

MARY JANE LEACH

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MARY JANE LEACH is a composer/performer whose work reveals a fascination with the physicality of sound, its acoustic properties and how they interact with space. In many of her works Leach creates an other-worldly sound environment using difference, combination, and interference tones; these are tones not actually sounded by the performers, but acoustic phenomena arising from Leach's deft manipulation of intonation and timbral qualities. The result is striking music which has a powerful effect on listeners. Critics have commented on her ability to "offer a spiritual recharge without the banalities of the new mysticism" (*Detroit Free Press*), evoking "a visionary quest for inner peace" (*Vice Versa Magazine*), and "an iridescent lingering sense of suspended time." (*Musicworks Magazine*)

For many years, Leach has also created visuals to go with her music. Initially this was done by creating hand-painted slides that were used in pairs that were projected by overlapping them, using long dissolves that created a kind of animation. Most recently she has been able to create the visuals using computer-generated imaging.

Leach's music has been performed throughout the world in a variety of settings, from the concert stage to experimental music forums, and in collaboration with dance and theatre artists. She is an accomplished performer in her own right who has been presented across the United States and Europe, and her works have been performed by many eminent soloists and chamber ensembles, most recently in Europe by Manuel Zurria, Emanuele Arciulli and the Orchestra Sinfonica di Lecce, György Lakatos and Trio Lignum in Hungary, the Flemish Radio Choir, La Gioia, the London Concord Singers, and Vox Feminae (Switzerland). In recent years Leach has received considerable acclaim for her choral music, which is featured on two CD releases on the XI and New World labels. Drawing on inspirations as diverse as Monteverdi, Bruckner, and 14th century Ars Nova, these pieces "enliven a choral repertoire starved for good contemporary work." (*Village Voice*). Several are published by C.F. Peters.

Leach has been commissioned by many notable ensembles, including Fondazione ICO Tito Schipa, Relâche, The Downtown Ensemble, Newband, and the New York Treble Singers, and by soloists such as Manuel Zurria, Emanuele Arciulli, Sarah Cahill, Guy Klucevsek, Shannon Peet, and Libby Van Cleve. She has received commissions/awards from the New York State Council on the Arts (2007, 1992), Danish Arts Council (2006), National Endowment for the Arts (2005, 1995), New York Foundation for the Arts (2002), International Alliance of Women in Music (2002), American Composers Forum (1995), the NEA (1995), Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust (1993, 1995, 1996), Westdeutscher Rundfunk (1992), and many other funders.

Recordings of her work are on the New World, XI, Wave/Eva, Lovely Music, Capstone, and Aerial compact disc labels. On the radio, her music has been featured by *First Art*, John Schaeffer's *New Sounds*, CBC (Canada), Radio Cultura in Sao Paulo, and by stations in Europe. Writing about her work has appeared in several books: *American Music in the Twentieth Century* by Kyle Gann/Schirmer (1997), *La musica minimalista* by Paolo Coteni and Giovanni Antognozzi/Edizione Textus (2000), *The New Generation of Mystery/Kunstler des XXI. Jahrhunderts* by Maria De Alvear/World Edition (2000), and *Het Tweede Thema of de Verwaarloosde Geschiedenis van de Componerende Vrouw* by Simonne Claeys/Alamire Pere (Belgium, 2002). Her scores have been published in *Soundings*, *Ear Magazine*, and *logosblad*, and she has been featured in articles in *Chamber Music*, *Vermont Quarterly*, *Pulse!*, *Option Magazine*, *Kölnische Rundschau*, *Albany Times Union*, *logosblad*, and on German television.

In 1995 Leach was selected for a prestigious grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, which was established by Jasper Johns and John Cage to support innovative artists in the performing arts.

"People say that Leach's music is hard to listen to. Well, Beethoven's music is hard to listen to - at first." —Otto Luening