

# A New Name Hits the New-Music Scene

By ALLAN KOZINN DEC. 6, 2011

New York City's new-music world is densely populated, with groups of just about every size, instrumentation and stylistic persuasion jostling for the spotlight. But there seems always to be room for more, and on Sunday evening the Ensemble Moto Perpetuo introduced itself with a short but alluring program at the DiMenna Center for Classical Music in Manhattan.

The ensemble's artistic director is Amir Shpilman, who is also president of the Brooklyn Composers Collective. The group's players are young enough that their names are not familiar from the rosters of other ensembles, but the performance was at a standard that suggested that some of them will become new-music regulars.

The program included three works composed in the last five years, each conceived around a particular approach to the migration of musical themes through either time or space (or both). In Jason Eckardt's bracingly angular "Trespass" (2005), divided into 13 sections of decreasing lengths, material crowded out of one movement piles into the next until the short closing movements are so freighted with displaced fragments that they seem to collapse into a smoothly blended finale.

Anna Thorvaldsdottir's "Hrim" (2011) was about dispersion — the idea of fragments and motifs traveling through the ensemble, transforming a static harmony into a shimmering, harmonically ambiguous, thoroughly enveloping texture. And Philippe Manoury's "Instants Pluriels" (2008) splits the ensemble into two chamber groups that move at different speeds, but play complementary material that seems (though the effect may have been illusory) to move back and forth between them.

The performances were consistently invigorating. In Mr. Eckardt's score, Natalie Tenenbaum gave a sparkling, sharply accented account of the prominent solo piano line, and the ensemble's woodwinds, brasses and percussionists made important contributions to the work's tactile, constantly changing surface. In Ms. Thorvaldsdottir's piece, the strings and woodwinds effectively created a dark atmosphere and the impression of a distant, howling wind early on, before melting into the work's morphing harmonic fabric.

Both were conducted ably by Nicholas DeMaison. He and Mahir Cetiz led the separate ensembles in the Manoury, and kept the rhythmically complex score properly synchronized.

As a prelude to the concert, the ensemble was split into four groups, one in each corner of the hall, to perform "Collective Improvisation 1 for Chamber Orchestra and Four Laptops," by Mr. Shpilman and Nicholas Nelson, based on themes from the program's three works. It was an interesting idea to have the musicians performing as the audience filed in: for anyone listening closely, it was a foreshadowing of sorts and it let the musicians warm up. But would it not have made better sense, from the listeners' point of view, to hear this semi-improvisatory tribute to the formal works after they were heard intact, rather than before?

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