

Lamento (1977) is another essay in the odd combination of a wind instrument with piano, in this case the tuba—something rather unusual at the time, one can assume. The relationship between the two instruments is as interesting as the material each offers: over-arching the “drama” of these two protagonists is a compelling constructive order that leads us through the (original and “radical”) way of the composition, whether through its original conjunctions of sounds, or its radical way of ordering them. And this is another feature of Gubaidulina’s work to this very day.

The rest of this program is very much concerned with the world of children: **Mowgli** is a 5-part cartoon series following the forest adventures of Kipling’s Mowgli from childhood to adulthood. The two episodes we are screening were completed in the late ‘60s and even though everyone implies they were written as a necessity to support the freelance composition career of “real” compositions Gubaidulina was pursuing, it seems clear to me that this necessity was turned into a remarkable virtue. Just listen to the colorful orchestration! The vivid coloring of instrumental line as ‘character’! The plucky, visceral language of the whole that shows up, albeit transformed, of course (!), in the many extroverted gesturings of *Offertorium* (which we present on Tuesday).

Musical Toys (1968) are fourteen miniatures perhaps of the world of children as much as for the world of the child. Gubaidulina has remarked “I often thought of my childhood and of the lack, in those days, of piano pieces that were able to take one back into the highly imaginative world of toys. At that time I also looked upon toys as material from which I could elicit sounds; they were part of the world of my musical sensations. With this collection, I have paid a late tribute to my childhood.”

Sofia Gubaidulina was born in 1931 in Chistopol in the former U.S.S.R. Tatar Republic. She finished her studies at the Conservatory of Kasan in 1954 and then studied with Nikolai Pejko—an assistant of Dmitri Shostakovich—until 1959 at the Moscow Conservatory. Following that, she completed post-graduate studies with Vissarion Schebalin.

Sofia Gubaidulina has been a freelance composer since 1963. In 1975 she founded the group Astraea with fellow composers V. Artyomov and V. Suslin, which improvised on Russian, Caucasian, mid- and eastern Asian folk and ritual instruments, which has greatly influenced her work. Since the beginning of the 1980s, her works have garnered a large international following, and today she is considered, alongside Schnittke, Denisov and Silvestrov, a leading composer of the post-Soviet Russian generation. Aside from that, she is now also considered one of the world’s greatest living composers. The recipient of many awards from across the globe, her work is documented in an impressive number of CD and DVD recordings.

Typical of Gubaidulina’s works is the nearly complete absence of absolute music, with her work containing, almost always, something that transcends its being absorbed in its own abstract musical constructs. This “transcendental” idea might be a poetic text hidden beneath the music or between the lines, a ritual, or some instrumental “narrative”. A delightful paradox follows: in a way all this is captured *in* the music (some occasional theatrical embellishments aside), only to draw our attention *away* from the internal machinations of the music’s very clever and thought-out construction.

In her own words, “the goal is to achieve the sort of relationship to traditional and new composition techniques in which the composer masters all means at her or his disposal—new and traditional—but in a way that she or he does not lend more attention to one or the other. There are those composers who consciously build their works, but I count myself among those who ‘cultivate’ their works. This means that the entire perception of my world forms the roots of a tree, and from there the piece grows branches and leaves. One can call it new, but they are just leaves, and from this perspective, they are still traditional, old. The greatest influences on my work have been Dmitri Shostakovich and Anton Webern. Although these influences cannot be seen or heard in my music, even so these two composers taught me the most important lesson: to be myself.”

—Mark Menzies

SOFIA GUBAIDULINA

PROGRAM 1: ADVENTURES OF MOWGLI AND OTHER ZIGZAGS

MAY 15, 2011 | 3:00 PM

presented by

REDCAT

Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater

California Institute of the Arts

CaLARTS



SOFIA GUBAIDULINA

PROGRAM 1: ADVENTURES OF MOWGLI AND OTHER ZIGZAGS

Sunday, May 15, 2011, 3:00pm

PROGRAM

from *Musical Toys* (1969) for piano

Mechanical Accordion

Ingrid Lee

Magic Roundabout

Sariah Wong

The Trumpeter in the Forest

Ricky Cheng

***Lamento* (1977)**

Luke Storm, tuba and Dzovig Markarian, piano

... more *Musical Toys*

The Magic Smith

Richard Valitutto

April Day

David Rhodes

Song of the Fisherman

Yichao Wang

Forest Musicians

Melissa Alcazar

Mowgli: The Kidnapping

– intermission –

... more *Musical Toys*

The Little Tit

Richard Valitutto

A Bear Playing the Double Bass and the Black Woman

Diane Lindsay

The Woodpecker

The Echo

Joaquin Gallegos

***Dots, Lines and Zigzags* (1976)**

William Powell, clarinet; Barbara Bochenek, piano

... the last *Musical Toys*

Sleigh with Little Bells

David Rhodes

The Elk Clearing

Barbara Bochenek

The Drummer

Melissa Alcazar

Mowgli: The Battle

Sofia Gubaidulina’s presence at these concerts has been funded by a generous grant from the Trust for Mutual Understanding.

