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Stockhausen's Kontakte at SICPP in Boston

This week is SICPP at New England Conservatory (Summer Institute in Contemporary Performance Practice, also known as Sick Puppy, I didn't make that up. They call it that!). Along with the seminar activities during the day (I participated in 2007), there is a fabulous week of free evening concerts -- the big, hard-to-program, fascinating works of the 20th-21st century avant garde.

Last night's program included Stockhausen's Kontakte with Stephen Drury, SICPP director, on piano and Mathias Reumert on percussion. It was another world, an alternate universe, a whirl of sound, a rich, immersive sound-world in the quad tape part, accented by a multitude of instruments on stage: gongs, drums, antique cymbals, marimba. Small gongs were on a rack bridging the piano and a tam-tam and a large gong were in the center. The players went to them for crashingly loud sounds as well as edge scrapes and taps with many beaters. It was among the most riveting performances I've ever heard, of anything.

The first half of the program was great too, with Jo Kondo's Dandelion-clock-work for 2 pianos, tuned a quarter-tone apart, with interludes for bass flute, cello and percussion. Two Italian guest performers, Francesco Dillon, cello, and Emanuele Torquati, piano, performed works by Scelsi, Sciarrino, and Solbiati. The first two I especially liked, with minimal, slowly developing materials and a beautiful control of sound and silence.

I'm in awe of Stephen's organizing energy. He has put together a whole week of concerts that are just as exciting as this one. And he performs in most of them too, along with many guests. Stephen Drury believes music should be an experience. It was an experience I'm glad I heard and saw. And a friend commented that for hearing this repertoire, Stephen's SICPP seminar and his ensemble, the Callithumpian Consort, are the only game in town (the town being Boston, MA).

Posted by Pam Marshall at 10:59 AM 0 comments [Links to this post](#)
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