Beat: Music

Dutch Composer Wins Grawemeyer Award

Up-close by Michel Van der Aa

Louisville, 26.11.2012, 16:34 Time

USPA NEWS - “Up-close,“ a piece by Dutch composer Michel Van der Aa (mee-SHEHL´ VAHN´-dur-a) that blends concerto with film, has won the 2013 University of Louisville Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition.

The 30-minute work is a highly innovative fusion of musical and visual art, said award director Marc Satterwhite.

“It´s a virtuoso cello concerto but also a fascinating multimedia experience that defies simple classification,“ Satterwhite said. “It really creates its own genre.“

Van der Aa, 42, house composer for the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, wrote the piece for Argentinian-French cellist Sol Gabetta and the Amsterdam Sinfonietta. The work, commissioned by the European Concert Hall Organization, premiered in Stockholm in 2011.

The Sinfonietta and Gabetta later performed the piece in concert halls throughout Europe, receiving high acclaim from audiences and critics. Disquiet Media, a recording label Van der Aa founded, released the work on DVD last year.

The piece is performed with a large video screen on the stage near a solo cellist and string ensemble. As the music unfolds, an image of an elderly woman appears on the screen. First, she is seen scribbling coded messages on paper amid a deserted stage set up exactly like the concerto. Later, she is shown running through the woods to an abandoned house, where she apparently tries to transmit the messages on a mechanical coding device.

As the piece progresses, the musical performance and film intertwine and begin to mirror each other. The woman seems to be an alter ego of the cellist, but much is left unexplained.

Van der Aa is widely considered a pioneer in musical theatre. Many of his works incorporate live and prerecorded electronics, theater and film. He is now working with English novelist David Mitchell to create an occult-mystery 3D film opera, “Sunken Garden,“ which is scheduled to premiere in London in April.

Boosey and Hawkes, a global classical music publishing company with offices in New York, London and Berlin, publishes his music.

UofL presents four Grawemeyer Awards each year for outstanding works in music composition, world order, psychology and education. The university and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary jointly give a fifth award in religion. This year´s awards are $100,000 each.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-274/dutch-composer-wins-grawemeyer-award.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Leon Koop

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the

submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report. Leon Koop

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619