

Music Alive: New Partnerships

A Residency Program of
Meet The Composer and the League of American Orchestras

These Worlds In Us (2006)

Missy Mazzoli
Program Notes

These Worlds In Us (2006) was premiered by the Yale Philharmonia, conducted by Shinik Hahm, in April, 2006. It was professionally premiered by the Minnesota Orchestra in December, 2006, conducted by Osmo Vanska. The work was featured on two subscription concerts by the Minnesota Orchestra in June, 2008, and has been performed by the Spokane Symphony and the Boston University Symphony Orchestra.

The title *These Worlds In Us* comes from James Tate's poem *The Lost Pilot*, written about his father's death in World War II:

(excerpt)

My head cocked towards the sky,
I cannot get off the ground,
and you, passing over again,

fast, perfect and unwilling
to tell me that you are doing
well, or that it was a mistake

that placed you in that world,
and me in this; or that misfortune
placed *these worlds in us*.

This piece is dedicated to my father, who was himself a soldier during the Vietnam War. In talking to him it occurred to me that, as we grow older, we accumulate worlds of intense memory within us, and that grief is often not far from joy. I like the idea that music can reflect painful and blissful sentiments in a single note or gesture, and sought to create a sound palette that I hope is at once completely new and strangely familiar to the listener. The theme of this work, a mournful line first played by the violins, collapses into glissandos almost immediately after it appears, giving the impression that the piece has been submerged under water or played on a turntable that is grinding to a halt. The melodicas (mouth organs) played by the percussionists in the opening and final gestures mimic the wheeze of a broken accordion, lending a particular vulnerability to the bookends of the work. The rhythmic structures and cyclical nature of the piece are inspired by the unique tension and logic of Balinese music, and the march-like figures in the percussion bring to mind the militaristic inspiration for the work as well as the relentless energy of electronica drum beats.

To inquire about a residency, please contact:
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