

ONE MINUTE MORE

Münchener Merkur

A microcosm of the very newest music ...Modern music is rarely so multi-dimensional, rich in changes and exciting.

Abendzeitung

Here one finds only winning minutes. Livingston jumped from one musical idiom to the next with fantastic skill.

Sports Illustrated

After striking the piano's soundboard with a ball to create the final note, he tossed it high into the air and caught it. "It's a piece about risk," said Livingston. "You can't drop the ball."

Le Monde

"Don't Panic" applies above all to the pianist himself, required to display—notably during the interpretation of this collection in concert—an incredible versatility. ...superbly shows off Guy Livingston's vocal and finger-work virtuosity.

Süddeutsche Zeitung

It is hard to decide whether to marvel more over Livingston's breathtaking ability, his high musical intelligence, or his theatrical humor.

American Record Guide

Livingston's playing is assured and expert...

Piano Magazine

The variety of languages is astonishing: Within the imposed temporal economy, the composers create radical and independent worlds, full of charm or anguish. In sync with the acceleration of humanity's daily life, this disc is a fertile and thought-provoking experience. Coup de Coeur Award.

Netherlands Financial Daily: Sixty Elastic Seconds

Musical graffiti is the best way to describe the one minute compositions of pianist Guy Livingston. His latest series of theatrical shorts is illustrated with mini films.

It all began with a friend who wrote a thirty-second opera, including costume change. A revelation for pianist Guy Livingston, who was studying at the Conservatory in The Hague at the time, and fully occupied with the Concord Sonata of Charles Ives, a mighty work lasting nearly an hour. And so he decided to invite all the composers he knew to write a sixty-second piece. Pierre Boulez had no interest in the exercise, but other celebrities such as Louis Andriessen and William Bolcom, set to work. Livingston, who originally hails from Tennessee, offered a bottle of Jack Daniels as incentive.

The idea of ultra short pieces is not new. Anton Webern had a tendency towards aphoristic shorts. Jazz avant-gardist John Zorn let his Naked City Ensemble loose with fifty pieces in under an hour. And Chopin wrote the Minute Waltz, which actually isn't 60 seconds at all but lasts between one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half minutes. But no one has taken the concept further than Guy Livingston. And the constraint apparently suited composers: within a year, Livingston already had more than 200 compositions sitting on his desk.

The best of them are punchy and have a clear identity. They are musical graffiti—like tags, the quickly scribbled signatures on walls and trains—often they have a parody impact, working one idea out in a very concentrated manner. As with Dan Warburton's Speed Study, which covers all 88 keys of

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the grand piano, and which sounds like a runaway etude of Nancarrow. William Bolcom takes the mickey out of Swan Lake with his 60 Second Ballet for Chickens . And Ketty Nez' Moondrunk is a variation on Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata .

That was ten years ago. Livingston traveled around with his 60 second program and proved himself as a flexible pianist and a theatrical talent. We saw that talent again at the Holland Festival in Dada at the Movies , in which he played not only the piano, but also high-hat, cap pistol and tambourine.

So on the 10th anniversary of Sixty Seconds, the American found it was time for a second series of one minute works. The Premiere is this coming Sunday during November Music Festival, which is always open for craziness and experiment. Under the motto, "the notes are used up" the Den Bosch festival this year gives special attention to ever increasing use of non-musical means within today's music. Livingston fits in well, given that his One Minute More , 60 works of 60 seconds by the same number of composers, is illustrated by short films by 5 Dutch filmmakers. They are on a very entertaining DVD, but on the stage, the live pianist goes into dialogue with the movies. In the case of filmmaker Thijs Schreuder, the image is impressionistic: metallic black-and-white images, of beaten lead. Or a deserted city, streaking by during the stamping rhythms of Tina Davidson's Bar None . Libby Larsen's Ricochet , as jittery as the title implies, is illustrated by a minimalistic game of vibrating lines. And in Frank J. Oteri's Last Minute Tango, a dozen cranes dance endless rounds.

Newt Hinton veers towards the surrealistic. Menno Otten put together ten films whose documentary images —like those of Schreuder— rely on reiteration such as the ebb and flow of tides or train-tracks gliding by. And animator Juan de Graaf leans to a slapstick style with magical overtones, and a bizarre little man with huge nose who suggests La Linea or inspector Clusoe from the Pink Panther films.

But the most wonderful are the films directed by Nelleke Koop, in which Guy Livingston himself performs. These are also the compositions with the most theatrical potential, such as Cleaning Instructions by Mayke Nas in which the pianist polishes the piano with panache, his head held high while he plays the keys in clusters. In No Entry from Andrea Nicoli, his fingers attack the wooden fallboard of the piano, with a flamenco effect, shattered at the end when he drops the fallboard as a final chord. In Werner Heider's For Fred Astaire he performs in top hat and tails, does a few elegant dance steps, and sings "doodah doodah."

The composers also borrowed richly from history, sometimes in a progressing sequence, such as Eric de Clercq's 24 Means to an End, which unites the last bar from each Chopin prelude, and other times thumbing their nose at the classics, the most of extreme of which is Anders Jallén's The Piece that Anton Webern Wrote . In this, Livingston begins by reading a set of instructions at high-speed, which sound improbably complex, but then at the piano resolve into a crawling version of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.

Not all the pieces in One Minute More are precisely a minute long: composition is not something you do with a stopwatch in hand. And there are some standouts such as For Merle by George Antheil, that doesn't even come to half a minute. But one thing is clear after listening to these compositions: within music time is a relative concept. One minute is not another. Notes can lengthen time, almost stopping it, or whip them up to lightning speed. The sixty seconds are elastic.

— Edo Dijksterhuis, November 15, 2008

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