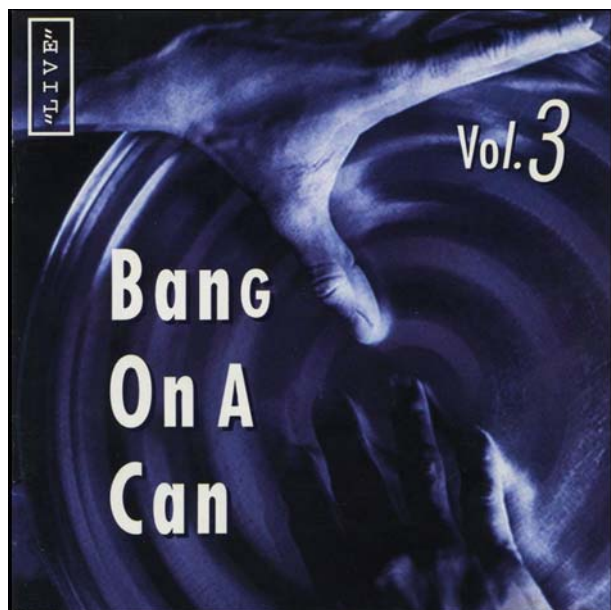


NWCR672

Bang on a Can

Volume 3: "Live"



Nick Didkovsky:

1. *I Kick My Hand* (3:59)
Bang on a Can 1993 – Nick Didkovsky, electric guitar

Bunita Marcus:

2. *Adam & Eve* (18:55)
Bang on a Can 1989, 1992 – Susan Stenger, flute; Marilyn Gibson, violin; Joshua Gordon, cello, Yiu Kwong Chung, percussion; Tom Goldstein, percussion, Sheri Bauer, piano; Bunita Marcus, conductor

Mary Wright:

3. *Lizard Belly Moon* (5:21)
Bang on a Can 1991 – Mark Stewart, Bill Anderson, John Tamburello, electric guitars; Robert Black, electric bass

Orlando Jacinto Garcia:

4. *Colores Ultraviolados* (15:12)
Bang on a Can 1993 – Pamela Warrick Smith, mezzo-soprano; Elizabeth Brown, flute; Mary Rowell, violin; Jonathan Storck, bass

Paul Reller:

5. *Carcass* (5:58)
Bang on a Can 1991 – Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble: Kwangwon Lee, violin soloist; Paula Swartz, trumpet; Bryan Wineberg, trumpet; Cinnamon Creeden, flute; Alice Lenaghan, flute; Scott Best, bass; Will Chase, percussion; Matthew Duvall, percussion; David Mancuso, percussion; Katja Murphy, percussion; Robert Ponto, conductor

Linda Bouchard:

6. *Lung Ta* (20:29)
Bang on a Can 1993 – Lydian String Quartet: Daniel Stepner, violin; Judith Eissenberg, violin; Martha Ruth Ray, viola; Rhonder Rider, cello

Total playing time: 70:23

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Notes

Like the ancient tradition of a drumming circle, in which many beats, tempos, and riffs collide and continue in headlong cohesion, the annual Bang on a Can Festival is a collaborative event in which musical freedom reigns, and in which energies and ideas blossom and build into a unique expression of the beauty of our own time and place.

But **Bang on a Can** happens in the urban landscape of New York City, where nothing is free or easy. Tickets have to be bought, musicians have to be paid, and programming decisions have to be made. Those musical decisions have been the work of the festival's three founders, composers Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe, who, despite their own personal styles, strive for a genuine diversity in programming.

As the festival approaches its eighth season—which for the first time is in the prestigious environs of Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall—I notice a popular misconception: that there exists a Bang on a Can aesthetic. If there is a Bang on a Can style, it is one more of demeanor—informality, unpretentiousness, and directness of expression—than of a particular musical syntax or school.

Each year the founding composers review numerous submissions using a blindfold audition. The decisions made through this process have frequently resulted in the selection of composers they've never heard of, and sometimes in the disappointing of composers whom they know quite well. Each festival also includes commissions and premiers planned in advance.

The bottom line of Bang on a Can programming might be simply: "what's wild and weird and has integrity." The emphasis has always been on presenting new and truly adventuresome talents. Emerging composers from the U.S., Canada, and abroad are listed as equals beside such eminent names as Feldman, Cage, and Glass. Over the years, the festival has also included a significant amount of music by such "academic" masters as Carter, Xenakis, and Stockhausen, as well as works by important mid-career composers (those caught between the labels "emerging" and "master").

Equal to the image of a circle: all who are present have an equal voice. The young and impetuous, and the old and wise each have their say, and it is up to the listeners and other

participants to make judgments and draw distinctions. The Bang on a Can Festival is that free forum that gives composers a new context in which to be heard.

