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The piece is purely acoustic, with no amplified or speaker-driven sound whatsoever, as Brant so fervently believed was necessary for the health of the human nervous system. At the same time, in his spirit of innovation and experimentation, it draws on interactive computer technology to create a "tele-presence" controller (called the "radio-drum" because the mallets communicate with the surface via radio waves), that maps three dimensional physical gestures to Trimpin's fantastical remote control percussion and piano instruments, distributed throughout the hall. These are all performed by one player, often in a precise synchronization that would be extremely difficult or impossible with multiple human players in a large space. At the same time, the music moves organically, with parts converging and diverging, reaching out across the space.

Brant believed in the expressivity and virtuosity of improvisation, and the radio-drum performer Andrew Schloss, also a student of Brant, epitomizes this approach. The instrument, first designed at Bell Labs as a 3-dimensional mouse, allows the performer six degrees of freedom (3 dimensions with each stick) and fine degree of expressive control, dramatically presented via physical gestures that the audience can clearly connect to the sound being produced. Schloss brings to the piece his varied expertise as an African, Cuban, jazz and classical percussionist to contribute a virtuosic kaleidoscope of stylistic associations.

Similarly, the piece celebrates Brant's "maximalist" approach to musical material. With explicit references to African music, Latin music, bluegrass music, and other styles, these are layered, fractured, fused, and exploded, creating an ecstatic musical sea that surrounds and engulfs the audience, and refracts the heterogeneous, multi-cultural, expansive, and emotionally contradictory nature of modern life.

Reviews from the Premiere Performance

ArtsSf.com

A real winner emerged among the contemporary compositions at the Other Minds Festival March 4, more than I had bargained for in an otherwise indifferent program.

The world premiere of David A. Jaffe's "The Space Between Us" was a felicitous linkage of acoustic/instrumental music with electronic sounds, the most successful we've encountered all this season. Like a rising tide, it lifted up the entire festival, which was littered with an array of indifferent pieces and improvisations ranging from predictable to ludicrous.

"The Space between Us" was spatial music, with a phalanx of string players ringing the audience, countering the electronic sound on stage coming from electro-percussionist Andrew Schloss, who made the piano play--look, no hands!--just by waving a wand over a sensor across the stage.

Watching a disclavier piano play by itself, without keyboardist, is disconcerting, to say the least. If there was a ghost in the house, it was that of the late Henry Brant, the spatial composer par excellence, to whose memory the work was dedicated. In the spatial mode, a chamber orchestra's worth of string players was scattered all about the audience at Kanbar Hall, often performing a string chorale, with the audience fairly drowning in rich harmonic sound. Jaffe relishes restless themes in a diatonic way, spreading this feast out over 25 minutes, with equally rich applause at the end from a healthy crowd.

The remainder of the program featured a jazz-ensemble jam session in fusion-Balinese manner, headed by I Wayan Balayan with his blazing-fast two-necked electric guitar and two virtuosic Balinese cohorts keeping up on metallophones; and an experimental solo-vocal set by the Polish soprano Agata Zubeł. Then came improv drummer Han Bennink, about whom one listener remarked, "I feel sorry for the people in the front row, it's usually so loud. And once he started a fire as well." I fled shortly after, before the splitting of either eardrums or atoms by the ferocious player, going all out like a man possessed. There were happily no fire brigades, either. This was the 16th year of the San Francisco-based Other Minds Festival of new sounds.

A PIANO THAT PLAYS ITSELF

And Other Wonders in Electro-Acoustic Cocktails

By Paul Hertelendy

artssf.com, the independent observer of San Francisco Bay Area music and dance

Musical America

At Other Minds, Anything (Still) Goes

By Georgia Rowe

MusicalAmerica.com

March 8, 2011

SAN FRANCISCO - Every year about this time, the Other Minds Festival of Contemporary Music brings composers and performers from around the world to San Francisco for a week of residency and three nights of unabashed music-making. The results are always eclectic, and frequently revelatory; under Artistic Director Charles Amirkhanian, this year's edition - Other Minds 16 - demonstrated that new music thrives, and that this city remains a mecca for artists, iconoclasts and free thinkers.

Amirkhanian has an uncanny ability to identify important composers of the future while honoring the past; programs are divided between talent on the rise and new music's established composers. The first two concerts, March 3 and 4 at Kanbar Hall, featured Louis Andriessen and Han Bennink (from the Netherlands), I Wayan Balawan (Indonesia), Agata Zubeł (Poland); Kyle Gann, Janice Giteck and David A. Jaffe (U.S.) A third concert, on March 5, offered additional works by Andriessen, Gann and Jason Moran.

