



what is good is given back

ESSENTIAL MUSIC

WASHINGTON SQUARE CHURCH, NYC
Wednesday May 20, 1998

P r o g r a m

Crippled Symmetry (1983)

Morton Feldman

Judith Gordon, piano
Susan Rotholz, flute
Charles Wood, percussion

John Kennedy and Charles Wood, Artistic Directors

www.essentialmusic.com

Cover image by Nora Farrell.

Essential Music's series of concerts this season in New York is made possible, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, and by the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, the Virgil Thomson Foundation, the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, The John Cage Trust, and The Aaron Copland Fund for Music. These concerts, and other activities of Essential Music, are also made possible through the very generous support of the *Friends of Essential Music*.

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ESSENTIAL MUSIC is devoted to the advocacy and development of new creative work which explores the nature, limits, and contexts of music and the arts, and the ways in which music and the arts can participate in the development of new spiritual, ethical, and ecological paradigms.

To address these goals through a primarily musical context, Essential Music presents new and/or neglected music from a movement that has its roots in the early 20th-Century avant-garde and American Experimental Tradition, and that has through the years spawned a vital body of experimental music throughout the world. We seek through our programming to define, advocate, and provide a forum for this movement among our contemporaries in New York and beyond, as well as to help define its historic lineage.

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John Kennedy and Charles Wood

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C D R E L E A S E S

Current

Ten Years of Essential Music

Live performances from ten years of Essential Music's most memorable performances. Works by Robert Ashley, Johanna Beyer, Peter Garland, Kyle Gann, Malcolm Goldstein, John Kennedy, Christian Wolff, and Charles Wood. Currently available from Monroe Street.

John Cage: The Lost Works

First recordings of Cage's Fads and Fancies in the Academy and the long-lost Cage/Patchen radio drama The City Wears a Slouch Hat. Currently available from Mode.

William Russell: Made in America

The (nearly) complete works of William Russell, experimentalist and contemporary of Henry Cowell, John Cage, and Lou Harrison. "a superb recording" - N.Y. Times. Currently available from Mode.

Forthcoming

Peter Garland: Another Sunrise

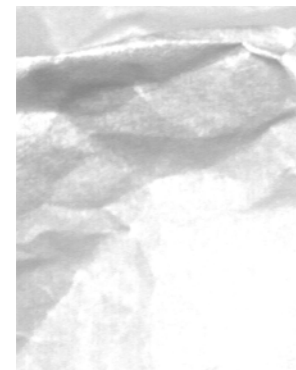
With special guest Aki Takahashi, recordings of Garland's *Another Sunrise*, *Dreaming of Immortality in a Thatched Cottage*, and *I Have Had To Learn The Simplest Things Last*. Mode.

John Cage: Five, Seven, Thirteen

Recordings of the late number pieces Five, Seven, and Thirteen. Mode.

Cornelius Cardew: The Great Learning

The first complete recording of Cornelius Cardew's major work, an epic 7-hour rendering of Cardew's improvisational score after Confucius. Mode.



Notes on Tonight's Program

"Though these patterns exist in rhythmic shapes articulated by instrumental sounds, they are also in part *notational images* that do not make a direct impact on the ear as we listen. A tumbling of sorts happens in midair between their translation from the page and their execution."

- Morton Feldman

By the time of **Crippled Symmetry**'s composition in 1983 Feldman had become fascinated with the study of Near and Middle Eastern rugs and the ways in which in the construction of these rugs subtle pattern and color shifts combined to create objects of seemingly great complexity, variety, and symmetry. Through his study, though, he was eventually drawn to the realization that the sense of perfect symmetry one initially experienced when looking at these rugs was in fact not quite true, as the handcrafted nature of these works inevitably introduced a degree of symmetrical imperfection, both through the way in which repeated patterns were reproduced inaccurately, and in the way that slight color shifts in the yarn had occurred from the small batches in which it had been dyed.

Feldman's fascination with the construction of Near and Middle Eastern rugs is evidenced in **Crippled Symmetry** in a number of ways, in particular through the use of relatively simple rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic 'shapes' that are repeated again and again, though each time with very slight structural changes. These subtle transformations eventually build to create a very densely textured sonic landscape, one that we might choose to see as an attempt to create a literal aural representation of the visual play in the rugs that had been holding Feldman's interest for so long. And yet if Feldman was making such an attempt, there remains something about how he approached the work's construction that seems incongruous with its inspiration.

