
EXCESSIVE NOISE SERIES

Saturday, September 30, 6:00 PM

Fine Arts Library

Russell Podgorsek

Isha

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What Every Woman Ought to Know

Frederic Rzewski

Les Moutons de Panurge

Louis Andriessen

Workers Union

With Hear No Evil

Marley Eder, flute

Nicholas Galuban, clarinet

Chloe Park, violin

James Burch, cello

Cory Fica, percussion

Monica Kang, piano

Guest soloists:

Andy Fleming, tenor

Page Stephens, mezzo-soprano

Nicole Vaughan, capable suffragette



ISHA

Isha is a musical tribute to the victims of the terrorist attack that occurred on January 29, 2017 at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec. Six members of the congregation were gunned down just after evening prayers began. Their names are the text of the work, set loosely in the style of a call to prayer:

Abdelkrim Hassane

Aboubaker Thabti

Khaled Belkacemi

Mamadou Tanou Barry

Ibrahima Barry

Azzedine Soufiane

Embarrassingly, the President of the United States has yet to comment on this incident publicly, offering only a bland pledge of support through a now-unemployed public relations staffer, despite the perpetrator's reported affinity for right-wing political extremists who share some of his "views".

The musical treatment of a murder victim's name was inspired by Luciano Berio's work *O King*, written after Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968.



Les Moutons de Panurge

In Frederic Rzewski's Les Moutons de Panurge the players ("any number of musicians playing melody instruments," Rzewski specifies, "and any number of non-musicians playing anything") work their way, by additive and then subtractive means, through a 65-note melody; as they inevitably fall out of unison with each other, the impromptu counterpoint creates a blanket of harmony. Les Moutons de Panurge makes music out of those most human of elements: inaccuracy and error.

The title – "Panurge's Sheep" – references a scene in the fourth book of François Rabelais's epic 16th-century satire "Gargantua and Pantagruel." On a sea voyage, Pantagruel's companion, the clever, craven Panurge, takes revenge on the sheep-dealer Dindenault by tossing a ram overboard; the rest of the sheep (and Dindenault, vainly trying to restrain the flock) instinctively

follow and are drowned. Rzewski's work harkens back to the chorus "All we like sheep," from George Frederic Handel's Messiah. Not only do both works share the same tonal center (F), but also expressive shifts between major and minor. Appropriate to its Baroque echoes, "Les Moutons de Panurge" was dedicated to Frans Brüggen, the great Dutch recorder virtuoso.

Handel's chorus moves from major to minor in which the sheep – we sinners – go astray in frenzied major, only to be enveloped by Christ's concomitant sacrifice in an abrupt curtain of minor. Rzewski's sheep, though, turn from minor to major, an anti-authoritarian, individualistic reversal of Handel's trajectory ("Stay together as long as you can," Rzewski's score instructs, "but if you get lost, stay lost."). Freedom, Rzewski reminds us, is a sometimes-chaotic harmony between order and anarchy.

Program note adapted from a review in the Boston Globe by Matthew Guerrieri.



What Every Woman Ought To Know

Edith Margaret Garrud was an English instructor of Japanese jujutsu who trained the bodyguard unit of the Women's Political and Social Union (a group of sometimes militant suffragettes lead by Emmeline Pankhurst) prior to World War I. She popularized jujutsu in England through exhibitions, magazine articles, and semi-theatrical works such as the 1911 play "What Every Woman Ought to Know" - from which the title of this piece is borrowed.

I chose the texts from various writings by Mrs. Garrud (and added an anonymous commentary on suffrage for the third movement as it was absolutely appropriate to the dramatic arc of the piece) both for their narrative qualities (II and V) and their polemic (I and IV). Mrs. Garrud is sharp-witted and her commentary incisive, and I have no doubt that the

techniques she taught her fellow women for use in protecting themselves from police abuse were likewise.

In the spirit of her promotional plays and the illustrated articles she offered, this piece is designed to be played along with martial arts demonstration. Tonight the mezzo-soprano will "play the part" of Mrs. Garrud, narrating and taking part in one of the demonstrations (most of which were dictated by Mrs. Garrud in notes and photos), while Nicole Vaughan, an aikido practitioner, will perform most of the demonstrations. I, the composer, will be, fittingly, the unfortunate assailant.

Program note by Russell Podgorsek.

I. Invocation and Overture

A woman who knows jujutsu,
even though she may not be physically strong,
even though she may not have a parasol,
she is not helpless;
she may bring great burly cowards nearly twice her size to
their knees
and make them howl for mercy!

II. Two Examples

The Incredulous Reporter:

"I rose convinced of the efficiency of Jujutsu, and, aching in every limb, crawled painfully away, pitying the constable whose ill-fortune it should be to lay hands on Mrs. Garrud."

Protesting outside Parliament:

"Now then, move on, you can't be making an obstruction..

I said, move on, you can't be making an obstruction, here!"

"Excuse me, it's you who's making an obstruction...here!"

TEXTS:

What Every Woman Ought To Know

III. An Anonymous Aside

That drunken loafer in the gallery says,

"Down with the petticoats."

I say "Up with the petticoats and down with the pants."

Then things will be seen in their true light.

We must unify,

for as long as we women are split up as we are,

the men will always be on top.

IV. Mrs. Garrud's Thoughts on the Press

The daily papers, by their witticisms, smart or otherwise, have certainly helped to popularize that mode of self-defense, at the expense of the Suffragette who goes in for jujutsu, in order that she may foil her natural enemy, the man in blue...

The daily papers, by their witticisms, smart or otherwise, have certainly helped to popularize that mode of self-defense, whether they clamour for the vote or not.

TEXTS:

What Every Woman Ought To Know

V. Damsel vs. Desperado

A lady is returning home along a lonely country road. It is growing dark, but the lady saunters carelessly, enjoying the fragrant summer breezes...

Suddenly, from behind a hedge, a rascally hooligan rushes forward.

He is powerful, unscrupulous, a thief.

He has cast avaricious eyes there upon her satchel.

But not so fast, my friend;

It's not so easy as it seems.

You've encountered a woman who knows a thing or two.

He cannot move,

he dares not move,

for if he does his shoulder or elbow, or both, will be dislocated.

Believing that he's had enough

now that she's shown him what she can do,

she gives him a severe twinge that makes him squeal,

and throws him off as a "thing" beneath contempt.

A moment afterwards she regrets her magnanimity...



Workers Union

Program note by Louis Andriessen:

Workers Union (1975) was originally written for the orchestra De Volharding (Perseverance), in which I myself figured as a pianist at that time.

This piece is a combination of individual freedom and severe discipline: its rhythm is exactly fixed; the pitch, on the other hand, is indicated only approximately, on a single-lined stave. It is difficult to play in an ensemble and to remain in step, sort of like organizing and carrying on political action.