

Feldman. There was minimal progression, rather a point in time was re-examined, re-worked and punctuated with occasional drops of light: Anders Førisdal's guitar passacaglia created a point of focus around which the other instruments gathered, and the piece finished with a slow and characteristically barely perceptible guitar cadenza. *still/moving* (2015, world premiere), also by Spahlinger, cavorted with delicacy between moments of unison (*still*) and phasing (*moving*). It is an instant classic, a work of such simple erudition and balletic finesse – music as simple beauty.

The Spahlinger works were paired brilliantly with the music of Øyvind Torvund (b. 1976), an acutely original talent. His talent is for the slick appropriation of everyday objects that are constructed into a unique meta-instrument, and *Neon Forest Space* (2009) provided as much fun in Oslo as it had in Huddersfield in 2014. *Plastic Waves* (2013) saw him reconstitute the ensemble into a provocative new multi-layered meta-instrument (as seems to be one of Torvund's defining techniques). The ensemble writing emphasised motion, propelling *asimimasa* forward in waves of sound, similar to the squeeze-and-release of an accordion. A joyous piece! Noise, rock guitar, cello & clarinet provided subtle contemporary styling round the edges, alongside Nancarrow-style piano, sampled percussion and glass-smashing (which was as perplexing as hysterical) – this was a Utopia of free expression crafted with stunning precision. Here is a composer to watch who, with an ensemble at the top of their game, created a concert in traditional format that was anything but dull.

Rose Dodd

'A Day for Pierre Boulez', Lucerne Festival im Sommer, Kultur- und Kongresszentrum

The ninetieth birthday of the last surviving founding father of post-WWII classical music is certainly reason enough for celebration, but what could the Lucerne Festival offer that has not already been covered by the many festivities that have taken place around the world? Fortunately, the festival has a trump card up its sleeve: the Lucerne Festival Academy, founded 11 years ago by Pierre Boulez and festival director Michael Haefliger to provide young musicians with the opportunity for intensive study of the music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra and Ensemble were omnipresent during 11 concerts

given over nine hours on 23 August 2015, performing eight world premieres from three generations of composers inspired by Boulez, alongside eight works from the master himself.

The day began, however, with a tribute from Lucerne city: from the roof terrace of Jean Nouvel's Kultur- und Kongresszentrum (an architect who owes his latest creation in Paris in large part to Boulez's artistic support), *Dialogue de l'ombre double* (itself a birthday present for Luciano Berio) represented far more than an exchange between a clarinettist and his/her own electronic echoes. Boulez's symbiotic relationship with the city was clear for all to hear, the passing road and lake traffic adding somewhat humorous but perhaps not entirely unintentional resonances to the performance.

The first main event of the day opened with Matthias Pintscher's short new work for solo piano, *Now I* (2015). Now Musical Director of EIC and the LFA, few may owe as much to Boulez as Pintscher; whilst the sound world hinted more at the influence of Boulez's teacher, Messiaen, than at Boulez himself, the title certainly suggests that Pintscher is looking towards the future. Next followed *Open to Infinity: a Grain of Sand* (2015) for chamber ensemble by Christian Mason, a previous recipient from Boulez of a Roche Young Commission. Also somewhat old fashioned (although very clearly in the British rather than the French tradition), as a melodic, motivic, almost ritualistic work, this series of three miniatures prepared the stage well for what was to follow: Boulez's *Rituel in memoriam Bruno Maderna* received an astute and dramatic performance by Academy instrumentalists in tandem with their coaches from Ensemble Intercontemporain, under the direction of Pintscher.

sur Incises was chosen as the central work for the next concert, demonstrating that, whilst 22 years on from *Rituel* refinement has taken a back seat to relentless energy, a sense of intense beauty can be found at the heart of any Boulez work, particularly when in the hands of Ensemble Intercontemporain. A prologue from Heinz Holliger, *à plume éperdue* (2015) for soprano, alto flute, cor anglais and cello, had a Boulezian elegance, but certainly from a more Germanic perspective, evoking memories of *Pierrot Lunaire* more than (despite the not-so-subtle references) *Le marteau sans maître*. To open the concert was *Re-Structures* (2015) for two pianos and electronics from this year's composer-in-residence – and former Director of Musical Research at IRCAM – Tod Machover. Although the most obviously Boulezian homage

of the day, the work's rather incongruent blend of ostinato keyboard gestures with seemingly spontaneous electronic interruptions left it lacking an overall shape.

