



TERMINALS

Bobby Previte and So Percussion: Eric Beach, Josh Quillen, Adam Sliwinski, Jason Treuting

TERMINAL 1 - Zeena Parkins, Harp, Electric Harp

TERMINAL 2 - Greg Osby, Alto Saxophone

TERMINAL 3 - Nels Cline, Electric Guitar

TERMINAL 4 - Bobby Previte, Trap Drums

TERMINAL 5 - John Medeski, Hammond Organ, Piano





“Nothing in human life or history is much more thrilling or of more ancient and universal experience than the antithesis of the individual and the crowd; an antithesis which is familiar in every degree from flat opposition to harmonious reconciliation.”

– Sir Donald Tovey

for Jan Williams - musician, teacher, friend.

Bobby Previte's *Terminals* proposes a simple idea: that the percussion ensemble is actually an ideal vehicle for the 21st century concerto. Writing for percussion allows the composer free reign to grab the flotsam of sounds and ideas that have floated through his life. He's a drummer, and so the choice of percussion seems natural. But anybody who knows Bobby's music knows that drums are just a part of the equation, the instrument that spoke to him earliest and strongest.

Terminals is a compendium of ideas that – though the percussion ensemble itself is young in the context of western music history – also have sentimental resonance. The sheer magnitude of orchestration recalls the huge mid-century novelty percussion orchestras, or the clashing and wailing of Edgard Varèse's *Ionisation*. Bobby knows these references well, and he celebrates the spirit of joy and chaos that they conjure. Some of his compositional choices – a swing-era drum battle, an abrupt break into slow blues, VERY long rhythmic vamps – would feel awkward or contrived in the hands of other contemporary composers. But Bobby has lived these musical moments deeply: in *Terminals*, they form a coherent viewpoint.

We half-joke with him that he is our favorite marimbist of all time because of his inspired contribution to Tom Waits' song "Clap Hands" on the album *Rain Dogs*. His career spans an incredible breadth, including collaborations with the soloists on this record. But *Terminals* also intersects with an earlier phase of his life, as a student of the influential percussion teacher Jan Williams at the University of Buffalo. Jan opened the door for Bobby to a whole world of avant-garde concert music: the percussion experiments of John Cage and Lou Harrison from the 1930s, the hard-edged modernism of Pierre Boulez, the uniquely serene assemblages of Morton Feldman.

This early exposure seems to have had an impact on him: *Terminals* is an ambitious statement in the vein of those bold composers. This big statement is made using percussion, but not in the way Cage and Varèse used it for their youthful radical gestures. Bobby's percussion statement feels more like a summation than a revolution, a repository of decades of thinking about these instruments.

"How much of that did you make up, and how much was written down?"

This is the question we are asked at almost every So Percussion concert, one we're happy to answer. That ambiguity means we're doing our job. It comes at the threshold where predetermined and spontaneous ideas blend together. A good classical performer, though he or she is often playing prescribed notes, is striving for that balance with every performance.

In Mozart and Beethoven's time, the concerto soloist was partially an improvising soloist. The cadenza was a bravura display not only of technical ability, but also of imagination and spontaneity. The way that Bobby weaves masters of contemporary improvisation into the fabric of *Terminals* may at first seem like another cross-genre experiment. But actually, his combination of sturdy, crafted ensemble writing with careful curation of the soloists' talents is one of the oldest formulas we have.

And what soloists! The first time we performed *Terminal 3* with Nels Cline, I actually forgot to play for a few bars because I was so enraptured by what he could do. In live shows, John Medeski's climactic entrance on the organ always electrifies the room. It is a credit to Bobby's composition and the soloists' artistry that I'm always listening to this record wondering "what is improvised, and what is fixed?" The happy truth is that it hardly matters, because in this universe good ideas are simply good ideas, no matter whether they jump off the page or directly out of the fertile minds of the musicians.

Working with Bobby on *Terminals* was exhilarating and revelatory. Traipse out in front of the audience to perform a clichéd, deadpan stick-clicking routine? Not on your life, but for you Bobby ok, because somehow it will work. Learn to crack a bullwhip, because that's what the Buddy-Rich-Gene-Krupa drum battle section requires? You're insane, but yes, we trust you. Interrupt the fourth movement with a duet between washboard and spoons, or spend ten minutes performing no other action than setting up a whole drum kit on stage? Why the hell not, at this point?

