

Sonata Liebeslied
a recital by Keith Eisenbrey, piano
Saturday, June 5, 2010, 8pm
Chapel Performance Space at the Good Shepherd Center

Keyboard Shortcuts (2006)

Richard Johnson

Lichen
Opposable Toes
Opinion As Fact
A Little Help
Grove
Related Sweepstakes Entities

Theme and Three Variations for Piano (2008)

Sean Osborn

Theme: for Gavin
Variation: for Keith
Variation: Fast
Variation: Improvise

dear s., (2008)

Brian Cobb

Liebeslied (*amended*) (1974/2006)

Benjamin Boretz/Keith Eisenbrey

****Intermission****

(**“...my chart shines high
where the blue milks upset...”**) (1978)

Benjamin Boretz

Sonata Liebeslied (2010)

Keith Eisenbrey

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Nonsequitur and to The Wayward Music Series for the use of this wonderful space and instrument.

Notes

Throughout his long career, **Benjamin Boretz** has been active as a composer, theorist, teacher, improviser, editor, and publisher. His compositional and music-theoretical works include *Group Variations*, *Meta-Variations: studies in the foundations of musical thought*, *Language as a Music*, (“...my chart shines high where the blue milks upset...”), *If I am a musical thinker*, *One*, and *Music/Consciousness/Gender*. Among his many collaborations, some of the most fruitful have been with composers J. K. Randall and Elaine Barkin. He was the instigating and long-time editor of *Perspectives of New Music*, and is currently co-editor of *The Open Space* magazine. In all his varied activities his voice stands as a continuing challenge to the conscience of our musical lives, and as an eloquent champion of the worth of musical endeavor.

(“... my chart shines high where the blue milks upset . . .”) (1978), Benjamin Boretz’s lyrical study in “two notes at a time” has been a touchstone in my musical life since I first made its acquaintance more than 30 years ago. What intrigues me so deeply, aside from its beguiling loveliness, is the magical way it unfolds, like a flower carefully blooming, step by step, projecting, in the end, an image very like its own beginning, utterly transformed. One pianist likened playing this piece to taking a stroll in a minefield, but to me it seems more like engaging a remarkable game of Go, constructing from the simplest elements a complex and subtle field in which each new move re-images the meaning of what has gone before, and casts shadows into next-ness.

Brian Cobb is a resident of Seattle and an active composer and double bassist. His composition catalogue includes music for voice, wind ensemble, orchestra, dance, film, electronic media, and numerous chamber settings (most recently a work for viola da gamba and harpsichord titled *from so simple a beginning*). Brian's major works include *Campfire Songs* (for two voices and mixed ensemble), a theatrical song cycle set during the American Frontier era; *sCatterEd* (for solo flute), an interdisciplinary work that fuses music/theatre/kinesics; and the evolution-influenced *in far country* (for alto/soprano saxophone & piano), commissioned by saxophone virtuoso Dr. Chien-Kwan Lin. Brian’s music has been published by Ludwin Music Co. and has received awards and grants from ASCAP, the University of Washington, and Jack Straw Productions. He has received music degrees from the University of Washington (DMA), University of Massachusetts (MM), and Berklee College of Music (BM). Brian is a Present Sounds Records recording artist and is a member of the Tom Baker Quartet, the William O. Smith Trio, and the newly formed quartet Cross Talk. His debut CD, *Campfire Songs*, is slated for release in 2010 on Present Sounds Records.

dear s., (for solo piano) is a musical reflection and celebration of human companionship. Using a compositional device similar to J.S. Bach's B,A,C,H motive, *dear s.*, uses the initials of the individuals involved (eS (e-flat), D; and B (the natural one), C) as the composition's primary pitch material. This work is extremely patient and consumes the concert space by rotating the collection of aforementioned initials/pitch classes and their subsequent overtones. *dear s.*, was composed in celebration of my ten year wedding anniversary to my beloved, Stephanie Deshaies.