Boulez's work as an educational pioneer cannot be overstated, and acknowledgement of this was given pride of place throughout the day. Chamber music filled all possible gaps in the programme, as Academy string quartets tutored by the JACK Quartet (themselves Academy Alumni from a decade ago) worked on *Livre pour quatuor* alongside Berg's *Lyrische Suite*, and the neighbouring art gallery hosted student performances of *Mémoriale* (... *explosante-fixe* ... *Originel*), and both versions of *Messagesquise*. The youngest generation had their moment too: *Notations* provided material for schoolchildren to experiment with dodecaphony in a pre-concert show, with the help of xylophones and physical theatre. Over the course of the day, Boulez's Academy showed how much can be achieved by like-minded musicians working together intensively for a week.

A new generation under Boulezian influence was represented in the final concert of the day, given by the Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra and featuring the winners of this year's Roche Young Commissions. Two young composers had been selected by Boulez in 2013 to create new orchestral works, probably his last contact with the Academy, the selection panel now being chaired by the new LFA Artistic Director, Wolfgang Rihm. Twenty-five-year-old Piotr Peszat demonstrated a finely crafted sound world in *Pensées étranglées* (2013/14), but an over-ambitious orchestration left the work somewhat directionless. *Crimson* (2015) by Samy Moussa also left several questions unanswered, its transparent shimmering textures and broad strokes yet brief duration suggested a Hollywood blockbuster pre-credit sequence soundtrack. A critic's description of the work as 'embodying everything that Boulez hated' was perhaps extreme, but both composers would do well to study the masterclass in orchestration and refinement that followed in the performance of selections from *Notations*. Pintscher's orchestral showpiece *Osiris* was understandably underprepared (Pintscher having occasionally to adopt his traffic-warden mode of conducting) but was nonetheless given a genuinely compelling, dramatic performance, with exceptional soli from the trumpet, contrabass clarinet and percussion. The 'old guard' gave their birthday greetings in this evening concert, with a rather literal offering from Rihm himself in *Gruss-Wort* (2015), and a slightly more symbolical one in *Petite musique solennelle* (2015) from György

Kurtág. Both were graceful, colourful and succinct pieces for small orchestra (109 bars between the two of them); Kurtág's work, in particular, conured an air of gentle understatement, perhaps a piece of 'old music' for a friend who was only one year older than he himself.

A final tribute was added for the day's climax, as cultish Boulez-selfie t-shirts were donned by all for *Notations I-IV* and *VII*, the orchestral arrangements being interwoven with performance of the piano originals by Andrew Zhou. Despite the iconoclast himself being too ill to join in the celebrations, the legacy of Pierre Boulez will certainly live on in Lucerne and around the world for many generations to come.

Jack Adler-McKean

La Monte Young *Trio for Strings Original Full Length Version*, Dia 15 VI 13 545 West 22 Street Dream House, New York City

Stepping inside the Dia Art Foundation's transformed gallery space in the heart of Chelsea is a special experience in itself. Darkly dressed ushers closely watch over your every move, preserving what is for the average audience member today a strikingly uncommon concert experience. 'Turn off all cell phones, remove your shoes, and remain completely silent while in the Dream House'. Free of everyday noise and distractions, this unassuming venue is converted into an almost reverential space of mystical quasi-worship. The air is thick with the fragrance of incense and the floor is covered wall-to-wall with plush white carpet. Blends of deep magenta and rich blue light illuminate the space. In the centre of the room, facing the stage area, are three dark figures – the curators of this numinous sensory environment (La Monte Young, Marian Zazeela and Jung Hee Choi) – sitting silently on swivel chairs. They sit, literally elevated above the audience, which is relegated to the carpet. There are no chairs for mere onlookers, only small pillows, and not nearly enough for everyone. Most find themselves at points during the marathon-length evening lying prostrate: to rest aching backs and arms, but mostly just to take it all in.

It was here in the Dia 15 VI 13 545 West 22 Street Dream House that the original, three-hour version of La Monte Young's *Trio for Strings* received its American premiere on 3 September 2015, two days shy of its 57 year anniversary of