



# Theater for the New City

**Crystal Field, Executive Director, presents**

**155 First Avenue (10th Street) Thurs-Fri-Sat 8pm Sunday 3pm**

**Box Office 212-254-1109 Tickets \$15/\$10 Seniors & Students**

**An opera by  
ELODIE LAUTEN  
Directed by  
ROBERT LAWSON  
& HENRY AKONA**

**Premiere  
3 Weeks  
May 5-22**

**Douglas Mc Donnell  
as Don Juan  
Courteney Symonds  
Arianna Armon  
Mary Hurlbut  
Alisha Desai  
as Death Multiples  
Jonathan Hirschman, guitar  
Elodie Lauten, synth  
& electronic orchestra**

**Composer Presentation  
Sun May 8 at 2pm free**

# THE DEATH OF DON JUAN



*Supported by Lower East Side Performing Arts, Inc.*



# THE DEATH OF DON JUAN

Premiere Performance

Music, Libretto, Video Imagery by Elodie Lauten

Directed by Robert Lawson & Henry Akona

## ACT I

Overture

Don Juan Reflects

Vision

Death as a Shadow

## ACT II

Interlude

Duet

Duel

Despair

## ACT III

Insanity

Enlightenment

Harpichord Interlude

Don Juan Exits

Kyrie

Apparition

## SINGERS

Don Juan: Douglas McDonnell

Death as a Woman: Courteney Symonds

Death as a Lover: Arianna Armon

Death as a Spirit: Mary Hurlbut,

Death as a Shadow: Alisha Desai

## MUSICIANS

Jonathan Hirschman, electric guitar

Elodie Lauten, synthesizer and Electronic Orchestra

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Alexander Bartenieff, Lighting Designer

Ron Benjamin, Audio Engineer

Robert Mendoza, Stage Manager

Anna Thomford, Carla Gant, Costumes

Elodie Lauten, Producer & Musical Director

## LOWER EAST SIDE PERFORMING ARTS STAFF / CONTACTS

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Artistic Director: Elodie Lauten 212-388-0202 elauten@yahoo.com

## Opera Premiere - Themes and Synopsis

This production is the Premiere Performance of a new work including a state-of-the-art electronic orchestra score (2010-11), new libretto and imagery, and new staging. The theme of the piece is a reinterpretation of the myth – a Spanish legend that has fascinated poets and composers for centuries – in a timeless and genderless framework, looking at the Don Juan archetype from the point of view of a modern woman. Who is Don Juan? In the original story, and in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Don Juan is a heartless seducer, but in Byron's *Don Juan* and Shaw's *Don Juan in Hell* from *Man and Superman*, there are somewhat mysogynistic attempts to defend Don Juan. In this piece, Don Juan is a revolutionary anti-hero seeking freedom from social rules, love for its own sake, adventure. He is also selfish, ruthless, sarcastic, and devoid of ethics or spiritual values, but he evolves. A timeless Don Juan reborn now has to face the fact that women have acquired independence and power as equals of men, and the different phases of his transformation are the action of the opera - seduction, love, despair, insanity, enlightenment. His "Death" could be metaphor of the death of a myth that belongs to a distant past, along with chastity belts, veils, binding footwear, and other restrictive devices for the enslavement of women, but there is something compelling about Don Juan as a character: he has courage, passion, and above all, he is thoroughly human, because he is after love and freedom. Something about him resonates in us, both women and men, and we cannot bring ourselves to hate him.

The entire opera happens within Don Juan's mind and soul as he is about to die, when he comes to terms with the true meaning of love, within a subtext of broader concerns, psychological (the nature of seduction and passion), social and political (gender typification, the emancipation and social evolution of women *and* men) and spiritual (God, enlightenment, compassion, forgiveness). Death is transformative and explosive, a new beginning.