Keith Eisenbrey brings to his pianism a composer's imaginative musical understanding, and to his composition a mysterious and majestic whimsy. Cerebral and sensuous, remorselessly speculative, his music seeks to illuminate those most intimate of our personal spaces: the silences across which, in which, and out from which music, thought, and utterance unfold. A native of the Puget Sound area, he studied composition with Dell Wade, Ken Benshoof, John Rahn, and Benjamin Boretz, and piano with Victor Smiley, Joan Purswell, and Neal O'Doan. He is a charter member of The Barrytown Orchestra, an interactive music-making ensemble based in Barrytown, New York, and is a co-founder of Banned Rehearsal, an ongoing argument in creative musical expression, which will soon celebrate its 26th anniversary. His critical and theoretical work has appeared in *Perspectives of New Music*, *News of Music*, and *Open Space*, and he assisted in the editing of Boretz's *Meta-Variations: Studies in the Foundations of Musical Thought* for its republication. His oeuvres includes solo pieces for various keyboards, songs, and chamber works. He lives in the Maple Leaf neighborhood of Seattle with his wife Karen and their two boys, John and Isaac.

When Benjamin Boretz left off work on *Liebslied* to follow another thread of thought – the thread that lead him to (“...my chart shines high where the blue milks upset...”) – he left it unfinished in two distinct ways. First, and most interestingly, it doesn't end in any conventionally satisfying clump clump way that music is expected to end, nor does it cut off abruptly, nor lingeringly die, nor drift ethereally heavenward. Instead it spirals up and around to a repeat mark, not ending at all, or maybe ever, but in what I hear as a distinctly Kierkegaardian personal dynamic, consciously chooses itself as its own continuation. He also stopped work on it before he was completely satisfied

with it on more of a nuts & bolts level. I was pleased and honored several years ago when he suggested that I re-compose the piece pretty much as I saw fit. In my first pass through, *Liebeslied (amended)* (2006), my intent was to only re-compose some of the passages that Ben had expressed particular dissatisfaction with, and to render a couple of spots more congenial to my pianistic idiolect. The result, as far as note-count goes, is still mostly Boretz, with my amendments being largely confined to the opening passages.

Sonata Liebeslied (2010) is a complete re-envisioning of Ben's original *Liebeslied*. The fact that Ben had also done this, and that the resulting piece occupies such an important place in my musical life, added a deeply personal challenge to the endeavor. While Ben's (“...my chart shines high where the blue milks upset...”) is all gracious inexorable flow – ever unfolding itself in deeply luminous tones – *Sonata Liebeslied* proceeds lumpily and abstractly, its internal logic kept close. Of the original *Liebeslied* I have kept the pitches of the first measure as starting point, some of the passage work as a background model, and the idea of large-scale repetition, or cycling back around, as an underlying structural notion – though heavily intercut and overlapped. The work is in one, three, or six movements, I think.

Richard Johnson is a composer, improviser and instrument builder, studying composition at the University of Washington with Richard Karpen. He was a founding member of the Zatsu Trio, has invented numerous musical instruments, and is considered one of the world's premier ornophonists.

Keyboard Shortcuts (2006) consist of six short pieces with charmingly evocative titles. They range widely in character, from the witty and energetic *A Little Help* and *Opposable Toes*, to the elegiac *Grove*. At the core of each is a tautly dissonant four-part chorale. In the longest and meatiest of them, *Opinion as Fact*, this chorale resolutely attempts to ignore all outside intervention.

Sean Osborn has traveled Europe, Japan, and North America as a soloist and chamber musician, and traveled the world during his eleven years with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. He has also performed as guest principal clarinet with the New York Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, Seattle Symphony, and the American Symphony Orchestra. Sean is currently based in Seattle, composing, teaching, and touring. He has partnered with the Selmer Company to do educational outreach through clinics, master classes, and performances at schools and universities throughout the world.

Theme and Three Variations was composed in the fall of 2008 as an homage to two composer/pianists as well as an experiment in improvisation. The theme is for Gavin Borchert, with only note-heads and a direction to play slowly and softly. The rest is up to the performer. Variation one, for Keith Eisenbrey, is in highly controlled notation, and is in homage to the style of several pieces of Keith's that I have admired over the years. The second variation returns to the note-head notation with a direction to play as fast and loudly as possible, while the final variation lists the pitches and lets the performer choose rhythm, duration, color, volume, tempo (if any), etc.