



PERCURAMA

AMERICAN PERCUSSION WORKS

CAGE | GINASTERA | HARRISON | VARÈSE

Signe Asmussen, soprano | Niklas Walentin, violin

Jean Thorel, conductor

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	JOHN CAGE (1912–1992)	
1	First Construction (in Metal) (1939) for 6 percussionists and 1 assistant	8:16
	ALBERTO GINASTERA (1916–1983)	
	Cantata para América Mágica, Op. 27 (1960) for dramatic soprano and percussion orchestra, on poems by Mercedes de Toro from ancient pre-Colombian texts Signe Asmussen, soprano	23:13
2	Preludio y canto a la aurora	4:50
3	Nocturno y canto de amor	3:31
4	Canto para la partida de los guerreros	2:10
5	Interludio fantástico	4:15
6	Canto de agonía y desolación	4:45
7	Canto de la profecía	3:42
	LOU HARRISON (1917–2003)	
	Koncherto por la violino kun perkuta orkestro (1959) Niklas Walentin, violin	19:15
8	Allegro maestoso, Allegro vivace	7:52
9	Largo, cantabile	7:20
10	Allegro vigoroso, poco presto	4:03
	EDGARD VARÈSE (1883–1965)	
11	Ionisation (1929–31) for 13 percussionists	5:38
		55:56

OM KOMPONISTERNE

John Cage er en central figur i det 20. århundredes musik, både som komponist og musiktænkter. Man forbinder især John Cage med præpareret klaver, moderne dans (Merce Cunningham) og den såkaldte tilfældighedsmusik. Men hans udgangspunkt var traditionelle musikstudier hos blandt andre Henry Cowell (New York 1933-34) og Arnold Schönberg (Los Angeles 1935-37).

Cage organiserede i slutningen af 1930'erne en slagtpøjsgruppe og arbejdede med dansere og udstillede også egne malerier. I 1940'erne, sideløbende med det enestående samarbejde med Merce Cunningham, skabte han et enmandsslagtpøjsorkester i form af det præparerede klaver. Værkerne fra disse år er præget af en streng strukturel tænkning med naturligt fokus på rytme. Under indflydelse af indisk filosofi, zen-buddisme og den kinesiske *I ching, forvandlingernes bog*, inddrog Cage omkring 1950 i sine værker i stigende grad elementer, som ikke var underlagt komponistens kontrol, for eksempel brug af terningekast eller tilfældigt indstillede radioer. Eller stilhed. Hvor pointen netop er, at den ikke findes! – men at lytteren danner sin egen musik af de (tilfældige) lyde, der altid vil være.

Alberto Ginastera blev uddannet ved konservatoriet i Buenos Aires, og efter at have afsluttet studierne i 1938 voksede hans ry snart ud over hjemlandets grænser. Han opnåede i 1942 et Guggenheim Fellowship og studerede i 1945-47 i Tanglewood hos Aaron Copland. Hans udgangspunkt som komponist var den traditionelle argentinske musik, men i slutningen af 1950'erne blev mere modernistiske træk indarbejdet i hans stil. I stigende grad blev hans musik en meget personlig syntese af forskellige stilelementer, som omfattede både mikrotonalitet, dodekafoni og aleatorik ved siden af mere traditionelle stiltræk. Selv betegner han perioden fra 1958 og frem som sin 'neo-ekspressionistiske' periode. I årene fra 1958-1971 bestred han med korte afbrydelser væsentlige poster i sit hjemlands musikliv. I 1971 forlod han dog af politiske grunde Argentina og slog sig ned i Europa.

Lou Harrison var en pioner både i brugen af alternative stemningssystemer og nye instrumenter, men især i forhold til at integrere verdensmusikken i sine værker, der ofte har hovedvægten på melodi og rytme og helt giver afkald på harmoniske elementer. Han studerede hos Henry Cowell og delte tidligt interessen for slagtpøjsmusik og dans med sin medstuderende John Cage. Efterfølgende studerede Harrison, ligesom Cage,

en kort overgang hos Arnold Schönberg i Los Angeles, inden han slog sig ned i New York i 1943. Her trivedes han imidlertid ikke, og efter et nervesammenbrud flyttede han i 1947 til fredeligere omgivelser i North Carolina og senere til Californien. Han skiftede musikalsk stil og forfulgte en interesse for indonesisk gamelan-musik, som han havde oplevet ved Golden Gate-udstillingen i 1939. Desuden fordybede han sig i Harry Partchs teoretiske værk *Genesis of a Music* og begyndte at arbejde med alternative stemningssystemer baseret på naturtonerækken. Hans deltagelse i konferencen The East-West Music Encounter i Tokyo i 1961 blev afsættet for indgående studier af asiatisk musik, først i Seoul og senere i Taiwan. Frem til sin død skrev han et stort antal værker for gamelan, ofte i kombination med europæiske instrumenter. Som kunstner og fredsaktivist arbejdede han livslangt på at integrere østlig og vestlig musik og kultur.

Edgard Varèse har – på trods af en beskedent produktion på kun 15 værker – haft stor betydning for det 20. århundredes musik. Han brød afgørende med traditionel formtænkning og introducerede et nyt syn på tekstur og klang. Han arbejdede med klangmasser i nærmest arkitektoniske konstruktioner eller, som han selv udtrykte det, med ‘orga-

niseret lyd’ frem for med vanlige motiver og harmonier. Han studerede i Paris hos Albert Roussel, Vincent d’Indy og Charles Widor, inden han i 2007 opsøgte Ferruccio Busoni i Berlin. Han var inspireret af dennes *Udkast til en ny æstetik for tonekunsten*, som indeholdt tanker, som Busoni ikke selv, men derimod Varèse, skulle komme til at realisere mange år senere. I 1915 flyttede han til New York. Edgard Varèse celebrerede sit nye liv med det store værk *Amériques* som hans første komposition i sit nye hjemland. Han bevarede dog forbindelsen til Europa og tilbragte årene 1928-33 i Paris, hvor han blandt andet komponerede slagtøjsværket *Ionisation*. Tilbage i New York forfulgte han visionen om skabelsen af en radikalt ny musik, frembragt af elektroniske instrumenter. Men først efter flere skuffelser lykkedes dette i 1954 med værket *Déserts*. Og senere kom værket *Poème électronique* for bånd, som under stor opmærksomhed blev realiseret for 400 højttalere i Le Corbusier-pavillon ved Verdensudstillingen i Bruxelles i 1958.