The works on this disc alternate between attention-getting decibels and a quiet post-Feldman sound world. Each of the works comes from a personal perspective and gives a revealing view of the character behind the music.

“Nerve” is a good word to describe **Nick Didkovsky**. Based in New York, he leads an avant-garde rock band called Doctor Nerve and is a virtuosic guitarist and accomplished computer programmer. The title *I Kick My Hand* refers to the dexterity required to realize the piece’s disjointed and repeating patterns, and to the anxiety these requirements create. The piece uses electronic sampling and looping to create a kind of duet between soloist and machine.

Repetitive and gradually evolving melodic patterns of a very different nature characterize *Adam and Eve*, the work by **Bunita Marcus** (b 1952). The gentle sighs and turns of the melody, and the intermingling of the instrumental lines, are meant to evoke the on-going give-and-take of interpersonal relations, a matter of special concern to the Brooklyn-based composer. “Outside of the opening,” she has said, “where I did intentionally wish to depict the Garden of Eden as a starting point, I followed no script, nor did I consult the Bible for details. My focus was primarily on exploring, via music, the human experience of love with all the tangents, diversions, and complications that might arise.”

Nature and animals provide creative inspiration for **Mary Wright** (b 1960), who composed *Lizard Belly Moon* during a period when she was making a living as a school bus driver in a rural California community. The title comes from an American Indian name for the moon in March, while the freeform guitar lines are drawn from the “secret language” Wright uses to communicate with animals. The jagged shapes and relaxed pacing of the musical events perhaps also suggest the desert landscapes of the American West, where the composer continues to make her home.

The vanishing point between silence and sound is the focus of *Colores Ultraviolados* by the Cuban-born, Miami-based composer **Orlando Jacinto Garcia** (b Havana, Cuba, 1954). Delicacies of color and shading are magnified as the

composer’s original text is stretched across an endless horizon of small, detached, and evolving occurrences. At times, the four players have unsynchronized parts as they follow their own independent pacing. The few integral accented lines sung by the soprano intimate the folk music of Garcia’s Latin American heritage.

With its dominating percussion sounds, **Paul Reller**’s *Carcass* may seem the ultimate “Bang on a Can” composition. Yet the work is actually meant as a violin showpiece and was commissioned by violinist Todd Reynolds in 1989. The composer writes: “The basic joke is the alternation between bursts of jubilant violin music and the bang-bang-bang-tinkle-tinkle of the percussion instruments. The use of electronic amplification is to insure that not one note of this almost completely stagnant texture is missed, thus massaging the listener into a warm and very real feeling of well being.” Reller teaches composition and heads the electronic music studio at the University of South Florida, Tampa.

French-Canadian composer **Linda Bouchard** (b 1957) draws on Tibetan ideas and images in her string quartet *Lung Ta*. Her explanation of the work refers to a Tibetan yogi who calls the human mind “a galloping horse which, wishing to fly like the wind, must be harnessed to be useful.” The title itself is the name of the woodblock-printed flag through which Tibetans offer up invocations and personal prayers. “Lung Tas are strung up high on hills, from house tops or trees. With each flutter in the wind, visible and invisible prayers are thus multiplied and sent off into the void for the benefit of those who made them and all other beings as well.”

It has been a privilege to work with David, Julia, and Michael in creating these discs that have helped enliven the CRI label by serving, in part, as points of departure for other recordings in our Emergency Music series. CRI is proud to have introduced the music of 20 emerging composers to a new audience through three volumes of Bang on a Can recordings. We are grateful to all of the musicians who have allowed their performances to be anthologized on these discs. It has been our goal to capture and recreate the sense of challenge and unexpectedness that is Bang on a Can.

—Joseph R. Dalton

Production Notes

Produced by Bang on a Can

Executive Producer: Joseph R. Dalton.

Recording Credits:

For WNYC (1989–1992):

Producer: Allison Chernow; director of radio operations: Steve Cellum; technical director: Edward Haber; engineers: Spyder Blue Rider, Michael DeMark, Stephen Shultis, Carol Martino, Jane Pipik, Eileen Delahunty, Christine Bronder.

For Bang on a Can:

Sound Design: Bob Bielecki; engineers: Ilana Pelzig, Connie Kiltyka, Miles Smith, Natalie Budelis, Dan Dryden, Brian Karl, David Meschter, and Jaap Spek.

Mastered by David Lang, Joseph R. Dalton, and Ellen Fitton, engineer at Sony Classical Productions, Inc., New York City. Publishers: Didkovsky: Didkovsky/Pubos Music (BMI); Marcus: composer (BMI); Wright: Leisure Planet Music (ASCAP); Garcia: American Composers Alliance (BMI); Reller: composer (ASCAP); and Bouchard: composer (SOCAN/BMI).

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