The storyline follows the cathartic experience of Don Juan facing Death not as the Grim Reaper, but as a haunting by multiple female spirits who remind him of the women in his life. In *Don Juan Reflects*, drunk, he boasts of his conquests but soon begins to doubt himself and lingers on the anxious thought of being replaceable. In *Vision*, at the moment of death, he sees his life unfold before his eyes. In *Death as a Shadow* he is surrounded by powerful Death multiples and he is at once frightened and seduced. He duets tenderly with Death, but his triumph becomes a rant and the duet becomes a *Duel*. In *Despair*, he feels the pain of unrequited love, having failed to seduce Death, while Death multiples obsess him with repetitive, disconnected phrases and drive him to *Insanity*. In that mad moment of surrender, he loses his ego-self, which becomes his path to *Enlightenment*, and he makes his final *Exit*, followed by a *Kyrie* of forgiveness.





**Elodie Lauten** is a composer, performer, producer and media artist. As a leading exponent of post-minimalism, she was listed among the most influential composers of the last three decades (Sequenza 21). Her piano, electronic, orchestral music and five operas have had 30 releases on major and independent labels in the US and Europe. Venues include the Lincoln Center Festival, the New York City Opera, The Whitney Museum, throughout America with performances and university residencies, and in Canada and Europe, notably at the Paris Museum of Modern Art. About her multimedia work shown as part of the Women Forward movement, a large-scale exhibition of art by women,

James Baldwin Cohen said: “Her highly sophisticated use of today’s advanced technology has opened a new dimension in the art world.” She received a Bachelor’s in Economics from the Institut d’Etudes Politiques in Paris and a Master’s in Composition from New York University. She has taught at NYU and is on faculty at CUNY’s New York City College of Technology. She serves as artistic director of Lower East Side Performing Arts and as a board member of the Art Loaisida Foundation. More information is available from: <http://www.elodielauten.net>.

### Composer’s Notes

*The Death of Don Juan* brings together operatic drama and new technology. The singing style combines operatic and natural voice techniques. It began as a series of 7x7 grids (inspired by correspondence tables between pitch, color, body parts, planets, metals, etc.) in which each of the 49 squares contains a pattern of pitch and rhythm. These “macros” were programmed on computer. At first, the music was represented only as a computer program, a series of visual scores, and audio. There was no ‘score’, so to speak. In preparation for the New York premiere at Theater for the New City, in 2010-11, I scored the piece in traditional notation, creating new material based on the original concepts, and developed the libretto to extend the role of Don Juan. The new score is written for harpsichord, organ, dulcimer, flute, oboe, violin I&II, viola, cello, contrabass and electric bass. Once the piece was programmed in the Finale notation software, I exported the data as midi files into Reason, a digital audio workstation software. At that point, a complex programming took place in order to create the electronic orchestra, and to mix and produce the audio to accompany the singers. I created the digital imagery for projection in the theater, using a combination of fractal, photography, and video animation software to make new images and collage ‘found images’ referring to inherited cultural elements addressed in the piece.

*To find out more on the creative process and ideas in The Death of Don Juan, come to a presentation by Elodie Lauten on Sunday, May 8 at 2pm, Theater for the New City, Johnson Theater. Free.*

### Comments from the Press about the music of Elodie Lauten

“Elegiac melodies.... lovely, effecting and affecting.... a fixture of the New York scene.” THE NEW YORK TIMES

“A composer of enchanting music... a seminal figure.” THE VILLAGE VOICE

“A force on the new music scene.” FANFARE

“Absolutely gorgeous”. ARTSJOURNAL

“Lauten reveals greater artistry the further you look beneath the surface”. GRAMOPHONE UK

“A grand work that we are likely to return to again and again... timeless beautiful.” 21ST CENTURY MUSIC

“At once sophisticated and transparent.” EXPOSE

“Mesmerizing ... extraordinary.” OPTION MAGAZINE

“Hypnotic.” TIME OUT

## ARTISTS AND TEAM

Soprano **Arianna Armon** was most recently seen in the world premiere of *The Lost Boys*, or an Awfully Big Adventure. Some previous credits include *Pirates of Penzance* (Mabel), *Patience* (Patience), *Phantom* (Christine), *A Little Night Music* (Anne), *Sweeny Todd* (Johanna), several productions of *Into the Woods* (Rapunzel, Baker's Wife, and Witch), and *Sound of Music* (Maria). She studied at Scuola Musicale di Milano (Milan, Italy) and Fullerton College, (CA).