OM VÆRKERNE

John Cage

First Construction (in Metal) (1939)

John Cage arbejder i sine slagtpøjskompositioner fra perioden 1935-45 med konstruktioner (jævnfør værkstitlen), som kan skabe en klar organisation af de musikalske elementer, der ikke er toner, men udgøres af de andre grundelementer rytme og klang. Han søger et overgribende konstruktionsprincip, der vedrørende rytme og klang kan danne en pendant til læremesteren Arnold Schönbergs dodekafoni, der handler om organisationen af tonehøjder. Cage eksperimenterer med af lade forudbestemte, numeriske principper styre det musikalske forløb. I *First Construction (in Metal)* er tallet 16 styrende for værkets musikalske konstruktion, og det gennemsyrrer værkets struktur på mange måder. Cage kalder selv dette princip for *square root* ($16 = 4 \times 4$) eller *micro-macrocosmic* form. Idéen er, at mikrostrukturen – motiver og fraser – afspejler makrostrukturen – de større musikalske afsnit og den store form – og vice versa i et hierarkisk mønster. Der er endvidere 16 forskellige typer af slagtpøjsinstrumenter (klangfarver) i værket ud over en gennemgående, tremolerende lyd af thundersheet i baggrunden. Skift i tæthed, det vil sige antal instrumenter, som spiller, og netop klangfarve

bruges til at artikulere værkets form. Cage har i en brevveksling med komponisten Pierre Boulez, en anden af det 20. århundredes store musiktænkere, nøje beskrevet sine nybrydende konstruktionsprincipper, men han ender med at gøre opmærksom på, at man også kan høre værket på en mere traditionel måde:

Du ved, at med eksposition og gennemføring (uden reprise) og med formen (klimaks, apoteose(?)) osv. er denne konstruktion fra 1800-tallet.

Alberto Ginastera

Cantata para América Mágica, Op. 27 (1960)

per soprano drammatico e orchestra di percussioni, su poesie di Mercedes de Toro da antichi testi precolombiani.

I sit storværk *Cantata para América Mágica* for sangstemme og slagtpøjsensemble har den argentinske mester Alberto Ginastera anvendt præcolumbianske tekster, som handler om menneskelivets vilkår, om krig, om naturens fænomener, om morgengryet, natten og kærligheden. Disse gamle indianske tekster er sammenstillet af Mercedes de Toro, som også var pianist og var gift med Alberto Ginastera fra 1941 til 1965. Med den ekspressive sangstemme i centrum omskriver musikken teksternes magiske univers med poetiske slagtpøjsklange, men også til tider med en vildskab,

der kan lede tankerne hen på Stravinskys *Le Sacre du printemps*. I sine tidlige værker var Ginastera tydeligt inspireret af den argentinske folkemusik, men værket *Cantata para América Mágica* blev komponeret i en periode, hvor komponisten søgte nye veje og gik i en væsentlig mere modernistisk retning med inspiration fra efterkrigstidens europæiske avantgarde. Det folkløristisk inspirerede og tidens avancerede kompositionsteknikker mødes på flere måder i værket, for eksempel gennem brugen af mikro-intervaller (intervaller mindre end en halvtone), som både kendes fra folkemusik og moderne kompositionspraksis. Desuden benytter Ginastera jævnlige tolvtonerækker i sin melodik, om end på en relativt fri måde. Og asymmetriske rytmi- ske mønstre gennemføres ofte i raffinerede kanoniske sekvenser. Harmonikken er præget af komplekse akkorder i en regnbue af klangfarver, som frembringes af ikke mindre end 53 slagtojsinstrumenter, to klaverer og celeste.

Lou Harrison

Koncherto por la violino kun perkuta orkestro (1959)

I koncerten for violin og slagtojsorkester mødes Lou Harrisons interesse for ikke-europæiske musikformer med en umiskendelig og bevidst forankring i et traditionelt europæisk formsprog:

Den er en blandt mange af mine kompositioner, som følger mønstret med at have en enkelt melodisk stemme akkompagneret (eller beriget) af rytmisk slagtojs med eller uden en drone. Modellen er selvfølgelig verdensomspændende.

Det er standardbrug i Indien, i islamisk eller centralasiatisk folkelig musik (hvis ikke kunstmusik), afrikansk musik, ja, hvor findes det ikke? Brugen af et moderne europæisk instrument som solist, sammenstillingen af 'skrammel'- og standardinstrumenter fra slagtojssektionen og brugen af romantisk koncertform udgør de eneste nyheder, set i et verdensperspektiv.

Musikken er baseret på enkle principper for gentagelse og variation. Og den tresatsede form – hurtig-langsom-hurtig – er indbegrebet af den klassisk-romantiske koncertform, ligesom kadencerne for solisten i første og tredje sats hører til dette univers. Men i udformningen af solostemmens melodi kommer en 'moderne' strukturel bevidsthed til udtryk. Ikke for ingenting studerede Lou Harrison en periode hos Arnold Schönberg, tolvtonemusikkens skaber. Gennem hele koncerten er solostemmen bestemt af blot tre forskellige intervaller (lille sekund, stor tert og stor sekst). Denne 100 procent gennemførte systematik er mindre bundet end

Schönbergs tolvtonerækker, men skaber et kromatisk univers, der har tydelige minder om lærerens. Musikken veksler mellem kontrasterende stemninger, som understøttes af både melodi og slagøjssklange. Koncerten åbner med en mørk alvor, der snart stilles over for en mere dansant, legende musik. I anden sats dominerer den mørke alvor, som dog mod satsens slutning får en mere ophøjet karakter. Sidste sats er en let og hurtig rondo-finale. Den når dog et næsten ceremonielt højdepunkt i store slagøjssklange, inden musikken klinger ud hos solisten.

