



## Frozen Music II: **The City Dance of Lawrence & Anna Halprin**

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### Music Performance Program Notes

The musical programming for City Dance is the result of months of planning and discussion between myself and our fantastic choreographers. Our challenge was to find music that was appropriate for the design aesthetic of each site, and that represented the tremendous creativity of the Halprin's collaborators and artistic colleagues during the era in which the parks were designed. Further, we wanted to show how these musicians used that intensely creative time in the 1960's Bay Area as the starting point for extremely influential careers, each taking their ideas for musical possibilities in many different directions.

The desire to create new artistic languages with a social conscience ran deep in the 1960's Bay area. Lawrence Halprin used nature as the basis for his radical experiments in landscape architecture, creating new possibilities for performative public spaces. Anna demolished the 'fourth wall', making the audience a part of her groundbreaking dance work, freeing dancers from traditional attitudes about movement and body awareness that opened up the possibility of dance movement to everyone, regardless of training or ability.

Just as Anna and Lawrence were attempting to create a new a language in their respective art forms, so too were the composers of that time shedding tradition and institutional influences to create musical works of remarkable originality. They understood the tradition of American art music, yet also felt to a large extent that the freedom to create was limited by institutional and 'stylistic schools'. Composer Ramon Sender described his work "Desert Ambulance" as "...a vehicle of mercy sent into the wasteland of modern music".

For our project, we have chosen to focus on the work of three of Anna Halprin's primary musical collaborators: Morton Subotnick, Pauline Oliveros, and Terry Riley. Each were participants in the work of the San Francisco Tape Music Center, and each took their musical art in very different directions; Subotnick pioneered the use of synthesizers in recorded and live performance; Oliveros laid the groundwork for the "ambient music" genre with her experiments in deep listening; Riley created the first minimalist masterpiece, *In C*.

Our performance is a tribute to their creative genius, and in true Frozen Music style, an attempt to provide the opportunity to see and hear these beautiful public parks that are the Portland legacy of that wonderfully creative time in our cultural history.

### **Keller Fountain**

Morton Subotnick was a co-founder (with Sender) of the San Francisco Tape Music center, and composer of the score for Anna Halprin's signature dance work from that period, "Parades and Changes". He was at the forefront of the emerging electronic music movement, working closely with Don Buchla on the first portable music synthesizer, the "Buchla Box."

### **Keller Fountain Program**

**Five Legged Stool (1962)** – As you enter the Keller Fountain area, you'll hear a recording of this tape composition of Subotnick. For the live performances with Halprin's dancers, Subotnick

discretely recorded the audience and played back this crowd 'noise' over the sound system, while the dancers, on stage and in the dark, became the audience to the real audience's performance.

**A Non Accented Legato (1982)** – This excerpt is from the acclaimed 1989 recording of Joan La Barbara, Morton Subotnick's wife, singing this mesmerizing work by Morton Feldman.

**A Fluttering of Wings (1985)** - A string quartet work that uses a computer effects process that Subotnick calls "Ghost Effects", designed for the composer by Don Buchla. This work demonstrates the Subotnick's ingenious integration of live music with technology, enhancing and amplifying the fluttering and halo colors that are created by the string quartet.

**Silver Apples of the Moon B (1967)** - This excerpt is from the landmark recording on Nonesuch, the first electronic music work commissioned by a record company. It was created entirely on a Buchla modular synthesizer.

**A Sky of Cloudless Sulphur (1978)** – A later electronic work of Subotnick's that incorporates more groove oriented rhythms, while also showing the dramatically increased sonic range of the Buchla synthesizer.

### **Pettygrove Park**

Since the 1960's Pauline Oliveros has influenced American music profoundly through her work with improvisation, meditation, electronic music, myth and ritual. Her scores for Anna Halprin included "The Bath" (1966), and she was a central figure in the activities of the SF Tape Music Center. Her 1965 work "Bye Bye Butterfly" is considered a classic in the history of electronic music.

