

Peter Adriaansz

No. 15 Battle Hymns (2002)

Commissioned by: Big Bang Festival, with financial support from the Netherlands Fund for the Creation of Music

Info/Program Note:

Written during the winter months of 2001, *Battle Hymns*, for 3 multi-functional musicians was specifically geared towards the amazingly versatile Dutch percussionist Arnold Marinissen. The piece, as such, is closely linked to several peculiarities akin to his specific skills, the main of which are not only a seemingly inexhaustible independence of each and every bodily limb, but also an ability to use his voice in a controlled way at the same time. This idea of 'multi-functionality' soon became one of the backbones of this piece and eventually found itself transported to each of the three musicians involved: besides asking the percussionist to sing, the singer also becomes a percussionist and the pianist, eventually, a singer.

Battle Hymns consists of three movements, each exploring different ensemble-settings, metric relationships and sound worlds. The first of the three movements is split into two parts ('ensemble 1', for all three musicians, and 'piano, snares and super-ball', for piano and percussion). The second movement consists of two 'solo pieces', one for the percussionist ('drums & snare') and the other for the singer, singing over and into a large temple-bowl and accompanied by piano pizzicatos ('singer, temple-bowls and piano-strings'). The final of the three movements ('ensemble 2 - revolutionary song') stars all three players again, each one now fully occupied.

Besides dealing with the afore-mentioned topics, *Battle Hymns* somehow developed a secondary - imaginary - topic as I was working on it. Unlike any of my other works, which really lack any affinity to narrative or theatrical matters, an imaginary storyline arose of three deserters from the French Legion, lost in the deep African jungle, chopping their way through a dense overgrowth while dreaming of the French revolution... and loosing their memory and any ability to verbalize in the process.

In its generally low scoring, the piece has an added characteristic in that it's the only one of my pieces which can definitely only be performed by males.

instrumentation:

Male voice
Percussion
Piano

duration:

27'

first performance:

Romain Bisschof
Arnold Marinissen
Peter Adriaansz
2002
Theater Lantaren/Venster, Rotterdam

special features:

the voice must also play percussion; the percussionist and pianist must also sing.