

COMFORT BLINDNESS

MARCH 13, 2018 8pm

comfort blindness (15:00)

Kathryn Shuman

- i. raw sing
synth interlude
- ii. learned (audience participation encouraged—read the bottom of the page)**
- iii. to forget - water
- iv. to remember (do you know that place?)
- v. forward
viola interlude
- iv. raw seeing interlude

Movement: Erika Bell

Vocals: Alina Roitstein, Lauren Davis, Cari Stevens, Kathryn Shuman

Bass: Ben Finley

Viola: Patrick Behnke

Visuals: Geir Foshaug

Synthesizer and Live electronic vocal processing: Kathryn Shuman

Recitation 9 (5:30)

Georges Aperghis

Recitation 10 (5:00)

Where Grief Slumbers (19:00)

Earl Kim

1. Listen to it rain
2. from Drunken Boat
3. It's Raining
4. Ophelia
5. The Farewell
6. The Departure
7. The girl with orange lips

Conductor: Luc Kleiner

Violins: Rachel Iba, Henry Webster, Sara Cubarsi, Sophia Schuldt

Violas: Jordan Dykstra, Patrick Behnke

Cellos: David Mason, Luigi Anthoni Polcari

Harp: Sarah Rice

poem by Anthony McCann, adapted by K. Shuman

At some point during this piece, gently gargle and swallow water while we perform with the bottle below your seat, if you'd like.

How does this alter your listening experience? Does this feel like it shifts your role as observer?

PROGRAM NOTES

COMFORT BLINDNESS by KATHRYN SHUMAN

is an abstraction about human sex trafficking and forced labor— one of the largest growing criminal industries in the US, and worldwide. ⁱ

Water is the central point of communicating the message of this work, too.

There is life on Earth because of water. The average human adult is made up of about 60% water. Water is life. We are water.

There are many parallels and correlations I notice between women and water, in particular.

Water and women give life.

There are growing concerns about ownership and distribution of water, as well as entitlement to control this essential element.

This brings me to the issue of ownership of humans— forced labor, sex trafficking and other forms of modern slavery.

Today, the majority of victims are women and girls.

“According to the U.S. State Department, 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders every year, of which 80% are female and half are children.”ⁱⁱ

Women deserve rights. I believe water deserves rights. Both are often neglected.

These are some of my perceptions, and just like water’s fluidity allows it to take many forms, I hope you, too, create your own opinions based on your observations of the piece.

It is very easy to turn away—to seek comfort in blindness— from the hard truth that modern slavery is growing at a rapid rate.

How do we help? We have to talk about it, since often victims in these situations can’t speak for themselves. Also, we can get more involved by donating to reputable organizations working to end this (like the A21 Campaign, ATLAS, Gender Perspectives, etc).

In fact, there will be a donation jar at the reception following the recital. 100% of the profits will go to the **A21 Campaign**—a non-profit, non-governmental organization that works to fight human trafficking.

Find more info, and or donate online at any of the following reputable organizations:

-A21 Campaign

<http://www.a21.org/index.php>

-Gender Perspectives, is a La Strada International member in Belarus that advocates for gender equality between women and men and stronger anti-trafficking laws.

<http://lastradainternational.org/ls-offices/belarus>

- **Anti-Trafficking League Against Slavery, (ATLAS)** is another non-profit, non-governmental organization based in LV, Nevada, which works to identify, rescue and restore victims of human trafficking and to prosecute traffickers in the State of Nevada. <http://www.humantrafficking.org/organizations/448>

14 RÉCITATIONS (1978) by GEORGES APERGHIS

are an interesting combination of pieces that feature a mixture of French words, phonemes, and non-verbal vocalizations cleverly designed in a way to encourage the singer to produce a unique performance each time. The Greek composer, Aperghis, uses atypical and attention-grabbing notation for these scores as well. While the scores request single choices to be made for each suggestion written, it also creates complications for the performer that require spontaneous and improvisatory solutions.

I have chosen to perform recitations 9 & 10 to act as a prelude to *Where Grief Slumbers*, which is about, the fictional character, Ophelia from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In these recitations I am representing the grief-stricken, young noblewoman, Ophelia. I see Recitation 9 as her attempt to win Hamlet's love, and Recitation 10 as her slipping into madness.

WHERE GRIEF SLUMBERS by EARL KIM

is a work about the beloved and infamous Ophelia.

The work features seven French poems by Apollinaire and Rimbaud translated to English. Ophelia's growing madness and disillusion is portrayed by Kim's choice to omit double basses from the orchestration. It creates a lighter texture without a strong foundation that seems to complement Ophelia's teetering mental state.

After Ophelia loses her father, and believes Hamlet has rejected her, she no longer sees a reason to continue living.

Apollinaire and Rimbaud's poems richly illustrate Ophelia's grief, madness, and her questionable suicidal drowning with images of rain, and the sea. Water's powerful connection to past, present, and future life is represented throughout this work.

