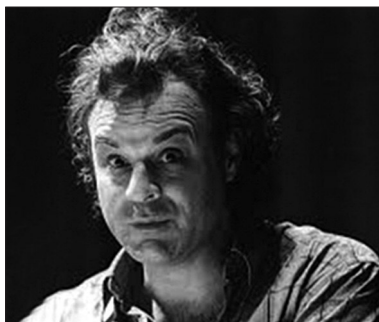


Interview

COMPOSER TOBY TWINING TALKS ABOUT HIS MICROTONAL MUSIC

Современная музыка США предельно разнообразна и включает в себя много контрастирующих друг с другом направлений. Среди американских композиторов можно обнаружить традиционалистов, авангардистов, сериалистов «Школы аптаун» (Uptown School), эксперименталистов «Школы даунтаун» (Downtown Music), минималистов и др. Внутри этой многокрасочной палитры встречаем одно весьма необычное направление – микротоновую музыку. Целый ряд композиторов, начиная с первой половины XX века и до наших дней, посвятили музыкальное творчество нестандартным строям и темперациям. Последние включают в себя как равноступенные темперации (четвертитоновую, одну шестую тона, одну восьмую тона, 31 тон в октаве, 43 тона в октаве и т. п.), так и нестандартные строи, включая пифагорейский, чистый и среднетоновый, а также многие искусственно сформированные строи. Такие композиторы, как Чарлз Айвз, Харри Парч, Мордекай Сандберг, Бен Джонстон, Джонни Райнхард, Слип ла Плант и Джозеф Персон являются авторами оригинальной изобретательной музыки, написанной в нестандартных строях и темперациях.

Среди американских микротоновых композиторов можно обнаружить самобытную фигуру Тоби Твайнинга, автора интересной микротоновой музыки для хора. Твайнинг обучался в Хьюстонском университете в Техасе и в Университете штата Иллинойс. Его учителем был



Бен Джонстон, видный американский микротоновый композитор, чья музыка оказала значительное влияние на Твайнинга и его музыкальное творчество. В течение многих лет Твайнинг сам собирал коллективы певцов и обучал их петь музыку в чистом строе. Этот строй, который в XVI веке продвигал знаменитый итальянский композитор и музыкальный теоретик Джузеппе Царлино, основан на интервалах натурального звукоряда. Пение хора в нестандартной темперации само по себе производит неповторимое впечатление. Музыкальные произведения Твайнинга, плюс к тому, содержат богатство изобретательных идей, сопряжённых с тонким чувством вокальной фактуры, дополнительно оживлённой авангардными эффектами, которые композитор умело внедряет в звуковую ткань. Среди сочинений Твайнинга выделяются его хоровое произведение «Chrysalid Requiem» и музыка для хора и инструментов к спектаклю «Eurydice» («Эвридика»). Твайнинг является также автором интересной инструментальной музыки, исполняемой ведущими музыкантами США и такими значительными объединениями, как Американский фестиваль микротоновой музыки.

Мы предлагаем интервью с Тоби Твайнингом, представляющее российскому читателю эту экстраординарную фигуру американской музыки.

Д-р Антон Ровнер

The contemporary music scene in the USA is extremely diverse and includes many contrasting trends. Among American composers one can run across traditionalists, avant-gardists, serial composers of the “Uptown School,” experimentalists of the “Downtown Music,” minimalists, etc. Among this motley assembly of styles there is one trend which stands out in its

uniqueness, and that is microtonal music. A certain number of composers, starting from the early 20th century and up to our days, have dedicated themselves to composing music in non-standard tunes and temperaments. The latter include both equal-tempered scales, such as quarter-tone, sixth-tone, eighth-tone, 31-note per octave and 43-note per octave scales, as well as unequal-

scaled tunings, such as Pythagorean tuning, just intonation, mean-tone scales, as well as all sorts of artificial tunings. Various composers, among them Charles Ives, Harry Partch, Mordecai Sandberg, Ben Johnston, Johnny Reinhard, Skip La Plante and Joseph Pehrson, have composed original, innovative music in different non-standard tunings and temperaments.