Bobby pushed us beyond our boundaries. In preliminary meetings about *Terminals* we told him we're a touring group, so really he should stay away from instruments like chimes, timpani, huge drum setups, and a thousand pesky accessory instruments. This is of course exactly what he ended up using.

His winning combination of dogged conviction and convivial humor always helped us jump over the next hurdle. Very few composers can ask so much while also making you feel so invested.

- Adam Sliwinski, So Percussion

Terminals have fascinated me for as long as I can remember. As young boys we used to climb the fence of Niagara Falls 'International' (there was a flight to Toronto!), sneak out near the runway, and lie down on the grass for hours as the jets thundered their takeoffs directly overhead (it's incredible I can still hear anything). I took up the drums at age 13, fashioning my first kit from rusty garbage cans and aluminum pie plates (but that's another story). I was a rock/soul drummer kid from Niagara Falls who by extreme accident parachuted into the new music paradise that was the University of Buffalo in the 70s: the world of the Creative Associates, of Morton Feldman, John Cage and, most importantly for me, the percussionist Jan Williams. He simply said "look," and there it all was, an entire universe of music I never could have imagined existed - music for percussion. Bold, forward-thinking, crazy, exhilarating music.

After college I again parachuted down, but into quite a different new music paradise - New York City in the early 80s, the world of Downtown Music, the improviser-as-hero world I have inhabited ever since I left school. Many years later, in the middle of this life as a touring musician, and much removed from both the early 80s and my college percussion days, I was sitting on a runway waiting for takeoff, no doubt on my way to some festival or other. Bored, I picked up the in-flight magazine and flipping through it I came upon the Terminal Maps section. I was immediately struck by how the shapes of the maps pictured recalled set-ups for percussion pieces. At that moment, TERMINALS was born.

TERMINALS is a collision between, and a celebration of, these two worlds. In clichéd terms, the precise, unflappable, 'classical' percussion ensemble meets the wild, uncontrollable, 'jazz' master improviser in the forum best suited to such a meeting, the Concerto, a schizophrenic word whose etymology is much debated but in Italian means to "join together" while in Latin means to "contend." These two worlds happily co-exist in my mind. This is the country in which I live.

So here is TERMINALS then, for percussion ensemble and improvising soloist. My attempt to reconcile a comic book conundrum that fascinated me as a child: "What happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object?"

- Bobby Previte

A note on the spoken text of Terminal 2:

Throughout the 60s and 70s Buffalo was arguably the American epicenter for what was then called New Music, largely through the work of the Creative Associates, a rotating collection of musicians and composers whose mandate was simply to come together and "create." Conceived by Lukas Foss, the group presented concerts all over the world. Their main season offering, however, was "Evenings for New Music," staged at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, and then usually repeated some days later at New York's Carnegie Hall. Jan Williams, to whom this work is dedicated, was a seminal member of that group. On Tuesday, November 9, 1965, they were at Carnegie, preparing for that evening's concert. Finished by mid-afternoon, Williams decided to go back to the hotel to take a short nap, planning on returning to the hall just before the concert. Waking in the late afternoon, he went to turn on his bedside lamp but it didn't work. Ditto the bathroom light. He opened the door and looked out into the hallway - no lights there either. Groping for the phone he called downstairs to the desk to report the situation and ask what was going on. The answer is embedded in the ensuing cryptic exchange with the hotel operator.

All music composed and arranged by Bobby Previte
© 2011 Open World Music/ASCAP

Additional percussion: Danny Sadownick
Additional whip cracks: Sean Perham
Female voice: Andrea Kleine

Produced by Bobby Previte
Executive Producers: Anthony B. Creamer and Monika Rucker

Recorded by Paul Geluso at James L. Dolan Music Recording Studio at NYU, January/February 2014.
Assisted by Aybar Aydin, Shao-Ting Sun, Mike Tierney, and Dave Stoecker.
Additional Recording by Fabian Rucker at Dolan Studio, and by Bobby Previte at Three Horses in a Wood (mobile)
Mixed by Fabian Rucker at Three Horses in a Wood, Claverack, New York, March, 2014
Vinyl master by Scott Hull at Masterdisk, assisted by Bryan Mette.

Artwork by Corban Walker
Design by Graham Schreiner

SO Percussion plays Pearl/Adams Instruments, Zildjian cymbals, Vic Firth drumsticks, Remo drumheads, Black Swamp Accessories, and Estey organs
Bobby Previte strikes his Paiste cymbals and Evans drumheads on his DW drums with Regal Tip drumsticks.