OPHELIA POEMS

1.Listen to it rain

Listen to it raining listen to it rain

then	bl	of	min	the
lis	ind	Flan	gle	rain
ten	sol	ders	with	so
to	diers	in	the	ten
the	lo	a	ho	der
rain	st	go	ri	the
fall	a	ny	zon	rain
ing	mong	un	beau	so
so	the	der	ti	gent
ten	che	the	ful	le
der	vaux	thi	in	
ly	de	n	vi	
and	fri	rain	si	
gent	se	the	ble	
ly	un	rain	be	
	der	so	ings	
	the	ten	un	
	li	der	der	
	qui	and	the	
	d	so	thi	
	mo	gent	n	
	on	le	rain	

(Apollinaire)

1. Écoute s'il pleut écoute s'il pleut (original poem and notation)

puis	sol	des	con	la
é	dat	Flan	fon	pluie
cou	a	dres	dez-	si
tez	veu	à	vous	ten
tom	gles	l'	a	dre
ber	per	a	vec	la
la	du	go	l'	pluie
pluie	par	nie	ho	si
si	mi	sous	ri	dou
ten	les	la	zon	ce
dre	che	pluie	beaux	
et	vau	fi	ê	
si	de	ne	tres	
dou	fri	la	in	
ce	se	pluie	vi	
	sous	si	si	
	la	ten	bles	
	lu	dre	sous	
	ne	et	la	
	li	si	pluie	
	qui	dou	fi	
	de	ce	ne	

2. from Drunken Boat

I have seen the low sun stained with mystic signs
Lighting with far flung violet arms
Like actors in an ancient tragedy
The fluted waters shivering far away!

I have dreamt the green night's drifts of dazzled snow
The slow climb of kisses to the eyes of the sea

The circulation of unheard-of saps,
And the yellow blue alarum of phosphors singing!
(Rimbaud)

2. le Bateau Ivre (original)

3. Il pleut (original poem and notation)

Illuminant de longs figements violets,
Pareils à des acteurs de drames très-antiques
Les flots roulant au loin leurs frissons de volets!

J'ai rêvé la nuit verte aux neiges éblouies,
Baiser montant aux yeux des mers avec lenteurs,
La circulation des sèves inouïes,
Et l'éveil jaune et bleu des phosphores chanteurs!

3. It's raining

it's raining women's voices as if they were dead even in memory
it's raining you too, marvelous encounters of my life, oh tiny little droplets
and those clouds rear and begin to whinny a universe of auricular cities
listen if it rains while regret and disdain weep to an ancient music
listen to the fetters falling that bind you high and low
(Apollinaire)

4. Ophelia

On the clam black water where the stars sleep
White Ophelia floats like a great lily;
Floats very slowly, lying in her long veils...

For more than a thousand years sad Ophelia
Has passed, a white phantom, down the long black river.
For more than a thousand years her sweet madness
has murmured its romance to the evening breeze.

The wind kisses her breasts and unfolds in a wreath
Her great veils softly cradled by the waters;
The trembling willows weep on her shoulder,
Over her wide dreaming brow the reeds bend down

O pale Ophelia! Beautiful as snow!
Yes, child, you died, carried off by a river!
Oh poor mad girl!
You melted to him as snow to fire;
Your grand visions strangled your words
And fearful infinity terrified
Your blue eyes!

And the poet says that under the light of the stars
You come looking at night for the flowers that you picked,
And that he saw on the water, lying in her long veils,
White Ophelia floating like a great lily.
(Rimbaud)

4. Ophélie (original)

Sur l'onde calme et noire où dorment les étoiles
La blanche Ophélia flotte comme un grand lys,
Flotte très lentement, couchée en ses longs voiles...
- On entend dans les bois lointains des hallalis.

Voici plus de mille ans que la triste Ophélie
Passe, fantôme blanc, sur le long fleuve noir;
Voici plus de mille ans que sa douce folie
Murmure sa romance à la brise du soir.

Le vent baise ses seins et déploie en corolle
Ses grands voiles bercés mollement par les eaux;
Les saules frissonnants pleurent sur son épaule,
Sur son grand front rêveur s'inclinent les roseaux.

O pâle Ophélia! belle comme la neige!
Oui, tu mourus, enfant, par un fleuve emporté!
- C'est que les vents tombant des grands monts de Norwège
T'avaient parlé tout bas de l'âpre liberté;

Et le Poète dit qu'aux rayons des étoiles
Tu viens chercher, la nuit, les fleurs que tu cueillis,
Et qu'il a vu sur l'eau, couchée en ses longs voiles,
La blanche Ophélia flotter, comme un grand lys.

5. The Farewell

I picked this spray of heather
Autumn is dead remember
Never more on earth we two together
Odor of time spray of heather
Remember I wait for you
(Apollinaire)

6. The Departure

And their faces were pale
And their sobs were broken

Like snow on pure petals
Or your hands on my kisses
Fell the autumn leaves
(Apollinaire)

5. L'adieu (original)

J'ai cueilli ce brin de bruyère
L'automne est morte souviens-t'en
Nous ne nous verrons plus sur terre
Odeur du temps brin de bruyère
Et souviens-toi que je t'attends"

6. Le Départ

Et leurs visages étaient pâles
Et leurs sanglots s'étaient brisés

Comme la neige aux purs pétales
Ou bien tes mains sur mes baisers
Tombaient les feuilles automnales

7. The girl with orange lips
At the edge of the forest—
dream flowers tinkle, flash, flare—
The girl with orange lips
knees crossed in the clear flood
that gushes from the fields,
nakedness shaded, traversed,
and clothed by rainbow,
rainbow, flora, sea.
(Rimbaud)

7. La fille à lèvre d'orange (original)
À la lisière de la forêt —
les fleurs de rêve tintent, éclatent,
éclairent, —
la fille à lèvre d'orange,
les genoux croisés dans le clair déluge
qui sourd des prés,
nudité qu'ombrent, traversent
et habillent les arcs-en-ciel,
la flore, la mer.

ⁱ Couch, R. (2015, January 7). Human Trafficking Is Still Globe's Fastest-Growing Crime Despite Increased Awareness. Retrieved January 03, 2016, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/07/human-trafficking-increasing_n_6425864.html

ⁱⁱ Powell, C. L. (2014, July). Trafficking in Persons Report. Retrieved January 9, 2016, from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/34158.pdf>