Edgard Varèse

Ionisation (1929-31)

Edgard Varèse forlod Europa i 1915 med kurs mod New York. Han havde oplevet nyskabelser som Stravinskys *Le Sacre du printemps* og Schönbergs *Pierrot lunaire*. Han havde opsøgt Ferruccio Busoni i Berlin og gjort sig bekendt med dennes *Udkast til en ny æstetik for tonekunsten* (1907). På trods af dette førstehåndskendskab til den europæiske musiks nyeste trends udtrykte han kort efter sin ankomst til USA, at musikken havde et stærkt behov for nye instrumenter (elektroniske instrumenter) og en berigelse af det musikalske alfabet:

Jeg nægter at underkaste mig lyde, som allerede er hørt. Det, jeg leder efter, er nye

tekniske medier, som kan stå til rådighed for ethvert udtryk for tanken og være på niveau med tanken.

Han kom til at vente indtil 1954 på de elektroniske udtryksmuligheder (værket *Déserts*), men med slagøjssværket *Ionisation* betrådte han ikke desto mindre nyt land. Det er det første værk komponeret udelukkende for slagøjssinstrumenter (klaveret, der høres i slutningen, behandles som et slagøjssinstrument). Og han finder en ny grammatik til musikkens sprog. *Ionisation* er på sin måde lige så epokegørende som *Le Sacre du printemps* og Schönbergs *Pierrot lunaire*. Værkets forløb bestemmes af de fremherskende klangkarakterer: skind (trommer af forskellige slags), træ (wood blocks, kastagnetter med videre) og metal (gonger, bækner, klokker). Hertil kommer lyden af en dyb og en høj sirene. Midten af værket markeres med en kort episode udelukkende med metalinstrumenter, og den afsluttende del markeres af stemte klokker og klaverets entré. Høje og dybe trommer arbejder med værkets tre forskellige rytmiske celler, der hver især på organisk vis kan trække sig sammen og udvide sig. Hermed skaber Varèse et klangligt landskab af bogstavelig talt uhørt rigdom og sin helt egen poesi.

Niels Rosing-Schow

OM MUSIKERNE

Jean Thorel promoverer passioneret ny og ukendt musik og har stået i spidsen for 700 uropførelser. Thorel er en ukonventionel fortolker af både ny og klassisk musik og har begejstret mange kritikere i sit hjemland Frankrig, og i flere andre lande.

Jean Thorel bliver regelmæssigt inviteret til større ny musik-festivaler, herunder Ars Musica, Bruxelles, Numus Festival i Aarhus, Komponist-biennalen, PULSAR festival i København og Musicorama i Hong Kong.

Fra 2008 til 2016 var Jean Thorel chef-dirigent ved City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong. Som gæstedirigent har han stået for utallige koncerter eller indspilninger med blandt andre Ensemble Storstrøm, Odense Symfoniorkester, Musica Vitae (Sverige), Ensemble Quartz, Musiques Nouvelles, the Royal Chamber Orchestra of Wallonia (Belgien), PERCURAMA Copenhagen, So Percussion (Washington) samt en række internationale orkestre, blandt andre the Royal Philharmonic (London), National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Den Kgl. Ballet (København), Aarhus Symfoniorkester, Marseille Philharmonic Orchestra og National Music Light Orchestra of Shanghai.

Jean Thorels omfattende diskografi indeholder mere end 30 dvd'er og cd'er og



rummer en optagelse af værker af Louis Saguer med Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble, som i 2002 vandt prisen Académie du Disque Lyrique "Orphée d'Or"; hans cd med musik af Sikora opnåede "særlig omtale" af Académie du Disque Lyrique i 2003. Han er også den første franske dirigent, som har indspillet med Russian National Orchestra og det internationalt berømmede Hilliard Ensemble.



Signe Asmussen

Siden sin debut fra Det Kgl. Danske Musikkonservatorium med anmeldelser, som benævnte hende “mulighedernes stemme”, “en naturlig fortolker” og “en intim stemmefører” har den danske lyrisk-dramatiske sopran Signe Asmussen været en hyppigt benyttet solist med alle de nationale orkestre, ensembler og kor.

Med et gennemsnit på cirka 100 koncerter om året har hun for længst fastslået sit ry som en af de mest efterstræbte og alsidige solister af sin generation, som ofte promoverer sin foretrukne disciplin: den intime recital, der bringer hende i tæt

kontakt med publikum med et omfattende lied-repertoire fra hele verden.

Hendes nysgerrighed og skarpe musikaltet, sammen med passionen for ny musik og kammermusik, har gjort hende til foretrukken samarbejdspartner for nationale ensembler som blandt andre Theatre of Voices, Copenhagen Saxophone Quartet, Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen og internationalt anerkendte dirigenter og pianister som for eksempel Thomas Dausgaard, Thomas Søndergaard, Franck Ollu, Jean Thorel, Lan Shui og Lars Ulrik Mortensen. Hun har udgivet adskillige soloalbums med blandt andet portrætter af danske komponister.

Niklas Walentin

Niklas Walentin er dansk-schweizer, født i 1994. Han begyndte at spille violin i en alder af seks år uden musikalske aner eller grundlag for at tage musikken til sig.

Han debuterede fra solistklassen fra Det Kgl. Danske Musikkonservatorium i 2017 og har to gange modtaget Kunststyrelsens store legat ”Den Unge Elite” som solist og som medlem af Trio Vitruvi – foruden talrige andre priser og legater, herunder Musik-anmelderringens Kunstnerpris og Årets DR P2 Talentpris. Trods sin unge alder har han allerede turneret både som solist og som medlem af Trio Vitruvi i en række europæiske



lande, i Japan, Kina og USA og har givet koncerter i nogle af verdens mest berømte koncertsale – herunder Carnegie Hall i New York – og arbejdet sammen med flere store internationale dirigenter. Hans unikke

spillestil er blevet beskrevet som en kombination af et traditionelt, gammeldags violin-spil og en innovativ tilgang til den klassiske musik. Han spiller på en Joannes Franciscus Pressenda /Q. Raphael-violin (Torino 1837) velvilligt udlånt af Augustinus Fonden.

