

Summergarten The Museum of Modern Art

NO. 54
FOR RELEASE: June 22, 1976

JOAN LA BARBARA, COMPOSER AND EXPERIMENTAL VOCALIST, IN SUMMERGARDEN

Composer JOAN LA BARBARA will present experimental vocal solos, "Circular Song", "Vocal Piece: One-Note Internal Resonance Investigation" and "Vocal Extensions", at 8 PM, Friday and Saturday, June 25 and 26 in The Museum of Modern Art's Summergarten. Free admission is through the Sculpture Garden gate at 8 W. 54 St.

(Program notes attached)

The Museum of Modern Art's Sculpture Garden is open free to the public from 6 PM to 10 PM every Friday, Saturday and Sunday through September 19, 1976. Short informal concerts are presented every Friday and Saturday at 8 PM. Free admission is through the Sculpture Garden gate at 8 West 54 St.

July 2 and 3, THE NO GAP GENERATION JAZZ BAND SALUTES DIXIELAND in Summergarten

July 9 and 10, organist LEONARD RAVER opens a series of keyboard concerts of works by living American composers. The series features recitalists VIVIAN TAYLOR, DWIGHT PELTZER and ROSEMARY CATANESE.

SUMMERGARDEN is made possible by a grant from MOBIL

Additional information available from Earl Hatleberg, Project Director, Summergarten and Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019. (212) 956-7298; 956-7501

Summergarden The Museum of Modern Art

VOICE IS THE ORIGINAL INSTRUMENT
a concert of new vocal music
by JOAN LA BARBARA

SUMMERGARDEN
8 PM, June 25 and 26, 1976
8 West 54 St.

CIRCULAR SONG for amplified voice

VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION for amplified voice

--intermission--

VOCAL EXTENSIONS for voice with electronics
(altered signal is amplified)

PROGRAM NOTES

CIRCULAR SONG (conceived March 24, 1975; revised November-December 1975; first performance, December 19, 1975) is based on the technique of circular breathing. The process as practiced by horn players (forcing air held in the mouth out through the horn by means of cheek muscles while inhaling through the nose) is impossible for the voice since the sound producing mechanism is an internal organ. By engaging the vocal cords as the air passes in and out through them (vocalizing the inhale as well as the exhale) I create a song of constant sound without the silent spaces for breath.

The diagram illustrates the picture patterns I visualize and concentrate on mentally during the song. The circles indicate descending and ascending pitch glissandos. Breaks in the lines and arrows indicate the change from inhale to exhale. Transitional figures are indicated by a small "t" outside the circle. The diagram is to be read in a clockwise direction starting at top center with the single descending glissando.

Each pattern is repeated to its physical or musical limit, that is until it is too exhausting because of rigidity of structure or until it is no longer musically interesting to me.



(over)

At that point I use the transitional phrase to move me to the next repeatable pattern and continue in this way from two breath changes (at top and bottom of pitch range). switching position of breath change (at middle of glissando), three changes per pitch direction, four, five, then through two unusual variations. The first allows the pitch to rise and fall alternately instead of using breath as the only change factor, using multiple breath changes and smaller pitch changes while the overall direction remains the same. The second variation uses a technique I have developed fro producing more than one note at one time (indicated on the diagram by the symbol "I"). At the inhale and exhale split tones are created while the overall pitch climbs gradually. After this, the patterns are reversed and the cycle is completed by moving backward more quickly until the final descending glissando.

VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION (conceived March 2, 1974; revised September 30, 1974; first performance December 9, 1974) explores the color spectrum of one pitch. A comfortable pitch is chosen to begin the piece (the pitch may be different each time the piece is performed since the instrument, being part of a person, reacts to weather, humidity, state of health, fatigue or energy level and emotion). All the sounds are created by singing only that one chosen pitch, placing it in as many different resonance areas and combinations of resonance areas as possible. I use rhythm in the pure sense of duration -- length of time spent in each area -- and the element of melody is a matter of varying colors, isolating perticular overtones and generating "undertones" and eventually chords. The overtones are produced when I focus the tone in specific mouth, cheekbone, nose, forehead and eye regions, mentally forcing the tone out through an imaginary tube of sound. (Much of singing is a mental process since there are no external buttons or keys to push.) The lower tones or "undertones" (octave, 5th, 7th , 9th and combinations which occur in addition to the chosen pitch) are produced by singing the original pitch, mentally directing the sound to a deep resonance area, relaxing the throat completely, pulling back slightly on the sound and breath pressure and allowing the sound to drop. The longer the piece goes on, the stronger the additional tones become until the original pitch at times seems to disappear. The piece is based on a technical procedure I am investigating and has nothing to do with religion, meditation or yoga.

VOCAL EXTENSIONS (conceived October 1974; revised December 1974; first performance January 15, 1975) is based on stretching the voice, using sounds I've discovered in earlier experiments and expanding these possibilities by feeding the voice signal through electronic sound altering devices. The equipment I use includes a phase shifter, pitch modulator ans echo unit, shaping a sound fabric based on the natural rhythm and flow of thought.

Joan La Barbara
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JOAN LA BARBARA

Joan La Barbara (b. 1947), composer and experimental vocalist, is concerned with extending the sound spectrum associated with the vocal instrument, utilizing its vast and relatively unexplored possibilities both alone and in combination with other instruments. Her solo concerts have been performed at Washington Square Church, N.Y.; Wesleyan University, Conn.; University of California at San Diego, Ca.; University Art Museum, Berkeley, Ca.; Kresge College, University of California at Santa Cruz; and Mills College, N.Y.

Individual pieces have been presented at The Kitchen, St. Mark's Church, The Open Mind, Environ, Staten Island Community College, WBAI Free Music Store, Dartmouth College, Composers' Forum, the SOHO Center for the Visual Arts and on radio broadcasts on WBAI and KPFA.

Ms. La Barbara has performed jazz, rock, classical and theater music though the mainstream of her work is in the experimental or avant garde. Her innovative vocal work can be heard on recordings by Don Sebesky ("The Rape of El Morro"), Philip Glass ("Music in 12 Parts"), Steve Reich ("Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices and Organ" and "Drumming") and Bruce Ditmas ("Yellow"). She has collaborated and/or performed with numerous composers, poets, writers, artists and dancers including John Cage, Alvin Lucier, David Behrman, Robert Ashley, Philip Glass, Bruce Ditmas, Spencer Holst, Armand Schwerner, Muriel Rukeyser, Ed Friedman, Jackson Mac Low and Jerome Rothenberg.

Ms. La Barbara's writings on new music have appeared in DATA-ART (Milan) and THE SOHO WEEKLY NEWS. Articles about her work have appeared in HEUTE KUNST, FLASH ART, THE VILLAGE VOICE, AVALANCHE, THE SOHO WEEKLY NEWS and THE NEW YORK TIMES. She has been recipient of grants for composition from Creative Artists Public Service program (CAPS), MEET THE COMPOSER, Composers' Forum and Experimental Intermedia Foundation.

VOICE IS THE ORIGINAL INSTRUMENT, Ms. La Barbara's first solo album (recorded live in-concert at the University Art Museum, Berkeley) will be available through the New Music Distribution Service, 6 W. 95 St., NY 10025.

Ms. La Barbara's video collaborations with Bruce Ditmas (Vermont II and Hunters) have been shown at California College of Arts and Crafts, UCSD, and Mills College; and she has given workshops and seminars on voice and composition at the Center for Music Experiment, University of California at San Diego, Dartmouth College and Mills College.