A decided high point was the world premiere of "The Space Between Us," Jaffe's tribute to Henry Brant's pioneering work in spatial music. The composer's 20-minute opus places two string quartets - the Del Sol String Quartet, and members of the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble - on opposite sides of the hall, while a

percussionist onstage (Andrew Schloss), sends remote electronic signals, via radio drum, to a piano, two xylophones and an array of overhead chimes (the installation was by Seattle composer/inventor Trimpin).

Jaffe's score introduces richly textured, eerily prolonged voicings from the strings, which are interrupted by urgent, rhythmic phrases tapped out by percussion. As the work moves toward a poised, luminous conclusion, the instruments seem to reach out to one another, as if longing for connection. The performance stretched the mind and beguiled the ear.

Sequenza21

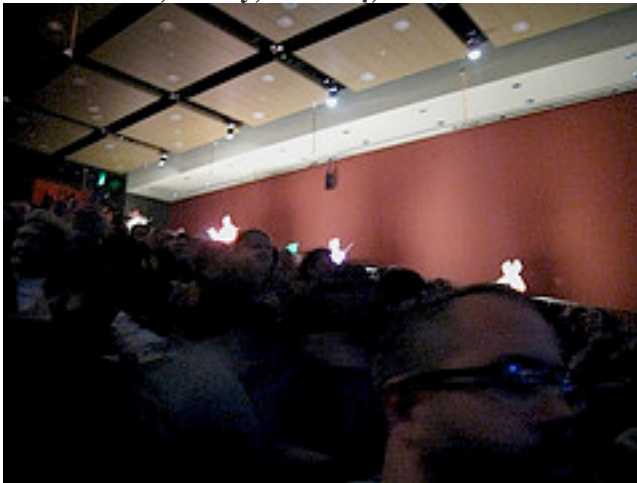
Peeking into Other Minds

Posted by [Steve Layton](#)

*[The latest iteration of the always-stellar **Other Minds** festival is now done and in the books. We asked our equally-stellar Bay Area musician friend [Tom Dill](#) if he'd like to cover a bit of it for us, and he happily sent along his impressions of the second and third concert evenings.]*

Other		Minds		16
Jewish	Community	Center,	San	Francisco

Concert Two, Friday, March 4, 2011



There's a shard of spotlight on my shoulder. A music stand hovers off the sphere of peripheral vision; under it, the shadow of fingers curl like the violin scroll toward which they crawl, spiderish. The fingers belong to a violinist of the **Del Sol String Quartet**; on both sides of the audience the quartet and the **Left Coast Chamber Ensemble** are arrayed up the steps toward the back of the hall. In forward vision is percussionist **Andrew Schloss**, standing behind a computer and percussion-controller on a table. Over these hover his wired drumsticks, sometimes striking the controller yet often just floating, stirring the atoms above it, sending flocks of musical messages to various slave percussives onstage, offstage, and hung from the ceiling above. The composer is **David A. Jaffe**, protégé of Henry Brant; the percussion-controller builder, German-born, Seattle-based **Trimpin**, master of MIDI and commander of solenoid soldiers.



The Space Between Us might be called a “cubistic” composition. The subject is suggested by the title, or “what can be communicated and what remains unsaid,” in the composer’s words, as, with sticks held aloft in a gentle but dramatic gesture, percussionist-conductor Schloss signals yet another beginning, another foray into the problem of separation and identity. Somewhat reminiscent of Ives’ *The Unanswered Question*, each new attempt answers nothing but only brings more questions to the surface, adding facets to the cubist puzzle in the hearer’s mind. Strings quiver in mournful, canonic dirges in one phase; other times they signal impatience in brusque, un-pretty gestures. Later on, massed plucking is attempted, to better match the percussive chatter. Desperate glissandi from the computer-driven piano onstage are gobbled and hurled back by cello and viola, all to no avail. The space remains and separation seems unbridgeable, yet the sonic discussion has pushed the gloom back for at least a few moments of transcendent, clouds-clearing beauty. The conversation is aptly dedicated to Henry Brant, an Other Minds spiritual father.