PERCURAMA

Slagtøjsensemblet PERCURAMA blev grundlagt af professor Gert Mortensen med Det Kgl. Danske Musikkonservatorium som udgangspunkt. Kombinationen af studerende og lærere betyder, at et stort antal deltagere fra den danske slagtøjsscene optræder i ensemblet. Antallet af musikere varierer mellem to og 25 – afhængigt af det repertoire, som fremføres.

PERCURAMA er en smeltedigel af kunstneriske udtryksformer som for eksempel ny musik-koncerter, 'cross-over'-performances, trommer og moderne dans, verdens-/etnisk musik, koncerter for børn, spil på skrammel-instrumenter, musikteater, slagtøj og kor samt slagtøj kombineret med 'real-time'-maleri og gamelan-ensemble.

En fællesnævner for PERCURAMAs talrige aktiviteter er fascinationen af den rituelle kraft, som udgår fra trommer, puls og rytme, og som opstår i blandingen af lyde og lydeffekter i kombination med et stort antal instrumenter.



Gennem mange år har PERCURAMA haft et frugtbart samarbejde med den franske dirigent Jean Thorel, hvilket har udmøntet sig i opførelser af værker skrevet for store grupper af slagtøj, blandt andre Edgard Varèse: *Ionisation*, Lou Harrison: *Labyrinth #3*, Gérard Grisey: *Le Noir de l'Étoile* og

Alberto Ginasteras *Cantata para América Mágica*. PERCURAMA samarbejdede med det danske kor Ars Nova om en unik version af John Cages *Song Books* på Vikingskibsmuseet i Roskilde, hvor der blev skabt et veritabelt musikcirkus bestående af sangere, slagtøj, elektronik og skuespillere.

THE COMPOSERS

John Cage is a key figure in 20th century music, both as a composer and as a musical thinker. He is particularly associated with the prepared piano, modern dance (with choreographer Merce Cunningham) and so-called 'chance music' (aleatoric music). But his starting point was traditional music studies under, among others, Henry Cowell (New York 1933–34) and Arnold Schoenberg (Los Angeles 1935–37). In the late 1930s, Cage organised a percussion ensemble, worked with dancers and exhibited his own paintings. In the 1940s, as part of a unique collaboration with Merce Cunningham, he created a one-man percussion orchestra in the form of the prepared piano. His works from these years are characterised by rigorous, structural thinking, with a natural focus on rhythm. Around 1950, under the influence of Indian philosophy, Zen-Buddhism, and the Chinese *I Ching* (*The Book of Changes*), Cage began to include elements in his works that were not subject to the composer's control. For example, the use of cast dice, or randomly tuned radios, or even silence – where point is precisely the fact that it does not exist, but that the listeners form their own music out of the (chance) sounds that will always be there.

Alberto Ginastera studied at the Conservatory of Music in Buenos Aires, and after completing his studies in 1938, his reputation quickly spread beyond the borders of his own country. In 1942, he gained a Guggenheim Fellowship and in 1945–47 studied in Tanglewood under Aaron Copland. His point of departure as a composer was traditional Argentinian music, but in the late 1950s more modernist characteristics were incorporated into his style. To an increasing extent, his music became a personal synthesis of various stylistic elements that included microtonality, dodecaphony and aleatorics, alongside more traditional stylistic features. He personally describes the period from 1958 onwards as his 'neo-expressionist' period. In the years between 1958 and 1971, he held – with brief intermissions – important posts in the music life of his country. In 1971, however, he left Argentina for political reasons and settled in Europe.

Lou Harrison was a pioneer in both the use of alternative tuning systems and new instruments, but particularly with regard to integrating world music into his works, where the emphasis is often on melody and rhythm – completely ignoring the harmonic elements. He studied under Henry Cowell,

and shared an early interest in percussion music and dance with his fellow student John Cage. Subsequently, Harrison – like Cage – studied for a short while under Arnold Schoenberg in Los Angeles before settling in New York in 1943. He did not feel at home here, however, and following a nervous breakdown in 1947 moved to more peaceful surroundings in North Carolina and, later, California. Thereafter he changed his musical style and pursued an interest in Indonesian gamelan music, which he had experienced at the Golden Gate exhibition in 1939. He also became absorbed in Harry Partch's theoretical *Genesis of a Music* and started to work with alternative tuning systems based on just intonation derived from the overtone series. His participation in The East-West Music Encounter conference in Tokyo in 1961 was a springboard for his in-depth studies of Asian music, first in Seoul and later in Taiwan. Up until his death, he wrote a great many works for gamelan, often combined with European instruments. As an artist and a peace activist he sought throughout his life to integrate Eastern and Western music and culture.

Edgard Varèse is – despite a modest *œuvre* of only 15 works – a composer of great importance for 20th-century music. He

made a definitive break with traditional form conception, and introduced a new view of texture and sound. He worked with sound clusters in almost architectural constructions or, as he himself puts it, with 'organised sound' rather than with ordinary motifs and harmonies. He studied in Paris under Albert Roussel, Vincent d'Indy and Charles Widor, before visiting Ferruccio Busoni in Berlin in 1907. He was inspired by Busoni's *Sketch of a New Aesthetic of Music*, which contained thoughts that not Busoni but rather Varèse was to realise many years later. In 1915, he moved to New York. Edgard Varèse celebrated his new life with the major work *Amériques* as his first composition in his new homeland. He retained, however, his connection with Europe and spent the 1928–33 period in Paris, where one of his compositions was the percussion work *Ionisation*. Back in New York, he pursued his vision of creating a radically new form of music, produced by electronic instruments. But it was only after several failures that he was successful in 1954 with the work *Déserts*. Later came the work *Poème électronique* for tape, which caused quite a stir when realised on 400 loudspeakers in 1958, at the Le Corbusier pavilion during the World Exposition in Brussels.