**Alisha Desai** is a singer, actor, dancer, and figure skater. She studied theater and the performing arts at Sarah Lawrence College, and is currently a member of two different dance companies; The IndoRican Multicultural Dance Project and NYC Bhangra. She also performs bharatanatyam (classical dance of South India). Recently, Alisha has appeared in independent films and music videos, such as *Karma Road* by Mihir Pathak and *Stillness* by Dorothy Colon. She was also an Actor Educator with the NiteStar Program, a theater company for social change.

A native New Yorker, **Jonathan Hirschman** began playing lead guitar in Village clubs as a teenager. He has performed with countless bands from metal to blues to R&B and is known on the scene as a powerful improviser. In 2002 Elodie Lauten produced his solo album of *Tunes from the Lower East Side* (Studio 21). He then became a core member of the Elodie Lauten Ensemble, recording *Harmonic Protection Circle*, featured on WNYC. He was a soloist in *The Two-Cents Opera* at Theater for the New City in 2009.

Soprano **Mary Hurlbut** has performed with the New Music Consort, Downtown Music Productions, the Gravesend Players, the American Landmark Festival, Brooklyn Baroque, Music Downtown, The Lark Ascending, American Festival of Microtonal Music, the Cygnus Ensemble, the New Jersey Percussion Ensemble and the Soho Baroque Opera. She has recorded for 4tay, Frog Peak and Tarmac. She is an interpreter of choice in contemporary music, and she has premiered works by John Cage, Jim Theobald, Jackson Mac Low, Anne Tardos, Franz Kamin, Harold Seletsky, Dan Levitan, and many of Elodie Lauten's operas including *The Two-Cents Opera* at Theater for the New City in 2009. Venues include Merkin Hall, Symphony Space, La Mama La Galleria, The Knitting Factory, Roulette and Carnegie's Weill Hall. She studied voice with Antonia Lavanne, Angelica Lozada, Priscilla Woodley, Chiara Carrerell and piano with Elka Kirkpatrick, Michel Ashmore and Bernice Sjogren. She holds a Master's from Mannes College of Music.

**Douglas McDonnell**, baritone & dramatic tenor, performed regularly with The Metropolitan Opera for 18 years, from acting to solo parts, in over 500 performances. He was a Children's chorister and soloist with New York City Opera for 5 years. He was personally directed by Menotti as Amahl in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* at The Brooklyn Academy of Music. Most recently, he performed the title role in the world premiere of *The Perfect Man*, Ambrosio in *Die Drei Pintos* with Bronx Opera, Falke in *Die Fledermaus* with Amore Opera, and Macheath in Benjamin Britten's *Beggar's Opera* with Morningside Opera

Soprano **Courtenay Symonds** has been hailed by the Boston Globe as "lively and capable" and by Opera Today as "scoring in both comedy and voice" for her portrayal of Arminda in Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera*. Modern American operatic repertoire includes Mag in Richard Wargo's *Ballymore: Winners* at Boston University's Fall Fringe Festival, the Controller in Jonathan Dove's *Flight* with Opera Avanti at Hunter College, and Anne in Harold Farberman's *Diamond Street* at Bard College's Conductor's Institute. Art song repertoire includes performances with enCANTA Collective, and as a soloist at the Hudson Opera House with Diamond Opera Theater and the Hudson Valley Choral Society. Internationally she has performed with the Schubert-Institut of Baden-bei-Wien, Austria, on the French Riviera in Les Nuits Musicales d'Été de Nice, and in the Amalfi Coast Music Festival, in the roles of Mimi in *La Bohème*, La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi*, and Annina in *La Traviata*. She is a graduate of Westminster Choir College and Boston University. She studied voice with Penelope Bitzas, Jean Kreitzer, Daniel Pratt and Norma Newton.

