

Mp3 Skip La Plante - Classical: Contemporary



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Creative music composed from invented instruments. 22 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Contemporary, NEW AGE: Environmental Details: Music For Homeade Instruments performers: John Bertles, Andrew Bolotowsky, Alice Eve Cohen Michael Evans, Geoffrey Gordon, Rolf Groesbek, Tom Goldstein, Rolf Groesbeck, Jody Kruskal, Skip La Plante, Mayumi Tsuda, David Simons, Carole Weber, with Johnny Reinhard, bassoon, and Mat Fieldes, double bass Glyptodont was written as a response to Partchs Castor and Pollux. In some ways it is indeed Partchian. On the other hand, one of the most significant facets of Partchs creative legacy is completely ignored. Outside of the fact that all parts are written for a certain number of pitches that must be audibly higher or lower than the other pitches of the instrument, there are no important pitch relationships in the piece. Glyptodont was studio recorded at Full House Productions, engineered by Phil Lee. A list of the instruments might say it all: icicles (1.5 meter long glass rods laid on a styrofoam box), bass carimba (large cardboard tubes appx 10-15 cm in diameter ranging from 1.5-3 meters long), legimbass (various sized pieces of wood on styrofoam boxes), fire alarm bells, broiler pan gongs, cobas (variously sized pieces of electrical conduit pipe laid on styrofoam boxes), turtles (strips of mirror stainless steel bent into a turtle-like shape), the fojar (a collection of empty juice jars), the first flute La Plante ever made-really just some holes cut into a piece of conduit pipe sealed at the blowing end with a cork, lots of bottles, slide whistles, flutelike toys, and (is an apology necessary?) a bass drum. With unconventional work there are always questions about which aspects of the work are truly important (and which aspects are just an artists eccentricities that can be conveniently ignored). How many of these eccentricities can be removed from a piece before it ceases to be what the creator intended? The score for Glyptodont includes an entire page about the instruments and how other performers might try to approximate my instruments with whatever they have on hand. This assumes that the relationships

between the patterns the instruments play are the important part of the piece, not the timbres of MFHIs collection of objects. Concerto for Bassoon and Homemade Instruments It would seem like the way to write a concerto would be to find out what complicated sounding stuff an instrument does really easily, write a lot of that and arrange a background for a few contrasting instruments that helps to highlight the soloistic extremes. Not this time. This concerto explores the concept of a double reed instrument. The piece starts with an array of soda straw oboes playing an ostinato into an ever shifting collection of hollow objects-cans, jars, tubes, yogurt containers etc. As the bassoon eventually enters, it is just another instrument with a reed stuck into a somewhat bigger, fancier tube. The Concerto goes on to explore some really extreme concoctions such as the snake-a straw attached to a long length of garden hose, in turn connected to a sump pump hose the end of which is inside a large plastic bucket. What then happens if one begins to alter the bassoon's air space? Towards the end of the piece, the accompanying musicians carry a variety of objects to the bassoon and place them either on the instrument so that they will vibrate as the bassoon is blown, or into the bassoon so that they will alter the air flow of the instrument. Each time the bassoon is so altered, the bassoon plays what would be an identical passage except that the altered instrument is incapable of playing it as such. Theme and Variations in 13 Equal The text for the piece is by Alice Eve Cohen and Rolf Groesbeck, and it is in 13 sections. La Plante has long delighted in creating scores in which the players must make numerous choices as they go, insuring that no two performances of the score could ever be the same. To give you a sense of how this works, the following is the rules for the 11th variation-the Enigma Variations variation: players must play at least 5 notes, but not more than 27 notes each, omitting all the other notes. Each player is free to play or not play any note so long as the first condition is met. Thus any combination of players, including none, might play a given pitch. Zeuglodon Perhaps the strangest looking of all La Plantes scores, Zeuglodon is full of pictograms that the players have to interpret. It was written during a particularly chaotic period for MFHI in which it was impossible to guess who might show up at a given rehearsal, or when. Thus the score includes a few primary parts and a series of AOP parts (all other players) that the masses could deal with whenever they arrived. The most unusual instrument is either the diggerydoo-like thing made from an 8 foot plastic safety tube for florescent lights with a large paper cone taped to the end, or stonehenge, a collection of broken cinder blocks. The Bouncing Streetlights of Nome This was composed and performed by Skip La Plante, Mayumi Tsuda, and Carole Weber. Consider the rhythm of a bouncing object. What happens when you

assemble many objects that can bounce, twang or move in some similar way and produce some sound? How can you organize this flow of sounds given that it is absolutely impossible to set anything to a steady beat?

Camping in the Backyard This piece is in 17 pitch per octave equal temperament. The piece explores various scales derived as subsets of 17 pitch per octave equal temperament. All scales are derived by taking two adjacent scale degrees, skipping one or more notes, taking two more adjacent scale degrees, skipping the same number of notes, etc. over a range of about 2 octaves. The first movement skips one note between adjacent pairs, the second two, the third three, etc. The resulting scales get stranger as the skipped interval increases. The musical territory possible is both less familiar and far more restricted as the skipped interval increases. The progression from familiar to unfamiliar suggests the title, *Camping in the Backyard*. Musically, the piece proceeds from relatively familiar material (a twisted blues) to remotely familiar material (a taqsim) to completely unfamiliar stylistic material-whatever sort of normal sounding stuff could be manufactured with fairly weird pitch collections.

A possible scenario: Some kids decide to camp in the backyard. At the appointed time they excitedly go out to the tent. Not at all ready to sleep, they instead have a party (the blues). At first the conversation has little to do with being in the backyard. The conversation proceeds from everyday banter to speculation about unfamiliar places and events (taqsim). Tiring, the campers prepare to sleep, but now the familiar backyard world is quiet. The lights are out; there is nothing to be seen. But the world is not quiet. As neighbors go to sleep, the familiar soundscape is replaced by a less familiar one consisting of machine noises usually masked by other daytime noises and the sounds of nocturnal animals. The noises they make are common enough, but only if one is awake in a situation where one could hear them. The campers find the unfamiliar noises a bit scary. The scariness is contagious. The familiar has become weird. Perhaps the campers stay awake till dawn. Perhaps they fall asleep. Either way, things eventually return to normal, but the normal is now tinged with a bit of weirdness, the residue of a new experience.

Skip La Plante invents, builds, composes for, performs on and teaches with musical instruments built from trash. He co-founded MUSIC FOR HOMEMADE INSTRUMENTS in 1975. He has built over 200 instruments. Skip has composed music for over 100 modern dance and off-off Broadway theater presentations, and appears regularly with the American Festival of Microtonal Music Ensemble. Skip has been a member of the Gamelan Kusuma Laras since 1985 and spends as much of his time on long distance backpacking treks as he can eating raspberries wherever he finds them. Liner notes by Skip La

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