THE WORKS

John Cage

First Construction (in Metal) (1939)

In his compositions for percussion instruments during the 1935–45 period, John Cage works with constructions that create a clear organisation of musical elements that are not tones, but consist of other basic elements: namely, rhythm and sound (hence the title – *Construction*). He is searching for an overarching constructional principle which, via rhythm and sound, can form a counterpart to the dodecaphony of his mentor Arnold Schoenberg, which deals with the organisation of pitches. Cage experiments with having predetermined, numerical principles controlling the course of the music.

In *First Construction (in Metal)* the number 16 controls the musical construction of the work, and it permeates the structure of the piece in many ways. Cage personally called this principle *square root* ($16 = 4 \times 4$) or *micro-macrocosmic* form. The idea is that the micro-structure (i.e. motifs and phrases) reflects the macro-structure (i.e. the larger musical sections and overall form) and vice-versa, in a hierarchical pattern. There are also 16 different types of percussion instruments (timbres) in the work, in addition to a

continuous tremolo sound of thundersheet in the background. Changes in density (i.e. the number of instruments playing) and timbre are used to articulate the form of the work. In a correspondence with the composer Pierre Boulez, another of the great musical thinkers of the 20th century, Cage has in detail described his innovative constructional principles, but he concludes by drawing attention to the fact that one can also listen to the work in a more conventional way:

You know that with exposition and development (without recapitulation) and with the form (climax, apotheosis (?)) etc., this construction is 19th century.

Alberto Ginastera

Cantata para América Mágica, Op. 27 (1960)

for dramatic soprano and percussion orchestra, on poems by Mercedes de Toro from ancient pre-Colombian texts

In his major work *Cantata para América Mágica* for voice and percussion ensemble, the Argentinian maestro Alberto Ginastera has used pre-Columbian texts that deal with the conditions of human life: with war, natural phenomena, daybreak, night and love. These old indigenous texts have been placed together by Mercedes de Toro, who

was also a pianist and married to Alberto Ginastera in 1941–65. With the expressive singing voice at its centre, the music transforms the magical universe of the texts into poetic percussive sounds, but at times also with a wildness that is reminiscent of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps*. In his early works, Ginastera was clearly inspired by Argentinian folk music, but the work *Cantata para América Mágica* was composed during a period when the composer was following new paths and moving in a considerably more modernist direction, with inspiration coming from the post-war European avant-garde. The folklorist-inspired and advanced compositional techniques of that period interact in a number of ways in the work, e.g. via the use of micro-intervals (smaller than a semitone), which are known from both folk music and modern compositional practice. In addition, Ginastera regularly uses twelve-tone series in his melodies, though in a relatively free way, and asymmetrical rhythmic patterns are often implemented in refined canonic sequences. The harmony is characterised by complex chords in a rainbow of timbres that are produced by no less than 53 percussive instruments, two pianos, and a celesta.

Lou Harrison

Koncherto por la violino kun perkuta orkestro (1959)

In the concerto for violin and percussion orchestra, Lou Harrison's interest in non-European forms of music interacts with an unmistakable and conscious anchoring in a traditionally European formal idiom:

It is among many of my compositions which follow the pattern of having a single melodic part accompanied (or enhanced) by rhythmic percussion, whether with or without additional drone. The model is, of course, worldwide.

This is the standard usage in India, in Islam in Sinitic folk (if not in the cultivated) music of Africa – and where not else? The use of a modern European instrument as soloist, the mixture of 'junk' instruments with standard ones in the percussion section, and the employment of romantic concerto form constitute the only novelties, from the world point of view.

The music is based on simple principles of repetition and variation. Its three-movement form – slow-quick-slow – is the essence of the classical Romantic concerto form, just as the cadences for the soloist in the first and third movements belong to this universe.

But in shaping the melody of the solo voice part, a 'modern' structural awareness finds expression. Not for nothing did Lou Harrison study for a while under Arnold Schoenberg, the creator of twelve-tone music. Throughout the concerto, the solo voice is determined by only three different intervals (minor second, major third, major sixth). This consistent systemisation is less rigid than Schoenberg's twelve-tone series, but it creates a chromatic universe that is clearly reminiscent of it. The music varies between contrasting moods which are supported by both melody and percussive sounds. The concerto opens with a dark seriousness that is soon contrasted by a more dance-like, playful music. In the second movement, dark serious predominates again, but becomes more elevated at the end. The last movement is a light, quick rondo finale. It does however reach an almost ceremonial climax in loud percussive sounds, before the music dies away in the solo voice.

Edgard Varèse

Ionisation (1929–31)

Edgard Varèse left Europe in 1915 with New York as his destination. He had experienced innovations such as Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps* and Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*. He had visited Ferruccio Busoni in Berlin and familiarised himself with the latter's

Entwurf einer neuen Ästhetik der Tonkunst (Sketch of a New Aesthetic of Music) in 1907. Despite this first-hand knowledge of the latest trends in European music, he stated shortly after his arrival in the US that music badly needed new instruments (electronic instruments) and an enrichment of the musical alphabet:

I refuse to submit myself only to sounds that have already been heard. What I am looking for are new technical mediums which can lend themselves to every expression of thought and can keep up with thought.