**Robert Lawson**, stage director, is a writer, director, composer, screenwriter and visual artist. Recently he was co-author and co-producer of a feature film, *What Goes Up*, released in May 2009, with Hilary Duff (he was also her acting coach). He was co-author of *Tyler's Gap*, a television show produced by Touchstone/ABC & Fox Television, produced by David Duchovny. He was commissioned by NGN Productions (Vancouver) for the screenplay *Dancing in the Dark*, slated for production in 2011; *Reservoir*, a feature film; a play (Fitzwater Foundation) entitled *Empires Fall* about the fall of Communism, slated for reading in Washington, D.C. in fall 2010. Other recent premieres of his writing include *The Architect of No Place*, a music/theater project about silent films (text, direction & composition in collaboration with Austrian artist Kay Mühlmann); *Tabula Rasa*, a music theater piece about autism at the Neuro Fest (NYC), *The Architecture of Sight* at the Chocolate Factory (Queens, NY), *Pandora's Box*, a vaudeville (NYC). His play "...but the rain is full of ghosts" was presented at the Kennedy Center as part of the National ACTF Festival (2003). Directing premieres include: direction & set design for *The Magic Flute* for the Granite State Opera (NH); direction and text for *Kuhfangfederblech* at the Festsalle in Vienna, Austria.

**Henry Akona**, stage director, is a director and composer. He directed *A Butterfly on the Antenna* (The Havel Festival, NYC 2006), *The Rube Goldberg Variations* (Andy's Summer Playhouse, Wilton, NH 2006). He composed music for and directed as stage director and music director several of Robert Lawson's plays: *Tabula Rasa* (NEUROfest, NYC 2006, Andy's Summer Playhouse, Wilton, NH 2005, High Fidelity Theater, NYC 2005), and *Pandora's Box* (High Fidelity Theater, NYC 2004, Andy's Summer Playhouse, Wilton, NH 2004). Other plays and operas he directed include *Little Night Music* (County Stearns Theatrical Co., St. Cloud, MN 1999), *Happy Ending* (Andy's Summer Playhouse, Wilton, NH 1997), *Julius Caesar* (Clark University, Worcester, MA 1996), *The Little Prince* (Andy's Summer Playhouse, Wilton, NH 1996), Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas* (Clark Opera Theater, Worcester, MA 1995), *The Old Maid and the Thief* (Clark Opera Theater, Worcester, MA 1994) and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* (Clark Opera Theater, Worcester, MA 1993)

**Alexander Bartenieff**, lighting designer, has been in the theater since the age of six months, when he appeared in an avant-garde concert at Lincoln Center. He has been active in every aspect of theater as an actor, dancer and puppeteer. Since 2000, he has been the resident lighting designer for Theater for the New City. His lighting design credits include: *Thunder Bird American Indian Dancers*, *The Lower East Side Festival Of The Arts*, the Annual Village Halloween Costume Ball, *Afghan Woman and Democracy in Islam* by Bina Sharif, *War Bonds* by Barbara Kahn, and *Tarantella* by Spider Woman Dance Company. He has designed at The Henry Street Settlement Playhouse and the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater's Production of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. He made his lighting designer debut at La MaMa with *Lillian Yarallia*, by Barbara Etta Young, directed by Austin Pendleton. He did the lighting design for Elodie Lauten's production of *The Two-Cents Opera* at TNC in 2009.

**Ron Benjamin**, sound engineer, producer and DJ, began his music career creating instrumentals for Brooklyn's underground rappers. Recently he was Sound Tech with the Hudson Theater company and the Xoregos Performing Company. In 2010 he began working on his first Dance/Pop compilation, a self titled EP featuring legendary guitarist Richard Barret II, slated for release in July 2011. Ron merges electronic and urban sounds on his current single "Stand N Fight" (both recordings exclusively available on ronbenjamin.com). Currently he is working on music for a documentary about the plight of the homeless at Penn Station in New York.

**Robert Mendoza**, stage manager, has worked on many productions at Queensborough College (*For Colored Girls, A Christmas Carol, Russian Ballet, Romeo and Juliet*) and at the KGB Red Room Theater (*Excess Secret. Watch Out It's Go Time*) and at the ATA Chernuchin Theater (*Love Hurts*). Robert is also a musician. As a student, he received the "Stage Manager of the Year" award.



