

Mivos Quartet

Nijmegen October 20, 2024

Philip Glass (b. 1937)

String Quartet No. 4, “Buczak” (1989)

String Quartet No.4 was written as a memorial piece for the artist Brian Buczak. During the 1970s and 80s, Brian Buczak worked in multiple forms, from painting to publishing. Many of his canvases hold contrasting ideas side-by-side, pulling from portraiture, abstraction, and stenciled impressions of objects—often aestheticizing the nostalgia of faded cinema. Buczak might have found points of connection with the concurrent and era-defining Pictures Generation movement if his work wasn’t such a personal and unclassifiable collage. Two posthumous exhibitions earlier this year in New York, at Ortuzar Projects and Gordon Robichaux, affirm Buczak’s belonging to the canon of Postmodernism. *String Quartet No. 4* (1989) resonates with the cultural history of downtown New York. The music was commissioned by Buczak’s life partner, noted Fluxus artist, Geoffrey Hendricks (1931-2018), with whom Glass shared a deep, longstanding friendship. The finished work was premiered on July 4, 1989, the second anniversary of Buczak’s death from AIDS-related illness at age 32.

Ambrose Akinmusire (b. 1982)

***May Our Centers Hold* (2023)**

Commissioned for Mivos by the ECLAT Festival (Germany), Akinmusire's quartet incorporates specific intervals and chords, overlapping harmonies, repeated motives and melodic lines that can be interpreted with great freedom, creating a central sonic and harmonic framework that is free to change and respond to each live performance situation and the choices the quartet makes in the moment.

Ingrid Laubrock (b. 1970)

***Ashes* (2022)**

Winner of the 2022 Mivos/Kanter Composition Prize

after *Kriegslied*, a poem by Mathias Claudius
dedicated to my father

Michaela Catranis (b. 1985)

***luminous animal* (2020)**

“This piece was inspired by Tony Moffeit’s poem, *luminous animal* (1989). First reading this, I was struck by the music in his verse, the metaphorical language and the expressive way he conveys human struggle. Moffeit reiterates in his poetic way, one of those ambiguities every one of us has experienced - on the other side of pain, we can uncover something luminous in ourselves. He makes the parallel to bioluminescent organisms that emit light in the deepest, darkest places. "There is only one answer: to go deeper into the heart of the wound to go deeper

into the heart of the blues...like a luminous animal you glow from the fire of the pulse in your veins” (Moffeit). I used some of the metaphors and thematic material in the poem as I wrote this piece: a sense of shining, flickering light was the idea in the opening section, the strings hovering within an enclosed harmonic space, out of which emerge sharp, fiery accents, bursts of light. The viola solo later on in the piece was drawn from the themes of solitude/self-reflection: “like a luminous animal you dance alone like a luminous animal the night fills all your pores like a luminous animal you glow” (Moffeit).”

Alex Mincek (b. 1975)

String Quartet No. 3: “*lift – tilt – filter – split*” (2009-10)

Modern life is such that, confronted with the most mechanical, the most stereotypical repetitions, inside and outside ourselves, we endlessly extract from them little differences, variations and modifications. Conversely, secret, disguised and hidden repetitions, animated by the perpetual displacement of a difference, restore bare, mechanical and stereotypical repetitions, within and without us...The task of life is to make all these repetitions coexist in a space in which difference is distributed

–G. Deleuze

“String Quartet No. 3 uses successions of variously dynamic textures to represent physical shape, tactility and movement. I think of these textures as networks that are perceived most immediately as generalized sums of activity, but which have multi-stable characteristics as well, allowing the listener to bounce back and forth from the recognition of the unique parts and the undifferentiated whole. One of the things I find most interesting about these textures is their ability to absorb repetitions within networks of difference. For example, many sections in the work are constructed so that the composite rhythm from one phrase to the next is nearly identical, as is the timbre, pitch and register content. However, the distribution of these parameters is in constant flux. The result is music that is both always the same *and* always different, depending on how the listener chooses to follow the material. Of course other sections of the work do the opposite. They present obvious repetitions that mask subtle differences. There is a deeply personal, dramatic arc to the piece as well, but I’ve said too much already...?”

Ingrid Laubrock on *Ashes*.

“I started composing *Ashes* in February 2022, just as Ukraine was invaded by Russia. Outraged by this invasion, my father sent a letter to Vladimir Putin (addressed to The Kremlin, Moskow) begging him to end the war. He urged Putin to search within his soul—should he have one—and reconsider the human cost of war. In his letter, he included the poem “Kriegslied” by Matthias Claudius. The poem describes the protagonist’s visions of the victims of a fictitious war and imagines being responsible for all the pain and suffering. This letter became my inspiration for *Ashes*.”

Ingrid Laubrock

Kriegslied (Matthias Claudius 1778)

’s ist Krieg! ’s ist Krieg! O Gottes Engel wehre,
Und rede Du darein!
’s ist leider Krieg – und ich begehre,
Nicht schuld daran zu sein!

Was sollt ich machen, wenn im Schlaf mit Grämen
Und blutig, bleich und blaß,
Die Geister der Erschlagenen zu mir kämen,
Und vor mir weinten, was?

Wenn wackre Männer, die sich Ehre suchten,
Verstümmelt und halb tot
Im Staub sich vor mir wälzten und mir fluchten
In ihrer Todesnot?

Wenn tausend tausend Väter, Mütter, Bräute,
So glücklich vor dem Krieg,
Nun alle elend, alle arme Leute,
Wehklagten über mich?

Wenn Hunger, böse Seuch und ihre Nöten
Freund, Freund und Feind ins Grab
Versammelten, und mir zu Ehren krächten
Von einer Leich' herab?

Was hül'f mir Kron' und Land und Gold und Ehre?
Die könnten mich nicht freun!
’s ist leider Krieg – und ich begehre,
Nicht schuld daran zu sein!

it's war! it's war!
O God's angel forbid,
And talk about it!
Unfortunately it's war - and I desire
Not to be at fault!

What should I do when grieving in my sleep And
bloody, pale and pale,
The spirits of the slain come to me
And cried in front of me, what?

When brave men who seek honor
Mutilated and half dead
Rolled in the dust before me and cursed me In their
distress?

If a thousand thousand fathers, mothers, brides, So
happy before the war
Well all miserable, all poor people,
Lamented for me?

When hunger, nasty plague and their needs Friend,
friend and foe to the grave
Gathered and crowed in my honor
Down from a corpse?

What help me crown and land and gold and honor?
They couldn't please me! Unfortunately it's war - and
I desire
Not to be at fault!