He ended up having to wait until 1954 for the potential of electronic instruments to be realised (the work *Déserts*), but with the percussion work *Ionisation* he nevertheless entered a new land. It is the first work composed exclusively for percussive instruments (the piano heard in the conclusion is treated as a percussive instrument). He finds a new grammar for the language of music. *Ionisation*, in its own way, is just as epoch-making as *Le Sacre du printemps* and Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*. The course of the work is determined by the predominant sound characteristics of skin (drums of various kinds), wood (wood

blocks, castanets, etc.) and metal (gongs, cymbals, bells). In addition, there is the sound of a low- and a high-pitched siren. The middle of the work is marked by a brief episode played solely on metal instruments, and the concluding section is marked by tuned bells and the entry of the piano. High- and low-pitched drums work on the three different rhythmic cells of the piece, each of which can contract and expand in an organic manner. Varèse is thus able to create a landscape of sound, of, literally, unheard richness, and its own completely distinctive poetry.

Niels Rosing-Schow
Translation: John Irons

THE PERFORMERS

Jean Thorel

Jean Thorel is an impassioned promoter of new works and rare music and has given 700 world premieres. Thorel's unconventional interpretations of both contemporary and classical music have delighted many music critics in France and abroad.

Jean Thorel is regularly invited to guest conduct at major festivals of contemporary music including Ars Musica Brussels, the Numus Festival in Aarhus, the Composer's Biennale, PULSAR Festival in Copenhagen and Musicarama in Hong Kong.

From 2008 to 2016 he was appointed chief conductor of the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong. As guest conductor he has given concerts and/or recordings with the Danish Chamber Players, Odense Symphony Orchestra, Musica Vitae in Sweden, Ensemble Quartz, Musiques Nouvelles, the Royal Chamber Orchestra of Wallonia in Belgium, PERCURAMA Copenhagen, So Percussion in Washington, and a number of international orchestras such as the Royal Philharmonic in London, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Copenhagen Royal Ballet, Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, Marseille Philharmonic Orchestra, and the National Music Light Orchestra of Shanghai.

Jean Thorel's extensive discography of more than 30 DVDs and CDs includes a recording of works by Louis Saguer with the Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble which was winner of the 2002 Académie du Disque Lyrique 'Orphée d'Or' prize. His recording of works by Sikora won a 'special mention' by the Académie du Disque Lyrique in 2003. He is also the first French conductor to record with the Russian National Orchestra and the internationally acclaimed Hilliard Ensemble.

Signe Asmussen

Since graduating from the Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen with reviews that named her 'the voice of possibilities', 'a natural interpreter', and 'an intimate vocal-seducer', Danish lyric/dramatic soprano Signe Asmussen has been a preferred soloist with all of the national orchestras, ensembles and choirs.

With an annual average of around 100 concerts and performances, she has long confirmed her reputation as one of the most sought-after, versatile singers of her generation, always promoting one of her favourite disciplines: the intimate recital, which brings her in close contact with her audience, and with focus on the extended Lied repertoire from all around the world.

Her curiosity and sharp musicality, along with her passion for the contemporary repertoire, and chamber music, has made her a favoured collaborator with national ensembles such as Theatre of Voices, Copenhagen Saxophone Quartet, Athelas Sinfonietta, and internationally renowned conductors and pianists such as Thomas Dausgaard, Thomas Søndergaard, Franck Ollu, Jean Thorel, Lan Shui, Lars Ulrik Mortensen. She has released several solo-albums portraying Danish Composers and Danish Music.

Niklas Walentin

Niklas Walentin is Danish/Swiss, born in 1994. He began playing violin at the age of six with no musical ancestors or basis for adopting music. He made his debut from the Royal Danish Music Academy in 2017 and has twice received the grant The Young Elite from the Arts Council as both soloist and as member of Trio Vitruvi – besides numerous other prizes and grants including Music Reviewer's Artists Prize and Talent Prize of the year by Danish National Radio P2.

Despite his young age he has already toured both as soloist and member of the Trio Vitruvi in multiple European countries, Japan, China and the US, and given concerts in some of the most prestigious halls – among

these Carnegie Hall in New York, and equally collaborated with several great international conductors. He has been described as having a unique style of playing, which combines strong traditional, and old-fashioned methods with an innovative approach to the world of classical music. He plays on a Joannes Franciscus Pressenda /Q. Raphael-violin (Torino 1837) kindly lent to him by the Augustinus Fund.

PERCURAMA

The PERCURAMA Percussion Ensemble was founded by professor Gert Mortensen, with The Royal Danish Academy of Music as its point of departure. The combination of students and teachers means that the ensemble features many participants from the Danish percussion scene. The number of musicians varies from 2 to 25, depending on the repertoire to be played.

PERCURAMA is a melting-pot of various artistic forms such as contemporary concerts, 'cross-over' performance, drums and modern dance, world/ethno music, concerts for children, playing on trash objects, music theatre, percussion and choir and percussion combined with 'real-time painting' and gamelan ensemble.

One thing all PERCURAMA activities share is the fascination with the ritual power

of drums, pulse and rhythm that is created by a blend of sounds, sound-effects and the use of a large number of instruments.

For years, PERCURAMA has had a fruitful cooperation with the French conductor Jean Thorel, one that has resulted in many performances of works composed for enormous groups of percussion, including: Edgard Varèse's *Ionisation*, Lou Harrison's *Labyrinth #3*, Gérard Grisey's *Le Noir de l'Étoile* and Alberto Ginastera's *Cantata para América Mágica*.

PERCURAMA collaborated with the Danish choir Ars Nova in presenting a unique version of John Cage's *Song Books* at the famous Viking ship museum in Roskilde, where a music circus was established for singing voices, percussion, electronics and actors.

Alberto Ginastera: Cantata para América Mágica, Op. 27

I. Forspil og sang til daggryet

Oh du, Tzacol, Bitol,
se på os, lyt til os!
Lad os ikke alene,
forlad os ikke,
himlens hjerte, jordens hjerte!
Beskyt vores børn,
vores efterkommere,
så længe solen går over himlen
og der er lys!
Lad daggryet, lad daggryet
komme!
Oh du, Huracán, Chipi-Caculhá,
Raxa-Cuculha, Chipi Nanauac,
Raxa-Nanauac,
Voc Humahtupù,
Tepeu, Gucumatz,
Alom, Qaholom,
Ixipiyacoc, Ixmucané,
solens skaber,
lysets skaber!
Lad daggryet,
lad daggryet komme!