Among the American microtonal composers we can discern the original voice of Toby Twining, a composer of intriguing music for microtonal chorus. Twining studied at the Houston University in Texas and the University of Illinois. Among his teachers was Ben Johnston, a significant American microtonal composer, whose music exerted a considerable amount of influence on him. During the course of many years Twining assembled together ensembles of singers and taught them to sing music in just intonation. This tuning, which had been popularized by the famous 16th century Italian composer and music theorist, Giusepe

Zarlino, is based on the intervals of the overtone series. Choral singing in non-standard tunings by itself produces an extraordinary impression, and Toby Twining's musical compositions, on top of that, contain a wealth of imaginative ideas, intertwined with a refined sense of vocal texture, moreover, enlivened by extended vocal techniques, which the composer skillfully introduces into his music. Most prominent among Toby Twining's compositions is his microtonal choral work, the "Chrysalid Requiem," and his incidental music for chorus and instruments for a theatrical play, "Eurydice." Twining has also written impressive instrumental pieces, which is performed by some of the most prominent performers in the USA at such significant events as the American Festival of Microtonal Music.

We are offering this interview with Toby Twining, in order to introduce to Russian readers this extraordinary figure in American music.

Dr. Anton Rovner

Could you tell us about your musical background, where you studied as a composer, and how you entered the field of microtonal music?

I come from a musical family, so I grew up making music. I wanted to be a musician from the time I was thirteen years old. I began formal musical studies at the University of Houston, where I grew up. Then I travelled throughout the United States with a Jewish folk band for two years. After that I finished my undergraduate degree at the University of Illinois, where I studied composition primarily with Ben Johnston and also with Salvatore Martirano. Through hearing Ben Johnston's music I became interested in alternate tunings and temperaments, just intonation in particular. I was especially intrigued by Ben Johnston's practice of this tuning, which he calls extended just intonation, which is something more than merely using a diatonic or a chromatic scale in just intonation. Through hearing Johnston's music, in the experimental vocal works which I was composing myself I started practicing using just intervals. After releasing my first CD "Shaman" with my vocal ensemble, which was a quartet at the time, I realized that I really had to take the plunge into just intonation. I spent about five years working on my "Chrysalid Requiem," from 1995 to 2000,

thereby developing my musical vocabulary, and that composition set the tone for my writing ever since. It was premiered in 2000 at the Kleiner Zaal Koncertgebouw in Amsterdam, Holland, performed by my ensemble, which at that time consisted of twelve singers. I am now working on instrumental music and continuing to write experimental vocal music.

Who were the microtonal composers who inspired you the most, and how do you approach microtonality in your music? What kind of scales, tunings or temperaments do you use in your musical compositions?

The first microtonal composer who inspired me was Krzysztof Penderecki, especially in his early works, such as the well-known "Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima." When I was fourteen years old my mother introduced this work to me on an LP record. I was fascinated with the idea of what at that time was called sound sculpture or sound mass in music. I loved the idea of swathes of sound spectra being shaped, narrowed, expanded and built upon. Later, when I was studying at the University of Illinois, I was very taken with Ben Johnston's music. I knew that rather than going into various types of microtonal temperaments I wanted to study

one that uses pure or natural intervals which you would find in the harmonic series. My approach has been the development of musical compositions with the use of pure intervals. I am finding that because of my love of Schoenberg's music I am using something that is very close to set theory. Rather than these intervals being used serially, I am approaching them as groups of sets. I love the music of the Second Viennese School, especially what was written just prior to World War I. Perhaps this is why I have developed my compositional technique with intervallic cells and ways to build musical material out of a cell. Sometimes my cells are much longer, they are not that compact, and it approaches something like serial music.

What other musical compositions using alternate tunings, such as just intonation, did you write before or after you wrote "Chrysalid Requiem"? I am acquainted mostly with your choral music. Do you write instrumental music as well?