Cine Source magazine

Multidimensional Music Explodes in Other Minds

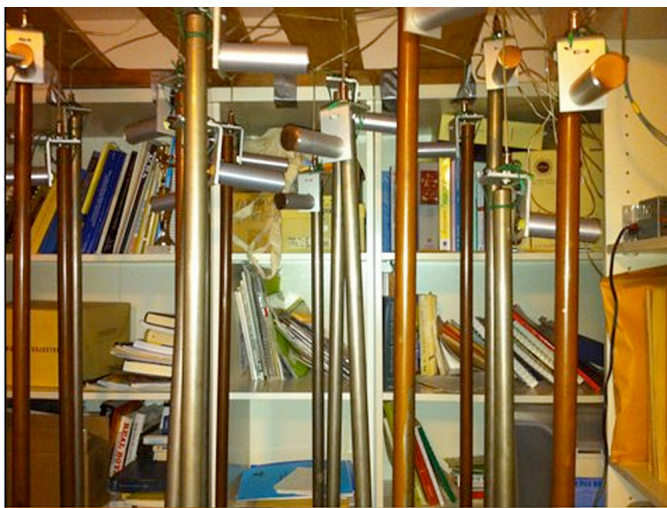
by Tony Reveaux



Composers Jaffe and Trimpin with a

Brant/Trimpin xylophone. photo: David Jaffe

It's the second evening of the Other Minds 16 concert series last March and the hall at the Jewish Community Center is exploding with sound from every direction. Musicians are playing from different positions in the aisles amidst the audience. Overhead, clanging metal chime tubes hang from the ceiling like gleaming stalagmites. On stage, a musician in a nest of electronics, his hands a blur, plays with mallets on a "radio drum" touch keyboard. Behind him a Yamaha Disklavier computer-controlled piano responds, and you can see its keys rippling to his remote commands. Spooky!



The cylinders on the side of each chime are electro-magnets that pull a "beater" to strike the chime when directed by the percussionist. photo: David Jaffe

Space is the score for Jaffe and Trimpin

3D in cinema is becoming so widespread and established that it is beginning to expand from the theater into the living room TV. Filmmakers are testing, experimenting and learning how best to shape and form depth to their best expressive advantages. Stereophony and multiple speaker placements gives perceptive depth to the audio. Live music generally radiates from stage center like a virtual speaker cone.

“The Space Between Us” (2011) for 3-D sensor, Trimpin instruments and strings by David A. Jaffe with the collaboration of German sound sculptor Trimpin expands all of that so that musical generators colonize and inhabit the audience realm as well as the stage. The performance is purely acoustic, with no amplified or speaker-driven sound whatsoever.

“This piece,” said Jaffe, “explores what can be communicated and what must remain unsaid as eight isolated string players embedded in the audience, and one percussionist alone on stage, reach out to one another. While the violinists, violists and cellists move air through intimate coupling of bows, strings and bodies, the percussionist silently induces electromagnetic waves that elicit reaction in remote robotic xylophones, bells, pianos and chimes.”

Composer Jaffe likes to meld acoustic analogue instruments and electronics. photo: David Jaffe (omitted – DJ)

Henry Brant’s Fourth Dimension

The piece is a memorial tribute to spatial music pioneer Henry Brant, who referred to space as the Fourth Dimension of Music, after pitch, time and timbre. It draws upon pre-WWII percussion instruments that Brant collected over the years and bequeathed to David A. Jaffe, Brant’s protégé and close friend.

These instruments have been transformed by sound artist Trimpin especially for this piece, turning them into 21st century robotic sound contraptions that evoke Brant's nuts- and-bolts spirit of adventure and experimentation, combined with a hand-crafted one-of-a-kind aesthetic that harks back to earlier days.

Tony Reveaux is a writer, film critic and tech specialist now living in Marin County

Other Minds Music Festival: Friday, March 4



The second evening of [the 16th Annual Other Minds Music Festival](#) started with a "spatial music" world premiere commission from the festival called *The Space Between* by David Jaffe with [special instruments](#) created by [Trimpin](#) (second and third from left above).

The composer Kyle Gann relates the following anecdote about the installation at PostClassic, his [Arts Journal blog](#):

"Trimpin, whose mischievously adolescent sense of humor is one of his most endearing qualities, had the best joke of the week. David A. Jaffe had inherited a bunch of percussion from his teacher Henry Brant, and he used those instruments in his piece *The Space Between Us*.

Included were about 25 chimes, and Trimpin had the idea of suspending the chimes from the ceiling and having them played via MIDI. So David's piece had two string quartets, one on each side of the audience, plus a Disklavier onstage, a couple of MIDI-played xylophones, and the chimes hung from the ceiling. On the preceding panel, as the audience sat underneath those chimes, David explained that Trimpin had suggested suspending the chimes, but that he, David, was afraid that they would fall down and strike audience members. Charles asked, "So Trimpin, how are the chimes suspended from the ceiling?", and Trimpin answered, "Oh, with very thin twine...." Gann continues: "*The Space Between Us* was perhaps the festival highlight, with the string quartets playing ethereal melodies with the disembodied chimes in rhythmic unison."

The spread-out string players were from the [Left Coast Chamber Ensemble](#) and the [Del Sol String Quartet](#), with percussionist [Andrew Schloss](#) (above, talking to pianist Sarah Cahill) standing on stage like the Wizard of Oz, waving his wands to conjure up magical effects.