Understanding what Feldman was trying to get at has been one of the great challenges for both listeners and performers struggling to come to terms with his music, particularly that of his later years. For performers the music often presents two seemingly exclusive directives: on the one hand it can be almost obsessively and strictly notated, while at the same time being almost irresponsible in its lack of concern with how all of the parts come together to make the whole. This is particularly true in **Crippled Symmetry**, in which each of the three performer's parts are precisely notated in terms of rhythm, tempo, and pitch, but where the synchronization of the three parts seems capriciously ignored. In fact Feldman goes so far at one point in the score as to remind the performers that they are in fact not to attempt to synchronize themselves with one another.

After having labored over such minute details, why this disregard for that which will have such a significant impact in performance? It is true that Feldman has frequently granted the performer great freedoms in how his music could be interpreted, but he has equally chosen not to grant those freedoms as well. The answer may lie in Feldman's understanding that the beauty that results from the subtle pattern and color shifts in a rug are a result of the circumstances of the rug's making, and that in musical performance a work's making is shared between both composer and performer. Choosing to allow certain aspects of the work's construction to vary from performance to performance, while being very specific and deterministic about other aspects, frees **Crippled Symmetry** to serve as a grand pattern upon which many different though intimately related works will be constructed in performance.

- John Kennedy & Charles Wood



The Likely Suspects

Judith Gordon gave her New York recital debut at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's "Introductions" Series. She has been heard recently as soloist with the Boston Pops, the ProArte Chamber Orchestra, and the Civic Symphony of Boston. In chamber music Ms. Gordon has partnered with a great variety of outstanding instrumentalists and singers, including Yo-Yo Ma, Lisa Saffer, Andres Diaz, Cynthia Phelps, Marcus Thompson, and the Lydian String Quartet. She performs frequently on WGBH radio in Boston, and was named Musician of the Year by The Boston Globe in their "Best of 1996 Classical".

John Kennedy founded Essential Music with Charles Wood in 1987. Since 1990, he has been Director of the Music in Time concert series at Spoleto Festival USA, where he conducts and leads guest artists and the Spoleto Festival Orchestra in a wide variety of contemporary music. His compositions have been performed at many venues in New York including The Kitchen and Here, and at festivals throughout the U.S. and Europe.

Susan Rotholz made her New York debut to critical acclaim in 1981 as a winner of the Concert Artists Guild Award. Since then she has appeared as soloist with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, New York Chamber Ensemble, New England Bach Festival, the Brandenburg Ensemble, and the New York String Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. She is principal flutist of the New England Bach Festival and the New York Chamber Ensemble. Ms. Rotholz is also a founding member of HEXAGON, a Young Concert Artists award winning ensemble for piano and winds which has recently released a CD, "Les Petites Neryeux" on Bridge Records.

Charles Wood is a composer and designer of new musical instruments and sound installations. His work has been presented at the Spoleto Festival USA, Aspekte Salzburg Festival, Zurich June Festival, at The Kitchen, at Roulette, and at The Performing Garage in New York City, Minneapolis' Southern Theatre, by Los Angeles' Antenna Repairmen, and by The California Ear Unit. His instruments have been exhibited at Lincoln Center's "Out Of Doors", and at the Walker Gallery in Seattle. Wood also is a producer of new media projects with Kaufman Patricof Enterprises, an interactive development firm in New York, and technical director of Cathedral, William Duckworth's ongoing interactive work for the web.

U P C O M I N G E V E N T S

May 29, 1998 – Spoleto Festival USA, Charleston, SC

The Spoleto Festival Chamber Orchestra, conducted by John Kennedy, will present the premiere of William Duckworth's **Ghost Dance**, one of a series of works that are a part of Duckworth's **Cathedral**, and ongoing interactive work for the web . Also appearing on the program will be Judith Gordon who will perform Duckworth's **Time Curve Preludes**. The concert will be broadcast live on the Cathedral website at www.monroestreet.com/Cathedral at 5pm.

June 1, 1998 - Spoleto Festival USA, Charleston, SC

Essential Music as ensemble in residence to perform Peter Garland's **Another Sunrise**.

1998 - 1999

Upcoming events planned for our 1998 – 1999 season include a trip to New Orleans in September to perform the music of William Russell, the premiere of Elodie Lauten's new work for four voices and chamber ensemble, based on several poems by Allen Ginzberg, an on-line performance by the Cathedral Band (featuring William Duckworth, Nora Farrell, John Kennedy, "Blue" Gene Tyranny, and Charles Wood), and performances of new work by Michael Byron, Peter Garland, John Kennedy and Charles Wood.

