we hear a certain unique minimalism, reflective of the New Simplicity of which Gudmundsen-Holmgreen was a leader, that entered our musical language in the late sixties in an attempt to remove complexity from music and create a sound world from a very few compositional elements – in this case, a few words, connected by an article or conjunction, each assigned to one of six notes. The composer writes, with a few words – “morning, a face, a coast, an eye, a haze and jump” – the poet sketches out “a situation of a classical type, the elements of a play with the unities of time, place and action. Then he runs this ruthlessly through his system, a repetitive structure ... [which] by virtue of its rhythm and sonority gradually brings about a new expressiveness.” Gudmundsen-Holmgreen mirrors this perfectly in the music, which also takes on a unique and somewhat jarring expressivity as the texture moves from one line to seven and back to two.

Of his life and work, Gudmundsen-Holmgreen says: “I take after my father [a sculptor], nothing

[Om Mani Padmé Hum]
Life is like a potter's clay
Changing from day to day.
As stars sparkle in the sky
Light and dark go quickly by.
What's the future, no one knows,
So be at peace
With how life goes.

-*Tibetan Tales for Little Buddhas*, Naomi C. Rose

evening morning day David Lang

The composer writes: "I wanted to make a piece about the creation story but I didn't want to highlight one religion's or culture's narrative over another. It was important for me to try to find something universal, something present in all stories, or common to all cultures. I hit upon the idea of making a kind of checklist of everything that needed to be created to get the world to this point, without each individual culture's stories or myths or exoticisms. I went back to the first chapter of Genesis, to see what I could get out of my own culture's story, and I stripped away all the descriptions, adjectives, connectors and motivators. All that is left of Genesis in my text are the nouns, leaving a dispassionate list of everything created, in the order in which it is mentioned. *evening morning day* was commissioned by the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Dianne Berkun, Director."

heaven earth
earth darkness deep waters
light light
light light darkness
light day darkness night evening morning day

firmament waters waters waters
firmament waters firmament waters firmament
firmament heaven evening morning day

waters heaven place land
land earth waters seas
earth grass herb seed fruit-tree fruit seed earth
earth grass herb seed tree fruit seed
evening morning day

IV. Languéo

Languéo — sed pereó,
Dum amoris — sed furoris,
Saucior — sed crucior,
Telo — sed tormento

I languish — no, I die,
From love's no, frenzy's...
I am wounded— no, tortured
...spear no, rack!

V. Aprili tempore

Aprili tempore quod nuper transiit
fidelis imago coram me adstitit.
Me vocans dulciter pauxillum tetigit;
oppressa lacrimis vox eius deficit,
Suspirans etenim loqui non valuit.
Illius a tactu nimis intremui,
velud exterrita sursum insilui,
Extensis brachiis corpus applicui;
Exsanguis penitus tota derigui...
Evanuit enim! Nichil retinui!
Sopore libera exclamo fortiter:
"Quo fugis, amabo? Cur tam celeriter?
Siste gradum, si vis inibo pariter,
nam tecum vivere volo perhenniter!"
Mox me penituit dixisse taliter.
Aperte fuerant fenestre solii,
fulgebant pulcritè Diane radii—
Heu me! Hue miseram! Tam diu dolui,
fluxerunt per genas ploratus rivuli;
Donec in crastinum nunquam abstinui.

In the April that has just passed
my true love's image stood before me.
Calling me sweetly, he touched me slightly;
overcome by tears his voice failed,
Sighing because speech had no strength.
Touched by him I trembled greatly,
as if affrighted I leapt up,
Extending my arms I pressed my body to him,
utterly drained of blood I froze...
For he vanished! I held nothing!
Freed from sleep I cried loudly:
"Where do you flee, beloved? Why so swiftly?
Stay, or if you wish I will enter equally,
for with you I wish to live eternally!"
Soon I regretted having spoken thus.
Open had been standing the windows to the sun,
to the beautiful shining rays of Diana—
Oh, me! Oh, misery! For so long I grieved,
flowing over my cheeks rivers of tears;
Until the morrow never did I cease.

VI. Vale, dulcis amice

Vale, dulcis amice, sine te procul hinc habiturus
Anxius abscedo, quia non cito sum rediturus.
Non discedo tamen totus, remanet quia tecum
Mens mea corque meum. Discedo vix ego mecum.

Farewell, sweet friend, without you far from here
I go, full of care, for I cannot easily return.
Yet I do not depart completely, for there remains
with you
My mind and my heart. I take with me hardly
any part of me.