II. Nat og sang om elskov

Din elskov var som en regn af
duftende blomster.
Din sang var smuk som den
gyldne fugls.
Månen og solen skinnede
på din pande.
Du er draget afsted.

I. Preludio y canto a la aurora

¡Oh tú, Tzacol, Bitol,
míranos, escúchanos!
¡No nos dejes,
no nos desampares,
corazón del cielo,
corazón de la tierra!
¡Protege a nuestros hijos,
a nuestros descendientes,
mientras camine el sol
y haya claridad!
¡Que amanezca,
que llegue la aurora!
¡Oh tú, Huracán, Chipi-Caculhá,
Raxa-Cuculha, Chipi Nanauac,
Raxa-Nanauac, Voc Humahtupù,
Tepeu, Gucumatz,
Alom, Qaholom,
Ixipiyacoc, Ixmucané,
creadora del sol,
creadora de la luz!
¡Que amanezca,
que llegue la aurora!

II. Nocturno y canto de amor

Tu amor era como una lluvia de
flores perfumadas.
Tu canto era hermoso como
el del pájaro de oro.
La luna y el sol brillaban
sobre tu frente.
Has partido.

I. Prelude and song to the dawn

Oh you, Tzacol, Bitol,
look at us, listen to us!
Do not leave us, do not
abandon us,
heart of heaven,
heart of earth!
Protect our children, our
descendants,
as long as the sun goes by
and there is clarity!
Let dawn, let dawn come!
Oh you, Huracán,
Chipi-Caculhá,
Raxa-Cuculha, Chipi Nanauac,
Raxa-Nanauac, Voc Humahtupù,
Tepeu, Gucumatz,
Alom, Qaholom,
Ixipiyacoc, Ixmucané,
creator of the sun,
creator of light!
Let dawn,
let dawn come!

II. Nocturnal and love song

Your love was like a rain of scented
flowers.
Your song was beautiful like
the golden bird's.
The moon and the sun shined on
your brow.
You have departed.

Lange og triste bliver mine
ensomme nætter.

III. Sang til krigernes afsked

Jorden skælver.
Nu vågner
krigernes sange.
Ørne og tigere begynder at danse.
På bjerget
dyrenes tumult;
på sletten
krigens tromme.
Jorden skælver.
Se på dem: De er krigerne.
Agt deres dyder.
De blev født i ild.
Fjendespyddene
smedede deres mod.
Se deres udsmykning.
Hjelmene vugger på deres
hoveder
med fjer af junglens fugle.
Deres fjenders tænder
pryder deres bryst;
de bruger ben som fløjter
og menneskehud dirrer udspændt
på trommerne.
Jorden skælver.
Nu høres skrigene
fra dem der går i kamp.
Krigerne giver liv,
rød som blod,
til solen.

Largas y tristes serán mis noches
solitarias.

III. Canto para la partida de los guerreros

Tiembla la tierra.
Se inician los cantos
de los guerreros.
Águilas y tigres comienzan a
bailar.
En la montaña
el clamor de las fieras;
en la pradera
el tambor de la guerra.
Tiembla la tierra.
Miradlos: son los guerreros.
Admirad su valor.
Nacieron entre el fuego.
Las lanzas rivales
forjaron su coraje.
Contemplad sus adornos.
En sus cabezas se agitan los cascos
con plumas de aves de la selva.
Los dientes de sus enemigos
engalanan sus pechos;
usan los huesos como flautas
y piel humana vibra estirada en los
tambores.
Tiembla la tierra.
Ya se escuchan los gritos
de los que van al combate.
Los guerreros hacen nacer,
rojo como la sangre,
el sol.

Long and sad will be my
lonely nights.

III. Song for the departure of the warriors

The earth trembles.
Now arise the songs
of the warriors.
Eagles and tigers begin to dance.
In the mountains
the uproar of the beasts;
on the prairie
the drum of war.
The earth trembles.
Look at them:
they are the warriors.
Admire their valour.
They were born in the fire.
The rival spears
forged their courage.
Behold their ornaments.
Helmets shake on their heads
with feathers of jungle birds.
The teeth of their enemies
decorate their breasts;
they use the bones as flutes
and human skin vibrates
stretched on the drums.
The earth trembles.
Now the screams are heard
of those who go to combat.
Warriors give birth,
red as blood,
to the sun.

IV. Fantastisk mellemspil

V. Sang om smerte og fortvivelse

Farvel, oh himmel!
Farvel, oh jord!
Mit mod og min tapperhed
er mig ikke mere til gavn.
Jeg søgte min vej
under himlen, på jorden,
adskilte urter
og tidsler.
Min vrede og min stolthed
er mig ikke mere til gavn.
Farvel, oh himmel!
Farvel, oh jord!
Jeg må dø,
jeg må gå bort her,
under himlen, på jorden.
Oh, od på mit spyd!
Oh, mit skjolds hårdhed!
Tag bort til vores bjerge,
til vores dale.
Jeg venter kun på min død,
under himlen, på jorden.
Farvel, oh jord!
Farvel, oh himmel!

IV. Interludio fantástico

V. Canto de agonía y desolación

¡Adiós, oh cielo!
¡Adiós, oh tierra!
Mi valor y mi bravura
no me sirven ya.
Busqué mi camino
bajo el cielo, sobre la tierra,
separando las hierbas
y los abrojos.
Mi enojo y mi fiereza
no me sirven ya.
¡Adiós, oh cielo!
¡Adiós, oh tierra!
Debo morir,
debo desaparecer aquí,
bajo el cielo, sobre la tierra.
¡Oh, punta de mi lanza!
¡Oh, dureza de mi escudo!
Id vosotros a nuestras montañas,
a nuestros valles.
Yo sólo espero mi muerte,
bajo el cielo, sobre la tierra.
¡Adiós, oh tierra!
¡Adiós, oh cielo!

