

For Cornelius (1982/1993/2001)

Alvin Curran (b1938)

Alvin Curran was born December 13, 1938 in Providence, Rhode Island. He studied composition with Elliott Carter and co-founded *Musica Elettronica Viva* with Frederic Rzewski and Richard Teitelbaum. Curran often uses sounds from nature to inspire his works along with electronic sounds and reproductive techniques. His compositions extend from solo performance works, such as *For Cornelius*, *TransDadExpress*, and *Shofar* (drawing on his Jewish heritage), to the *Maritime Rites* series of performances on and near water and sound installation works such as *Magic Carpet*, *Floor Plan*, and *Gardening with John*. Since 1996, Curran has worked continuously on a growing series of piano works entitled *Inner Cities*, which together form one of the longest non-repetitive piano works ever written.

For Cornelius was composed in 1982 (some sources give 1981), revised in 1993, and further refined in 2001. In creating my own version, I used the two latest source materials (which differ almost insignificantly). **Part I** presents a simple, meandering melody that changes ever so slightly upon each of its three repetitions. It is pensive and reminiscent. **Part II** begins seamlessly and somewhat *sotto voce*. It intensifies through increased dynamics and harmonic complexity and density. The musical material—alternating chords between both hands—is minimalistic in nature, drawing inspiration from such composers as La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Philip Glass, and Stephen Reich. Curran creates an effect of waves of sound washing over the listener, to the point where one forgets the sound is emanating from a piano! The final coda is a heavenly chorale composed of oscillating modal harmony that resolves into silence.

Brian Hendrickson Poet

CELEBRATION OF SILENCE

Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58

Frédéric François Chopin (1810–1849)

Movements I Allegro maestoso II Scherzo: Molto vivace III Largo IV Finale: Presto non tanto; Agitato

Born in Żelazowa Wola (near Warsaw) in 1810, Frédéric [François] Chopin was able to reproduce melodies he heard by the age of 6. His parents, both amateur musicians, took notice and the young Frédéric soon began lessons with his sister Ludwika. He later studied piano with Wojciech Żywny (Warsaw Lyceum) and music theory, piano, figured bass, and composition with the renowned Józef Elsner (Warsaw Conservatory).

Chopin's keyboard technique and oft-criticized small tone did not suit itself to the large concert hall, but it did make him a darling of the affluent Parisian salons, where his caressing touch made an indelible impression. Subsequently, he became a sought-after private teacher for upper-class families. At a salon hosted by Franz Liszt and Countess Marie d'Agout in 1836 Chopin met Amantine Aurore Lucile Dupin (later Baroness Dudevant), better known by her penname, George Sand. Though hesitant at first, they developed a relationship that was to last ten tumultuous years. Chopin succumbed to pulmonary tuberculosis soon after his last public appearance at London's Guildhall in 1848 and died on October 17, 1849.

Chopin's musical fluidity and counterpointal writing pay homage to Bach and Mozart; his beautiful soaring melodies owe much to his friend Bellini, master of the Italian *bel canto*. Chopin stretched the boundaries of musical harmony (*Preludes*) and pianistic technique (*Etudes*); concurrently, he developed a rhythmic sense and often un-notated but understood *rubato* that was particularly idiomatic to the piano: it was expressive, but never indulgent.

Dedicated to Countess Emilie de Perthuis, the *Third Piano Sonata* displays the height of Chopin's compositional output. The first movement's triumphant character—the primary theme's chordal progressions—reflects Chopin's Polish side; the delicate lines and highly polished counterpoint—the nocturne-like second theme and development—demonstrate his Parisian training. The second movement is a flighty scherzo with a *tenuto* middle section; this leads immediately to a gorgeous third movement, whose last B Major chord is truly the calm before the storm. The *agitato* fourth movement gains momentum from the very first notes. The theme appears three times (B minor, E Minor, and B Minor again) before Chopin takes the listener (and pianist!) through a dizzying and pyrotechnic coda.

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MUSIC WORTH TALKING ABOUT

*Today's performance
is sponsored by
Riha Rothberg . . .
Happy birthday to
Wayne Mikosz,
Boomer extraordinaire!
Because you still
save me the pretty rocks.*

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John Cage *Living Room Music, Branches
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Steve Reich *Marimba (Piano) Phase*

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CHATTER CABARET

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Steve Reich *Vermont Counterpoint*

Arvo Pärt *Spiegel im Spiegel - Mirror in Mirror*

Fritz Kreisler *Liebesleid and Poupee Valsante*

Dmitri Shostakovich *Piano Trio No 2*

CHATTER 20-21

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Steve Reich *Retrospective*

Clapping Music (1972)

Different Trains (1988)

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