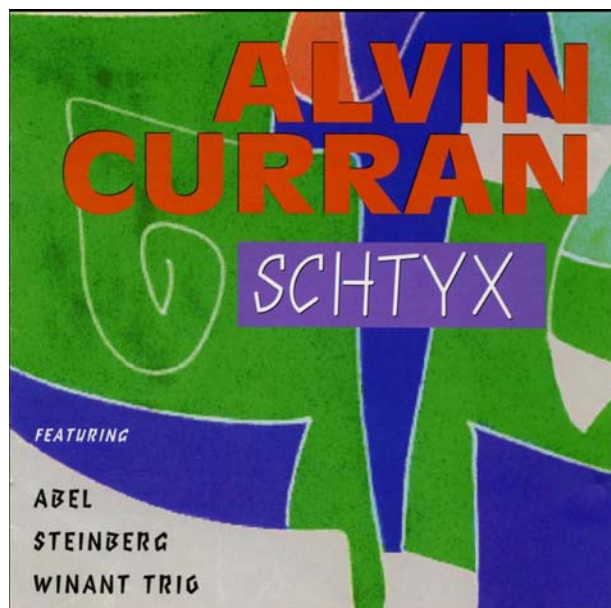


NWCR668

Alvin Curran

Schtyx



1. *Schtyx* (1991) (38:08)
Abel – Steinberg – Winant Trio; David Abel, violin, hi-hat, dog whistle; Julie Steinberg, piano, prepared piano, harmonica, bass drum, violin, dog whistle; William Winant, percussion, violin, dog whistle
2. *VSTO* (1993) (17:51)
David Abel, first violin; Sharon Wood, second violin; Meg Tichener: viola; Dina Weinschelbaum: cello

Total playing time: 56:16

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Notes

All his life my father played the trombone and sang; just before he died he became a music critic. He said “Chords, Alvin, yes, but it needs more melody.” *Schtyx* was the answer. It opens with a dotted quarter at 50. From the start implications appear and never cease. They remain open like a river for business. The melody, first thought terminal, is recycled on a child’s buzz saw but then reappears as a Mensch. Ten minutes later it turns up a 5/4 Waltz scrutinized by a group of unemployed harmonica players in the center of Darmstadt. It then visits Persia, Buffalo, and Irene, coming to rest on a bed of one-note hymns in Braxton’s former studio.

Schtyx are a rim-shot away from the Grand Canal, there a *gondoliere* can be heard singing an early Christian song by Wolf. Later in the day on Piazza Navona, Willie 4X Jam will be seen selling cool hip-hop riffs to a gang of Neapolitan bass-drum smugglers. *Schtyx* are charts, bones, professions, shades, numbers, glues, hypes, acts, devils, organ-grindings, wood implements, jugglers, chance operations, performance art, a Yiddish underground. *Schtyx* are what you use to get away with it. For example, from the wings of the theater a chair is moved mercilessly from left to right. Its angle to the river determines the tempi as well as the amount of homage owed to Satie’s furniture store. All this occurs in strict urban counterpoint as if from John’s window on Eighteenth Street. The violin has multiple tasks, such as peddling unmated hats and footwear on the bridge; similarly the pianist in bar seven has a chickpea attack followed by chords of smoked trout and marbles. Clark Coolidge supplied the book; days later he faxed the instructions. So in the E-flat Adagietto, Miles runs when Edith says “cookie.” Sections come and go and cardboard boxes full of sampled objects are launched from the marimba theme park. Dog whistles are blown, harmonicas inhaled. Trisha Brown tangos with a gypsy violin near the

twenty-first century. Three more fiddles come from their cases. Chicago style gets down and howls softly at the moon. Yet another tune over the arpeggiated piano rolls and no one can hold the violin’s identity back any longer. The school is overrun with Irish tenors. Melody bursts from the bathroom and the traps break into patterns reminiscent of Sonia Delauney’s recent paintings. A plastic windshield scraper used to cut the Bazooka gum in equal meters is now discarded leaving the musicians to quickly figure out what to do next. The violin scrolls and plays only what’s written, the other two only play from the mayonnaise stains on their scores. Is it Torah or Fakebook? ING or DURING? Cecil Taylor, Cole Porter, and Morty Feldman have a conference call—they decide to order a Golem. Fellini thought it was a great idea but said he’d be late; he never showed. Meanwhile Gabriella Münter painted Kandinsky in bed from the next room in Munich. This music was written 35 kilometers southeast of Rome.

VSTO

When it comes to music, Trisha Brown knows what she wants and if necessary she’ll dance it for you. I opened my archives – bowling balls and foghorns fell out but no “little man.” After an exasperating search a Polish string quartet appeared, four nice guys from Silesia; they had premiered the work in Berlin in 1988. I never thought they could dance but Trisha saw it immediately. String quartets are said to embody all the mysteries even as they bob and hum along. The choreography seemed to fit as if it were the music, moving through places of quiet fragility with the same oblique wisdom as through Berger encampments. As students, Elliot Carter said we could do anything but write octaves; here the octave rules like Gurdjieff. It is an interval that goes absolutely nowhere even when it goes up and down, like Trisha’s eighteen minutes of a

ninety-minute work written by me in Scelsi's memory in '88, indeed, a little man now becomes *Another Story*.

—Alvin Curran,

November 1, 1993

Alvin Curran was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1938, was cofounder of the group Musica Elettronica Viva, and is the author of a number of highly original works combining the sounds of nature, electronics, and acoustic instruments. Among them are: *Songs and Views of the Magnetic Garden*, *For Cornelius*, *Crystal Psalms*, *Notes From Underground*, *Animal Behavior* and *Why Is This Night Different From all Other Nights*. He currently is (1993) the Milhaud professor of composition at Mills College, Oakland, California. This is his premiere recording on CRI.

The **Abel–Steinberg–Winant Trio** was formed in 1984 and is dedicated to the performances of music from the Americas, Pacific Rim, and Northwest Asia. The trio has commissioned works from more than a dozen composers including Somei Satoh, Daniel Lentz, and Lou Harrison. Their CD recording of Lou Harrison's music on the New Albion label was hailed by the *New York Times* as one of the ten best new music albums of 1988. They have performed throughout the United States

and Canada to critical acclaim, including the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, Library of Congress, Chamber Music West, Cabrillo Music Festival, Ravinia Music Festival, Lincoln Center, and UCLA Center for the Arts. Their concerts have been broadcast by National Public Radio, WNYC, KPFA, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation two new hours), and D.R.S. 2 (National Radio of Switzerland). Currently they are on the faculty at Mills College.

Schtyx was commissioned by and for the Abel–Steinberg–Winant Trio in 1991, and was first performed at Mills College on March 6, 1992; it was later recorded by Tom Erbe in the Mills concert hall in May 1993. David Abel, violin, hi-hat, dog whistle; Julie Steinberg, piano, prepared piano, harmonica, bass drum, violin, dog whistle; William Winant, percussion, violin, dog whistle.

VSTO/ANOTHER STORY (1993) is the third in a series of recent collaborations between Trisha Brown and Alvin Curran. The work had its world premier at Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley in April 1993. Performers on this recording include David Abel, first violin; Sharon Wood, second violin; Meg Tichener, viola; and Dina Weinschelbaum, cello.

Production Notes

Tim Walters: Remix engineer

All compositions S.I.A.E. – Italy

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