Scores and parts for TERMINALS are published by Bachovich Music Publications
bachovich.com

For Cantaloupe Music:

Executive producers: Michael Gordon, David Lang, Kenny Savelson and Julia Wolfe
Label manager: Bill Murphy
Cantaloupe sales manager: Adam Cuthbert

For more about everything you hear on this LP, visit bobbyprevite.com, cantaloupemusic.com and bangonacan.org. To get specially priced advance copies of all our new releases, as well as catalog discounts and other perks, join the Cantaloupe Club at club.bangonacan.org, or join our digital subscription service, the Cantaloupe Patch, at drip.fm/cantaloupe.

This recording of TERMINALS was supported by Art of Franza Inc. and New Music USA, made possible by annual program support and/or endowment gifts from the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Helen F. Whitaker Fund, Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc. And with help from Pledgemusic.

The creation and premiere performance of TERMINALS was made possible in part by Art of Franza, Inc., the Composer Assistance Program of the American Music Center, and with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.

Thank you:

First and foremost, to the magnificent SO Percussion, without whom TERMINALS would not exist. Way back when it was just an abstraction, they said “yes.” Eric, Josh, Adam, and Jason, I am forever in your debt. To my fellow soloists, Nels, John, Greg, and Zeena, who brought the greatest thing, the only thing, they could bring to it - their full selves - I am grateful. They are but four brilliant emissaries plucked from the wide world of improvising musicians with whom I have been so lucky to stand. To Jen Shyu and DJ Olive, two of the first five soloists, whose prodigious gifts helped shape the early incarnation and who could not make the recording because, of course, they were somewhere out in that wide world.

And to:

Diane Williams, who helped get the score in shape. Andrew Beall, publisher, cool guy. James Baker at Mannes College, who graciously gave us a place for all our early rehearsals. Renée Levine Packer and her book, *This Life of Sounds*. Andrea Kleine for everything else.

People who made the premiere possible: John Schaefer, Judd Greenstein, and David Henry for booking it. Ned Rothenberg. Bruce and Susan Rose Ackerman, Marco Breuer, Cecil Castellucci, Kevin Dolan, Kevin Duggan and Sheila Keenan, Arrien Zinghini, Kate Previte, Bruce Levinson, Jamie Lowry and Danielle Capawanna, John Freyer and Sasha Waters, Thomas Kern, Karen McMahon and H. Jeffrey Marcus, Fran Richard at ASCAP, and especially my good friend Andrew Rudin.

People who made the recording possible: Jonathan Haas, who gave us the finish. Samurai Mixer Fabian Rucker. Scott Hull, the sonic genius. Everyone at Cantaloupe for going out on the limb with me. Jim Mussen, Jim Pugliese, Sean Statser. Paul Geluso. Matt Lydon at Pledgemusic. Drew Sanders. Emily Paull, Vicki Bodner, Michael Garland, Vittorio Albani, Andrew Barnes and David Foley, Steve Olson, Grace Row, Harold Kendrick, Rich Hanson, James McElwee, Susan Szeliga. Jeff Gorlechen at Sixpoint Brewery. And especially the co-exec producer Monika Rucker.

Finally, a very, very special thank you to Anthony Creamer. Thank you, Tony.

So Percussion would like to thank:

Emily and Yumi; Stephanie, Sasha, Sue and Jerry (Mom and Dad); Beth, Elsie, Mabel, and the whole extended Treuting clan, Ralph Alessi and Michael Cain (for bringing Previte to Rochester in 1995); Cristina and Guille; Yeji, Parsley, the Beach family, and the Cha family.

BOBBY PREVITE: TERMINALS

five concertos for percussion ensemble and soloist

Sō PERCUSSION

with soloists:

Nels Cline

John Medeski

Greg Osby

Zeena Parkins

Bobby Previte

CANTALOUPE MUSIC IS FROM THE CREATORS OF BANG ON A CAN.
© & © 2014 Cantaloupe Music, LLC.
All rights reserved. Unauthorized duplication is a violation of applicable laws.
Cantaloupe Music, 80 Hanson Place, Suite 702, Brooklyn, NY 11217
www.cantaloupemusic.com | CA21102

UPC/EAN: 713746310219



cantaloupe music

