

Elizabeth Hoffman
twelve to seven
Andrew Zhou, piano

...*twelve to seven*, written for Ben in 2015, takes its title from a 1947 novel by Malcolm Lowry called *Under the Volcano* referenced by Ben's piano work "...the sun poured molten glass on the fields..." At the end of the *PNM Festschrift* for Robert Morris in which Ben's piece appears, Morris (the dedicatee) mentions delight in "finding new resonance in another's voice." Through my many conversations with Ben over the years I have felt a flurry of this exact sort of resonance effect—usually an indirect, oblique feeling since I rarely grasp the full import of Ben's ideas until years later maybe. But, in this piece of music, there is direct resonance. My approach in...*twelve to seven* (a miniature) was to let my own responses to Ben's substantive piano work emerge subliminally. This creative experiment and poetic intent involved my listening continually to Ben's composition as I wrote a new work for him. Like most composers I know, I find listening to music while writing music completely antithetical to the project at hand. But, in this case, the process was embracing. Perhaps the process here was not entirely unlike Pauline Oliveros' and Stuart Dempster's sonic meditation techniques of imagining performing to a favorite person even if the person is not there. The striking "molten glass" passage is situated in a paragraph about a walk. It was that image, too, that led me to think about metaphors in sound.

-eh 2023

Benjamin Boretz

Poem for Sixtext

Benjamin Boretz, piano (8/06/88)

Uncannily, Elizabeth in her beautiful text for this album, invokes the Sonic Meditations of Stuart Dempster and Pauline Oliveros in which they “imagine performing to a favorite person (even if the person is not there)”. Uncanny because my *Poem for Sixtext* is the last “sonic meditation” of a series of pairs of piano contemplations which I began in 1985 in the innermost studio of the inner studio – the lowest ground floor of my house, each consisting of a “text” (last thing at night) and a “commentary” (first thing the next morning after listening to the previous night’s “text”). And each “text” centered a mental image of a cherished person as a score, whose output I played literally, completely, and exclusively, discovering in each one a time-sound being completely so-determined. Elaine Barkin, to whose loving memory this Open Space release is consecrated, was inevitably conspicuous among these images. The score for *Poem* was the image of *Sixtext*.

FROM THE INNER STUDIO: ERB/BAB session 2: 12/17/80

The idea of one-on-one “sessions” – listening/soundmaking episodes in our home precincts (a practice earnestly pursued for over a decade by Jim Randall, Elaine Barkin, and me) – had just begun to formulate itself by 1980, so Elaine and I spent several days in my Barrytown “inner studio” initiating our mutual exploration of the possibilities of spontaneous experiential discovery. It was perhaps playing it safe that we waded into this as yet uncognized territory wielding a published poem (“Strawberries Mit Cream” by Rochelle Owens) and my home piano, in straight-up keyboard mode. It belongs on this album because it reveals aspects and qualities of Elaine’s expressive personality not often made accessible outside the “family”.

-Ben Boretz

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