



The Walcott Sextet presents
Georges Aperghis'
Sextuor: L'origine des espèces (1992)

The Walcott Sextet, with director Lenka Udovicki and costume designer Martina Franic, presents Georges Aperghis' *Sextuor: L'origine des espèces* (1992) in celebration of Charles Darwin's 200th birthday and the 150th anniversary of Darwin's seminal writing *On the Origin of Species*. The Walcott Sextet's 2010 presentation of Aperghis' *Sextuor: L'origine des espèces* as an ideal representation of a stunning modern amalgamation of music and science.

Georges Aperghis wrote of The Walcott Sextet:

I have met them in Darmstadt [Germany] and I have truly appreciated the quality of their work. I believe that this is a nice project and I would like to let you know that I would be in total agreement should you wish to invite them to perform the piece.

The Opera

The opera, for 5 singers and a speaking cellist, utilizes Charles Darwin (from *On the Origin of Species*) and Stephen Jay Gould's (from *Wonderful Life*) texts on evolution. The remaining texts are the sounds of the evolving organisms (protean nonsense syllables) and the flowing libretto of Aperghis and François Regnaud—making *L'origine des espèces* one of the thorniest pieces around. But the rhythmic complexity, extensive use of quartertones, and idiosyncratic use of language all work to create a world that is aesthetically whole and uniquely expressive. These aspects also create a piece that is extremely important in the spectrum of contemporary music and political expression.

About the structure and creation of the opera:

"The score gives a sequence of ensembles [70 in all] (from duo to tutti) and solos, organized into a narrative system comparable to that of an oratorio—the subject of which is the evolution of species with recitations and arias – from which the singers step aside one by one to give a recitative that is at one "outside" and obviously linked symbolically to the whole ("Death" by the contralto, "Birth" by the first soprano, "Cinderella" by the mezzo-soprano, "Delivery" by the second soprano, and "The Love Experience" by the third soprano, "The Theorist" by the 'cellist.)

From MFA Radio France album notes by Antoine Gindt

The music itself, arresting and wildly virtuosic, assembles a broad palette of colors and genres by using changing combinations of extended vocal and string techniques. The words mirror the zoological variety of the music, giving a sense of swirling consistency to the work through libretto and music. The opera is immediate in its meditations on the surging proliferation of life forms and the necessity that death plays in the development of variation and complex, even self-reflective life. This self-reflection is exhibited in the cellist's final soliloquy,

"Où allons-nous, nous qui disons que la vie était belle, nous qui disons que la vie est belle?" ("Where are we going, we who say life was wonderful, we who say life is wonderful?")

From final cello solo of Aperghis' Sextuor

Group Biography

The Walcott Sextet: Kris Wildman-Soprano; Marja Liisa Kay-Soprano; Mayra Leticia Gallo-Soprano; Stephanie Aston-Mezzo-Soprano; Leslie Ann Leytham-Contralto; April Guthrie-Violoncello; Lenka Udovicki-Director; Martina Franic-Costume Designer

The Walcott Sextet is a group of 6 musicians based in the Los Angeles area who initiated the North American premiere of *Sextuor*, a chamber opera by Georges Aperghis. Separately, the sextet members have worked with Louis Andriessen, Muhal Richard Abrams, Antoine Bonnet, Jürg Frey, Richard Foreman, Vinny Golia, Michael Gordon, James Horner, Eva-Maria Houben, Joan LaBarbara, Libby Larsen, Mario Lavista, Nicola LeFanu, Radu Malfatti, Stephen L. Mosko, David Rosenboom, James Tenney, Wadada Leo Smith, Christian Wolff, and John Zorn.

Aston, a member of the sextet, is a recent recipient of a recording graduate student award from the Warren Music Center Studios at UCSD. With this award the sextet will be recording Sextuor in June 2010.

Musical Examples – mp3

First Half of Opera – please allow file to load before listening

<http://www.guthrieandstreb.com/aprilguthrie/mp3/FirstHalf.mp3>

Opening Sequence - Quintet

<http://www.guthrieandstreb.com/aprilguthrie/mp3/01Opening.mp3>

Gibberish Duet

<http://www.guthrieandstreb.com/aprilguthrie/mp3/02aiesyswav.mp3>

Gibberish Conversation

<http://www.guthrieandstreb.com/aprilguthrie/mp3/03ichfa.mp3>

Cello – The Theorist

<http://www.guthrieandstreb.com/aprilguthrie/mp3/04touscesfaits.mp3>

Contact Details and Website

April Guthrie aprildawnguthrie@yahoo.com

US phone 001.913.424.2311

<http://aprilguthrie.com/>

Marja Liisa Kay missmarja@gmail.com

UK phone 011.44.7971.080288

Sextuor Online

<http://aprilguthrie.com>

- Click on 'sextuor' link

<http://www.guthrieandstreb.com/aprilguthrie/sextuor.html>

At this website you will find:

- Individual Bios for each Artist - pdf
- Full Translation of the Libretto - pdf
- Photo documentation of the North American Premiere

Proof of Non-Profit Status

The Walcott Sextet is a sponsored project of Fractured Atlas, a non-profit arts service organization. Fractured Atlas will receive grants in behalf of The Walcott Sextet, provide oversight to ensure that grant funds are used in accordance with grant agreements, and provide reports as required by the grantor.