ALISHA DESAI



COURTENAY SYMONDS



MARY HURLBUT



ARIANNA ARMON



DOUGLAS MCDONNELL



DJ RON BENJAMIN



JONATHAN HIRSCHMAN

# Libretto and lyrics by Elodie Lauten

## ACT ONE

Scene 1: Overture (Instrumental)

Scene 2: Don Juan Reflects (Recitaria)

Don Juan

It is I, Don Juan Almighty I I win, I rule I am it What I want I get I want, I want more I get more  
I always get more I want more, always more I am it I am the one I am God and Satan  
Almighty I What I want I get I am the one

I am drunk I need to forget I am like a witness Time is slow, time is fast I thought about every subject  
Everything is erased I am at point zero Nothing stays, nothing goes My mind is transparent  
Lived and forgotten Useless now Replaced

Scene 3: Vision (Instrumental)

Scene 4: Death as a Shadow (Ensemble)

Simultaneous

Death as a Shadow (Alto)

I am your death, Death am I, I, becoming human again, Death am I, I. Last chance to reach purity.  
Your Death, your faithful death, your death am I. The human in me says you will live,  
Death in me says you have destroyed your self, self Death, Death I am, self destroy pleasure death am I.  
The human in me says, you are forgiven. Death in me says you will suffer. The Supreme in me says  
you will forget your past. Death I am, I am I, I, Death am I. I am your Death.

Death as a Spirit (Mezzo-Soprano)

Je suis la Mort, devenue plus humaine, ta dernière chance d'atteindre l'être pur. Je suis ta mort,  
ta mort suprême, et je t'attends, toujours fidèle, sans impatience. Je suis ta mort, ta mort fidèle...  
[Tr: I am your death, become more human, your last chance to reach the pure being. I am your death,  
your death supreme, and I await you ever faithful, without impatience, I am your death, your faithful death]

Death as a Woman (Coloratura)

Unsterblichkeit für immer und ewig Ich bin ein Tod, ein Erde, Ich werden wieder menschlich,  
Unaufhörlich, Leben, Seele, Ewigkeit, für immer und Ewig...  
[Tr: immortality for ever and always I am a death, an earth, I shall be human, unending life, soul, eternity,  
for ever and always]

Death as a Lover (Soprano)

Io sono la tua esistenza, il tuo mutamento. Io sono il tuo illuminismo. Aspettare, continuare,  
pronto, preparato, infinito, eterno, al momento della tua morte...  
[Tr: I am your existence, your transformation, I am your enlightenment. To wait, to keep going,  
quickly, prepared, infinite, eternal, at the moment of your death]

## ACT TWO

Scene 1: Prelude/Interlude (Instrumental)

Scene 2: Duet: Death as a Woman (Duet, then ensemble)

Don Juan and Death as a Shadow

Change my life I change Beyond life I change Life for you I change Change my life When love ends I change,  
Beyond change I change Action ends and you are left Insane Double self doubt action lost  
Only I change action life Action ends and I am left Insane Becoming the desire Hour after hour

Don Juan, spoken

Bodacious lady parts Replacement Lady-O [yodel] Oink oink Tongue bikini From the Bang dynasty of body  
enhancers Oink boing Lady Hunk Double doozer cups Bingo! Jumbo fallacies of dovey love smokey clouds  
Shivering potatoe or was it tomatoe? Toe socks keep you in tow Or above knee stocks of yester yore  
Sexomatic plush baby pink fuzzies Diamond hard chromium zirconia of fake promise in the makeshift garage  
in the industrial debris of artistic seduction sky forever gray of my polluted mind with memories of puke  
and manifold names of potions and beverages who would have thought that sex could actually ruin your  
health rose ribbon carbon migration do I get another life?

Scene 3: Duel (Ensemble, chanted)

Scene 4: Despair

Don Juan, spoken

The memory of our meeting was present so vividly I kept seeing your expression when you left  
Follow the line of least resistance Fear The fifth dimension The one I imagine There was a dream  
a dream of you like an astral visit Overcome by a longing Despair The little boy cut his hand  
he is bleeding You have not chosen me I struggle with the absurdity of taking my life while acting  
completely integrated If only I can look like I am OK keeping up the appearance as if everything were in place  
Then the reality of my despair becomes so hidden I can almost forget about it Ignoring the thought  
as unimportant is the key I abandon my feeling a tense violin string Throw it into the Infinite  
with all my gathered strength out of myself Merge into silence somewhere ahead

Simultaneous

Don Juan, spoken

Being Time stop Outside Action Life Mine again Empty Available Suffer Doubt Help Land  
Water Broken

Death as a Woman, Sung

Garden Time Ready Cry Satisfied Leben Evig Evigkeit

Death as a Lover, Spoken

Unfold Endless Hopeless Data Check data

Death as a Spirit, Spoken

Pages torn Stop desire Utter cry Unfold Endless Hopeless Work, always Broken sign Information  
Active task No! Pages torn Non-existence I am information

Death as a Shadow, Spoken

Danger Erase Into messages Active Task Non-existence I am... Unfold...