Pauline is the founder of the Deep Listening Institute, dedicated to promoting innovation among artists and audience in creating, performing, recording and educating with a global perspective.

"Listening to this space I sound the space. Listening to the energy of all who are present

I sound this energy. Listening to my listening and your listening I make this music here

and now with the assistance of all that there is.."

### **Pettygrove Park Program**

**Tree/Peace (1984)** – Originally written for piano trio, we've adapted this work for six players for this performance. In *Tree/Peace*, the musicians are asked to listen and react acutely while shaping the resulting musical performance in relationship to the metaphor of an imaginary tree. Using the individual performer's personal psychology to guide the performance is the same process that Anna Halprin used in developing many of her dance works.

The individual parts contain groups of notes that are the basis for a guided improvisational exercise, which follows the life span of a tree in seven short sections:

- I The Mystery of Propagation
- II The Growth of the Seedling
- III The Full Formation and Maturity of the Tree
- IV The Action of the Seasons
- V The Magical Nature of the Tree
- VI The Death of the Tree
- VII Contemplation

## Lovejoy Fountain

In 1959, Terry Riley and La Monte Young became Anna Halprin's first music directors, using improvisational methods including found instrument sound generation in pieces that laid the groundwork for the Minimalist movement in music. Anna used Young's *String Trio 1958* as accompaniment for *Birds of America*, and it was Riley's desire to reproduce the repetitive sonorities of his tape experiments for Anna, this time with live instruments, leading to the first minimalist masterpiece, *In C*.

## Lovejoy Fountain Program

**M.....mix (1960)** - As you enter the Lovejoy Fountain area, you'll hear this recording of Terry Riley's eerie tape experiment, which Anna Halprin used as accompaniment for "The Four Legged Stool". It's source material is natural sounds -- the aural equivalent to found objects -- that the composer has identified as "people playing the piano, laughing, different sounds I'd collected here and there, explosions". In *M... Mix* modules of sound are repeated and overlaid. To achieve this, Riley constructed a long tape loop that extended through a window and out into his yard with a wine bottle acting as a spindle. *M.....mix* is Riley's earliest surviving tape experiment.

**In C excerpt (1964)** - On November 4, 1964, the San Francisco Tape Music Center presented the first performance of Terry Riley's *In C*, featuring an all-star cast of performers, including Riley, Pauline Oliveros, Sonny Lewis, Steve Reich, Morton Subotnick, and many others. Our performance of this excerpt seeks to establish a very clear structural context for the Lovejoy site, which will erode during the course of the entire performance. This follows Lawrence Halprin's description of the design aesthetic for Lovejoy being one of "...nature creating form through a process of erosion." The final sustained pitches are a reference to La Monte Young's *String Trio 1958*, widely considered to be the first minimalist composition.

**Bird of Paradise (1964)** - An early example of "plunderphonics," Riley used heavy R&B, pop tunes, classical music, cut and looped with noise and effects, making them nearly unrecognizable by playing with different speeds.

**Sound generation** – From 1960-62, Terry Riley and La Monte Young's tenure as the first music directors for Anna Halprin marked a decisive shift for both the dancer and composers. Gone was the traditional rehearsal pianist and any sense of musical form, replaced by these sonic pioneers who, according to the Young, used "...ancestors of the wild sounds – natural sounds, abstract sounds – interesting material juxtapositions such as metal on glass, metal on metal... Terry and I started making incredible sounds; they were very long and very live, and we'd really go inside of them, because they filled up the entire room of the studio." For the Lovejoy musical program, we attempt to complete the erosion of *In C* with our own experiment in sound generation, tracing the evolution of Minimalism back to its ancestral roots.

## Source Fountain

Our performance draws to a close at the Source, the beginning of Lawrence's grand watershed metaphor, and a fitting coda for our event. Recorded samples of Lawrence and Anna's voices will accompany a quasi-improvised arrangement of some of the music heard throughout the journey through the parks sequence.

- Ron Blessinger, artistic director, Third Angle New Music Ensemble