Between 1967 and 1971, Soyuzmultfilm produced ***Mowgli***, a five-part series based on *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling. Director: R. Davydov; Writer: L. Belokurov; Art Directors: P. Repkin, A. Vinokurov; Cinematographer: E. Petrova; Animators: O. Komarov, P. Karabaev, A. Davydov, V. Zarubin, V. Likhachev, V. Arsentiev, S. Zhutovskaya, Krumin, V. Ugarov, R. Davydov, V. Kotenochkin, O. Safranov, N. Fedorov, F. Eldinov, S. Dezhkin; Director of Production: A. Zorina/L. Butyrina; Music: S. Gubaidulina; Sound: A. Snessarev; Voices: Mother Wolf: L. Ovchinnikova; Father Wolf: A. Nazarov; Shere Khan: A. Papanov; Tabaqui: S. Martinson; Bagheera: L. Kassatkina; Baloo: S. Bubnov; Akela: L. Lubetsky, I. Puzyrev; White Cobra: U. Khrzhanovskaya; Mowgli: M. Vinogradova, L. Shabarin; Kaa: V. Ushakov/A. Nazarov; Also: K. Kuzmina, V. Bubnov, T. Dmitrieva, K. Romyanova

In Radical Order: Soul’s Journey

Sofia Gubaidulina in Los Angeles

One of the living greats, and understandably surrounded by much mystique, composer Sofia Gubaidulina makes a rare U.S. visit on the collaborative invitation of CalArts and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. The five programs CalArts presents this week which begin this visit present a kaleidoscopic view of a career that has brought astonishing and moving additions to the world’s musical culture.

Illuminated from within with an original (radical) form of spiritual intensity, Gubaidulina’s start was in the context of the Soviet regimes of the last century that were bleakly hostile to creative originality, let alone anything with “spiritual” aspirations, as are implied or explicit within all of her music. As all of that changed, and Sofia’s music and unique artistic contribution have gently, but undeniably asserted themselves, so have her opportunities to focus the intensity of this inner light in abundance: now in her 79th year, compositions of the last decade or two reveal, with ever greater vitality, a creative spark and expressive mastery...

...well, that’s how I thought of these series of events last year when the planning began in earnest to welcome Sofia Gubaidulina to Los Angeles. Now that we are in the middle of the preparations of the chosen repertoire in the weeks prior to the performances of these programs, what comes to mind is a phrase Sofia wrote about *Dancer on a Tighrope*: “...dancing on a tighrope is also a metaphor... : life as risk, and art as flight into another existence.”

So, in answer, I think I can presume to honestly sum up our community’s response to this truth about artmaking: “We sincerely hope the risk we feel we take playing your glorious music, Sofia, will take us all into those other existences you have already hinted to us in our rehearsals. Nothing you’ve written is an easy piece, or a creation of glib effects, and it is the reaching beyond the normal—and the exhilaration of that dancing—that has already vitalized us in a most special way, even before you have arrived to hear our rehearsals. We sincerely hope, Sofia, from the depths of our hearts, that the result we present to you, and to the audience which shares this with you, contains an inkling of what you had in mind!”

Adventures of Mowgli and Other Zigzags

We begin with a program that takes the zig-zag as a metaphor: ziz-zagging through facets of Gubaidulina’s Soviet-era career as well as jump-cutting from the scenes depicted in *Musical Toys* to the two duos and two of the *Mowgli* films.

Dots, Lines and Zigzags (1976) for bass clarinet and piano was dedicated to Emma Kovarova and the late Josef Horák, who were the ground-breaking piano/bass clarinet duo Due Boemi di Praga. Features of the score are graphic notations as well as regular notes; as a result the piece evokes improvisational energies (musically expressive ideas intuited “on the spot”) alongside more constructed and planned expressive utterances. The title *Dots, Lines and Zigzags* is shared with an improvised piece played by the group Astraea that Gubaidulina had started in the mid-’70s with fellow composers Victor Suslin and Viatcheslav Artyomov.

What I find significant about all this history is the way an exciting exploration of the “extended” playing capacities of the bass clarinet (and piano) is also presented as a provocative challenge to the performers to find an intrinsic energy out of the material that is about the essence of communication, through music. This shows up time and again in Sofia Gubaidulina’s music, up until the compositions of the present day.