I lie David Lang

The composer writes: “I chose this particular text because it has a darkly expectant feeling about it. It isn’t about being happy or sad or miserable or redeemed; rather, it is about waiting for happiness or sadness or misery or redemption. As is the case in many Yiddish songs, something as ordinary as a girl waiting for her lover can cast many darker, more deeply beautiful shadows.” Written as a wedding gift, *I lie* was commissioned by Kitka, an Oakland-based women’s chorus focused largely on Eastern European women’s vocal traditions.

Leyg ikh mir in bet arayn
Un lesh mir oys dos fayer
Kumen vet er haynt tsu mir
Der vos iz mire tayer
Banen loyfn tsvey a tog
Eyne kumt in ovnt
Kh’her dos klingen – glin glin glon
Yo, er iz shoyn noent
Shtundn hot di nakht gor fil
Eyns der tsveyter triber
Eyne iz a fraye nor
Ven es kumt mayn liber
Ikh her men geyt, men klap in tir,
Men ruft mikh on baym nomen
Ikh loyf arop a borvese
Yo! er iz gekumen!

I lie in bed
and turn out the light
my beloved will come today
The trains come twice a day
one comes at night
hear them clanging - glin, glin, glon
Yes, he is near
The night has many hours
each one sadder than the next
only one is happy
when my beloved comes
Someone comes, someone knocks
someone calls my name
I run out barefoot
Yes, he has come.

this condition David Lang

The impact of Lang’s *I lie* on the work of The Crossing cannot be underestimated; we first sang it in Spoleto, Italy in 2007 and it became a kind of ‘anthem’ that summer and autumn, inspiring a friendship with its composer that has produced two new works and countless performances. Soon after, David visited me in Chicago with a packet of music that included a work called *The Little Match Girl Passion* (which was to win the Pulitzer Prize just a few months later). Since then, he has passed on to us various other works he accurately identified as perfect for our ensemble, including *this condition*, a wholly different work than *I lie*, but equally as engaging for the women of The Crossing. *this condition* was premiered by Amuse Singers in New York City in 2005.

In this condition: stirred not only by men but by women, fat and thin, naked and clothed; by teenagers and children in latency; by animals such as horses and dogs; by certain vegetables such as carrots, zucchinis, eggplants, and cucumbers; by fruits such as melons, grapefruits, and kiwis; by certain plant parts such as petals, sepals, stamens, and pistils; by the bare arm of a wooden chair, a round vase holding flowers, a little hot sunlight, a plate of pudding, a person entering a tunnel in the distance, a puddle of water, a hand alighting on a smooth stone, a hand alighting on a bare shoulder, a naked tree limb; by anything curved, bare, and shining, as the limb or bole of a tree; by any touch, as the touch of a stranger handling money; by anything round and freely hanging, as tassels on a curtain, as chestnut burrs on a twig in spring, as a wet teabag on its string; by anything glowing, as a hot coal; anything soft or slow, as a cat rising from a chair; anything smooth and dry, as a stone, or warm and glistening; anything sliding, anything sliding back and forth; anything sliding in and out with an oiled surface, as certain machine parts, anything of a certain shape, like the state of Florida; anything pounding, anything stroking; anything bolt upright, anything horizontal and gaping, as a certain sea anemone; anything warm, anything wet, anything wet and red, anything turning red, as the sun at evening; anything wet and pink, anything long and straight with a blunt end, as a pestle; anything coming out of anything else, as a snail from its shell, as a snail’s horns from its head; anything opening; any stream of water running, any stream running, any stream spurting, any stream spouting; any cry, any soft cry, any grunt; anything going into anything else, as a hand searching in a purse; anything clutching, anything grasping; anything rising, anything tightening or filling, as a sail; anything dripping, anything hardening, anything softening.

- *Almost No Memory*, Lydia Davis

Potter’s Clay Paul Fowler (b. 1978, Wisconsin)

Potter’s Clay was written for the tenth anniversary of the Milwaukee Choral Artists, of which the composer’s mother is a member. Fowler writes, “This mantra is spoken to Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, who vowed to hear the prayers of all sentient beings and postpone his own enlightenment until every being on earth achieved nirvana. In some renderings of Avalokitesvara’s story, Amitabha Buddha endows him with eleven heads and one thousand arms, so he may better hear and assist those who suffer. His mantra manifests compassion, good fortune, and purifies negative karma. In this piece the mantra is primarily intoned on a, b, and d [mirroring the three sounds of Om]. The turning point of the piece is generated by the simultaneous use of the mantra in the keys of both d and e. The mantra in e acts like the outside fear element that often imposes upon pure mind, speech, and body and the result of this is a question that is frequently our greatest downfall: What’s the future?”