I have written both choral and instrumental compositions. In 2001-2002 I wrote a cello piece called "9:11 Blues," which has been recorded by Matt Haimovitz on Oxingale Records. This piece was composed following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. This was followed by another piece for cello called "Schoenberg Dreaming," which has just been recorded by Malina Rauschenfels in Cleveland, Ohio, but has not yet been released on a CD yet. It presents music which Schoenberg might have been hearing in his dreams, while he was theorizing about pantonality. I also wrote music for a theatrical production of a play, called "Eurydice," which is for vocal quartet and cello, which includes several movements for live performance accompanied by prerecorded multi-tracks, one of which, in particular, involves eight quintets. This work was released on a CD of the Cantaloupe label. I wrote a composition for chamber ensemble called "A Pitch is a Groove," which has been performed at the American Festival of Microtonal Music by an ensemble assembled by the festival's director, Johnny Reinhard. I am presently composing a string quartet for the Jack Quartet, as well as a piece for solo bassoon for Johnny Reinhard to perform on the bassoon.

What kind of music did you write prior to your first major work in just intonation, "Chrysalid Requiem"?

Prior to writing music for pure intervals systematically, I had a vocal quartet called "Toby

Twining Music," and we were singing in a non-systematic type of just intonation, and sometimes consciously making septimal intervals. But the emphasis at that time was on arrangements with extended vocal techniques, rather than tuning issues. I have composed some settings of Psalms in Hebrew, which have not been premiered yet. I wrote various solo pieces, works for prepared piano, in some of which the pianist played inside the instrument as well.

How could you describe your music to someone who has never heard it? Does your music have diatonic centrality, or is it all atonal? Do you have any special textural elements which you incorporate in your music on a conscious level?

My music ranges from music that is very simple and tonal to music that is highly micro-chromatic. I am trying to work with intervals that will fuse, that will have a certain type of cohesion. I am very interested in the types of clusters these intervals can create – very often symmetrical clusters are formed – and how they cohere with each other. In my latest compositions I am thinking in terms of melody and motivic development as such, but I am also thinking of recovering some of the ideas that fascinated Penderecki early on. I am interested in making sound masses with microtonal clusters that I am working with. It is not dissonance as such that fascinates me, but more specific types of harmonicity. For these reasons, my work has certain affinity with the Spectral composers. I am fascinated with having very specific harmonic nuances. Since I am interested in developing certain particular vocal and instrumental textures, I enhance them by incorporating frequent repetition of certain musical phrases, either sequentially, or sometimes even in a quasi-minimalist fashion.

What kind of musical activities are you engaged in? Does your music get performed much in New York?

Right now I am not performing as much with my vocal ensemble, as I used to before. However, I have a new music publisher, and we are working with him on reviving my ensemble. It will be a matter of months before we are ready to resume our performing activities – we are especially interested in performances that include workshops with young singers and composers. Now I am mostly focused on composing, adding to my income as a dance accompanist and a church musician, and having fun with raising my kids!

Musical Examples

From Selected Compositions by Toby Twining

Example from Score of Toby Twining's Composition for Mixed Chorus and Cello "The Sitting Room"

♩ = 40

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Violoncello

8 10

mp

sempre

poco più f

poco più f

poco più f

poco più f

più f

81115

* pop open vowel with harmonics 4, or 3.
† morph vowel to produce written harmonics

Explanation of the microtonal tuning in Toby Twining's composition for solo cello "Schoenberg Dreaming" and performance instructions to the music

Schoenberg Dreaming modulates microtonally through sequences of just intervals, resulting in multiple accidentals that pitches to sound far from their written location on the staff. The extra staff helps to track "pitch drift" in these passages.

Further, multiple L's and 7's from three to ten follow a scheme of shape and color:

three	four	five	six	seven	eight	nine	ten

Sharps and flats nestle within these configurations with the last symbol highlighted by color, when there are three or more.

four b's and six 7's.	seven #s and ten L's.

When the music gives rise to pitches that take eleven through twenty L's or 7's, a new configuration begins inverted and above the first triangle of ten.

eleven	twelve	thirteen	fourteen	fifteen	sixteen	seventeen	eighteen

nineteen	twenty

4
444
4

bbb

three 6's, two 7's.

IV

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Schoenberg Dreaming

for John Carper

Toby Twining

With much ebb and flow throughout $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 49$

legato, bold

Violoncello

Nearest Equal Tempered Pitches in Cents

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 63$

accel. $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 63$

rit.

Toby Twining

for John Carper

Vc.

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 49$

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 63$

slightly faster

rit. $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 63$

a tempo

with intensity

sul pont.

suddenly faster

rit. $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 63$

a tempo

suddenly faster

Vc.

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