IV. Fantastic interlude

V. Song of agony and desolation

Farewell, oh heaven!
Farewell, oh earth!
My courage and my bravery
no longer serve me.
I looked for my way
under heaven, on earth,
separating herbs
and thistles.
My anger and my pride
no longer serve me.
Farewell, oh heaven!
Farewell, oh earth!
I must die,
I must disappear here,
under heaven, on earth.
Oh, tip of my spear!
Oh, hardness of my shield!
You go to our mountains, to our
valleys.
I only wait for my death,
under heaven, on earth.
Farewell, oh earth!
Farewell, oh heaven!

VI. Sang om profetien

Når de navnløse dage kommer,
når Kauils tegn
kommer til syne,
ved den ellefte Ahau,
når brødrene fra øst kommer
vil skralden lyde,
trommen vil lyde!
Ved daggry vil
Jorden brænde;
sabler vil falde fra himlen,
ved den ellefte Ahau,
med Yaxalchacs grønne regn.
Skralden vil lyde,
trommen vil lyde!
I den katun som skal komme
vil alt blive anderledes;
mændene som synger,
bliver besejret,
ved den ellefte Ahau.
Skralden vil tie;
trommen vil tie!

VI. Canto de la profecía

Cuando lleguen los días
sin nombre,
cuando aparezca la señal
de Kauil,
en el once Ahau,
cuando vengan los hermanos de
 oriente
¡sonará la sonaja,
sonará el atabal!
Al amanecer arderá la tierra;
bajarán abanicos del cielo,
en el once Ahau,
con la lluvia verde de Yaxalchac.
¡Sonará la sonaja,
sonará el atabal!
En el katun que está por venir
todo cambiará;
derrotados serán los hombres que
 cantan,
en el once Ahau.
¡Callará la sonaja;
callará el atabal!

VI. Song of Prophecy

When the nameless
days come,
when the Kauil sign appears,
at the eleventh Ahau,
when the brothers from
the east come
sound the rattle,
the timbale will sound!
At dawn the earth
will burn;
swords will fall from heaven,
at the eleventh Ahau,
with the green rain of Yaxalchac.
The rattle will sound,
the timbale will sound!
In the katun that is to come
everything will change;
defeated will be the men
who sing,
at the eleventh Ahau.
The rattle will be silent;
the timbale will be silent!

Oversættelse/Translation: Christine Canals-Frau og Niels Rosing-Schow

PERCURAMA Percussion Ensemble

Alexander Wnuk 1, 8–10

Michał Jedynak 1, 8–10

Matteo Flori 1

Nicola Carrara 1, 2–7

Victor Belloso 1

Gao Fan 1

Nikolai Petersen 2–7

Lorenzo Colombo 2–7

Johan Söderholm 2–7, 8–10

Klaes Nielsen 2–7

Maciej Swinoga 2–7

Daniel Bechmann 2–7

Sara Gasparini 2–7

Frans Klingfors 2–7

Irene Bianco 2–7

Tian Ye 2–7

Zhan Long Yue 2–7

Aikaterini Anagnostidou 2–7

Filip Strauch 2–7

Marie-Luise Bodendorff 2–7

Hugo Selles 2–7

Tomasz Szczepaniak 8–10

Jan Runi 8–10

Mads Hebsgaard 11

Lars Vestergaard 11

Christian Back 11

René C. Jørgensen 11

Vladimir Kaplan 11

Jakob Johansson 11

Basiliás Panagiotis 11

Andres Ramos 11

Neeraj Mehta 11

Alexander Henriksen 11

Sisse Tomczyk 11

Bernard Grodos 11

Julian Belli 11



THE ROYAL
DANISH
ACADEMY OF MUSIC

Tak | Thanks

Recorded at the Concert hall of the Royal Danish Academy of Music (Konservatoriets Koncertsal) on 6 March 2009, live recording (11), 9 March 2013 (8–10), 8–9 March 2014 (2–7) and 8 November 2015 (1)

Producers: Gert Mortensen and Niels Rosing-Schow (1–10), Gediminas Sudnikavičius (11)

Engineering and editing: Franziska Wackerhagen (1–10), Gediminas Sudnikavičius (11)

Mix: Mette Due (1–10), Gediminas Sudnikavičius and Gert Mortensen (11)

Mastering: Mette Due

Booklet notes: Niels Rosing-Schow. Translations: John Irons, Christine Canals-Frau

Cover image: Mikkel Østergaard

Layout: Manila Design | Naxos

American Percussion Works is a rare collection of seldom heard works each with specific rules or themes as a basis for the compositions. In John Cage's *First Construction* the principle is based on the figure 16. Alberto Ginastera's work *Cantata para América Mágica*, uses pre-Columbian texts based on the conditions of human life, with war, natural phenomena, daybreak, night and love. Lou Harrison mixes non-European forms which 'follow the pattern of having a single melodic part accompanied (or enhanced) by rhythmic percussion' in his *Koncherto*. Varèse's *Ionisation* also enters a new land being his first solely percussive work where 'he finds a new grammar for the language of music'

AMERICAN PERCUSSION WORKS

CAGE | GINASTERA | HARRISON | VARÈSE

John Cage (1912–1992)	1	First Construction (in Metal) (1939) for 6 percussionists and 1 assistant	8:16
Alberto Ginastera (1916–1983)	2–7	Cantata para América Mágica, Op. 27 (1960) for dramatic soprano and percussion orchestra, on poems by Mercedes de Toro from ancient pre-Colombian texts	23:13
Lou Harrison (1917–2003)	8–10	Koncherto por la violino kun perkuta orkestro (1959)	19:15
Edgard Varèse (1883–1965)	11	Ionisation (1929–31) for 13 percussionists	5:38

RDAM's Percussion Ensemble PERCURAMA



Signe Asmussen, soprano 2–7
Niklas Walentin, violin 8–10
Jean Thorel, conductor

Recorded: 6 March 2009 (live) (11), 9 March 2013 (8–10), 8–9 March 2014 (2–7) and 8 November 2015 (1)

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