

Brief Resumé Alvin Curran

Since 1965 I have had an active self-made career as a composer/performer in the American experimental music tradition. This was not easy. It began with a fortuitous bang when I co-founded the group Musica Elettronica Viva with Frederic Rzewski and Richard Teitelbaum in Rome, in 1966. The MEV experience (over 200 concerts and commercial recordings) was my main focus between 1966 and 1971 and continues to this day (concerts; Symphony 105, 106, 108 and MEV40 CDs). In the early '70s I began creating a poetic series of solo-performance works for synthesizer, voice, taped environmental sounds and found objects (Songs and Views From the Magnetic Garden, Canti Illuminati...) which were performed all over Europe and the U.S. and consolidated my commitment to a life in music that has included thousands of live performances and a discography of more than 30 solo and 60 collaborative recordings.

In seeking out new musical spaces in the late 1970s I began to develop a series of concert events to be given on lakes and rivers, in parks and quarries (Riti Marittimi, Tufo Muto...), which have evolved into large scale musical choreographic structured improvisation works such as Beams for 30 or more mobile acoustic instruments (2005-), Oh Brass On The Grass Alas for 300 amateur brass-band musicians (Donaueschingen 2006), Maritime Rites Tate, featuring the London Symphony Orchestra brass ensemble (2007), Signage, a conduction for improvising orchestra (2012-), Musique Sans Frontières (Glasgow 2016).

In the '80s I extended this concept to create simultaneous radio concerts with live musicians in multiple countries (1985: A Piece For Peace, Crystal Psalms); solo performance pieces (Electric Rags, Endangered Species, Transdaxexpress, Shofar, The Alvin Curran Fakebook) using digital samplers, midi-grand pianos, and computers in a synthesis among the concert hall, acoustic instruments, keyboards, and the sounds of the whole world; and radio works such as Erat Verbum, Un Altro Ferragosto, I Dreamt John Cage Yodeling at the Zurich Hauptbahnhof, On the Roads, Living Room Music, On Hearing The Brooklyn Bridge Sing In Yiddish, and the Maritime Rites series (NPR, 1984). I also created a series of striking sound installations in collaboration with visual artists (Magic Carpet, Floor Plan...) which pointed the way to solo installation works such as The Twentieth Century, Toto Donaueschingen, Everybody Dreams Their Own Music, Gardening With John, Shin Far Shofar, Torzam, and the 2018-19 Omnia Flumina Romam Ducunt which turned Rome's Baths of Caracalla into a vast musical instrument.

Throughout these electric years Elliott Carter's lessons – along with Cage's, Feldman's, and Scelsi's – continued to exert their influence; I have steadfastly remained a composer of "notes on paper," notably For Cornelius, Hope Street Tunnel Blues, Dead Beats, and the Inner Cities cycle for piano; the trios Schtyx and May I Now; the string quartet VSTO; the saxophone quartet Electric Rags II; the percussion quartet Theme Park; Rose Of Beans for ensemble; Malapromptus for cello and piano; Viola Voilà featuring 10 violas; the chamber violin concerto Pittura Fresca; In Hora Mortis for chamber orchestra; Music Is Not Music and others for chorus SATB; Brute Beat Brut Bruit for flutes, clarinets, piano, violin, cello, percussion, and rapper; Circus Maximus for 17 musicians, electronics, and live video (by Theo Eshetu); Symphony 1.1; and The Book of Beginnings (Donaueschingen 2015) for orchestra, youth orchestra, two self-playing pianos, and app.

Recent highlights: Publication of The Alvin Curran Fakebook, an illustrated compendium of notated works, fragments, instruction pieces, and writings (2015); Maritime Rites Rome for

musicians on rowboats (2017); Passi, with visual artist Alfredo Pirri (2017 and 2018); recordings of Irrawaddy Blues (musique concrète for Documenta14 2017), Dead Beats (solo piano 2018), and Endangered Species (enhanced and fractured standards, 2018); Concerto for Bathub and Orchestra (2017); the site-specific disintegrating installation Pian de Pian Piano at No Man's Land (2017); performances at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires (2017), Big Ears in Knoxville (2017), The Armory in New York (2018), with Clark Coolidge in San Francisco (2018), with Ciro Longobardi in Naples (2018), and in Spigolizzi (2019); A Banda Larga, a street symphony for Angelica in Bologna (2018); Der Goldene Topf, with Achim Freyer (2019).

Some performers of my work: Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio, Alter Ego, Arditti Quartet, Ars Ludi, Ars Nova, Bang on a Can Allstars, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Bruce Brubaker, EAR Unit, Eve Egoyan, Ensemble Modern, Fred Frith, Group 180, Grup Instrumental de València, Frankie Hi NRG, Huddersfield Choral Society, IATO Orchestra, Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Joan Jeanrenaud, Kronos Quartet, Joan La Barbara, MAE Ensemble, Yvar Mikhashoff, Maria Monti, Ursula Oppens, Paul Drescher Ensemble, Relâche Ensemble, Rova Sax Quartet, Frederic Rzewski, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, San Francisco Chamber Players, Gabriella Smart, Soldier Quartet, Kathy Supove, SWR Symphony Orchestra, Aki Takahashi, Valentin Garvie's Valensemble, Reinier van Houdt, Daan Vandewalle, the West Point Band, William Winant.

I have had fruitful collaborations with artists including Vita Accardi, Eric Baudelaire, Umberto Bignardi, Trisha Brown (five commissions), Paolo Buggiani, Rudy Burckhardt, Jacob Burckhardt, Yoshiko Chuma, Clark Coolidge, Willem de Ridder, Theo Eshetu, Molissa Fenley, Pietro Fortuna, Achim Freyer, Wanda Golonka, Melissa Gould, Pierre-Alain Hubert, Margy Jenkins, Joan Jonas, Kristin Jones, Nancy Karp, Paul Klerr, Lucia Latour, The Living Theatre, Roberto Masotti, Annabella Miscuglio, Memè Perlini, Alfredo Pirri, Edith Schloss, Ira Schneider, Ulli Sigg, Antonio Trimani, Claudia Von Alemann, June Watanabe.

During the 1970s I taught at Rome's National Academy of Theater Arts, and in 1991-2006 I was the Milhaud Professor of Composition at Mills College. I now teach privately in Rome and during invited residencies at institutions such as Oberlin College, the Universität der Künste Berlin, and The Hague Royal Conservatory of Music. I have published widely on music, my own music, and other artists, including at the New York Times website. A bilingual book about my work, Alvin Curran: Live In Roma, was edited by Daniela Tortora (Milan, 2010).

Selected prizes and awards: DAAD (1963-4, 1986-7, 2018), Ars Acoustica International Prize (1989), Prix Italia (1988), Premio Novecento (Pisa 1993), Leonardo Award for Excellence (1995), Guggenheim Foundation (2004), Ars Electronica (2004), Experimental Music Studio Freiburg (residencies 2006, 2007), ZKM Karlsruhe (2010), Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Fellowship (2011), Yale Oral History American Music project "Major Figure in American Music," Harvard's Elson Lectureship (2012).

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