## ACT THREE

Scene 1:       Insanity

Don Juan

I see colors on the wall   Message to myself   Only one place it's inside   Where anything is possible but for a short time only   Every minute remember   How it is on the other side   Sounds are the rain of the soul   So they speak  
Ping!   Gravity jumps   O-matic realm of pulverized allergens   Love stuff of furry fantasies of snug  
All-in-one mercantile Eden   Medicine chest of evil   Loophole genesis   Chinese hypochondriac-healer  
Of low-rider philosophy of consumption   Revolutions of infinite smallness   Capitulate   Rejuvenate  
Big bang small bing   Sputnik dog   Crash universe   Big time small space   Time transcendence  
Omens of apocalypse   Impulse stirring   Willful strength fails twice   Dice - snake eyes   Cards - reversed  
While the unexpressed   Turned inward   Is excruciating but only an atom away   From the joy of living  
Partnership stormy exit!   He-ha-holic holy-ho!   Fearless avenue of death   Tearing the shield of time  
Andromeda, Pallas, Europa   Fighting for an apple   The size of a grain of sand   Belzebubby, booby buddy  
Lexus nexus plexus rexus Rex   Leaving my dear bod, oh dear   For better body replacement   Brain in a jar frozen  
cloned   Freeze framed in past future

Scene2:        Don Juan Enlightened (Ensemble)  
Vocalizing on vowels a e i o pronounced as ah, hay, ee, om

Scene 3:       Harpichord Interlude

Scene 4.       Don Juan Exits (Recitaria)

I am spent   I am done   There is no goodbye   I am lost   I am found   There is no reply   I have loved  
Many times   I have truly lived   I am deaf   I am numb   I have lost my sight   I am only human now  
I have outlived my freedom   I have outlived my kingdom   I am only human now   I am spent   I am done  
There is no goodbye   For the women I truly loved   One at a time   I am only human now  
I have outlived my freedom   I have outlived my kingdom   I am only human now

Scene 5:       Kyrie (Ensemble)

Kyrie Eleison (Lord, have mercy)

Scene 6:       Apparition

Don Juan, spoken

Quote: "Actions   Beautiful days   Awful sleeps   Plants   Couplings   Everlasting music   Movements   Worships  
Divine suffering   Worlds that look alike and look like us   I drank you but I did not quench my thirst"

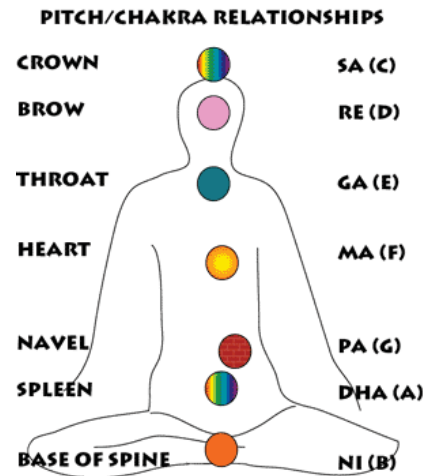
(English Translation by Elodie Lauten)

[Original: "Actions   Belles journées   Sommeils terribles   Vegetation   Accouplements   Musiques éternelles  
Mouvements Adorations   Douleur divine   Mondes qui vous ressemblez   Et qui nous ressemblez  
Je vous ai bu et ne fus pas désaltéré" from *Vendémiaire*, *Alcools* by Guillaume Apollinaire]

## The Death of Don Juan - Creative Process

Inspiration and sources: hierarchies common to the East and the West connecting sound and multicultural, universal elements

Examples of correspondences between pitches, chakras (energy centers in the body), colors, elements, properties, and corresponding seed mantras from Vedic tradition (India)

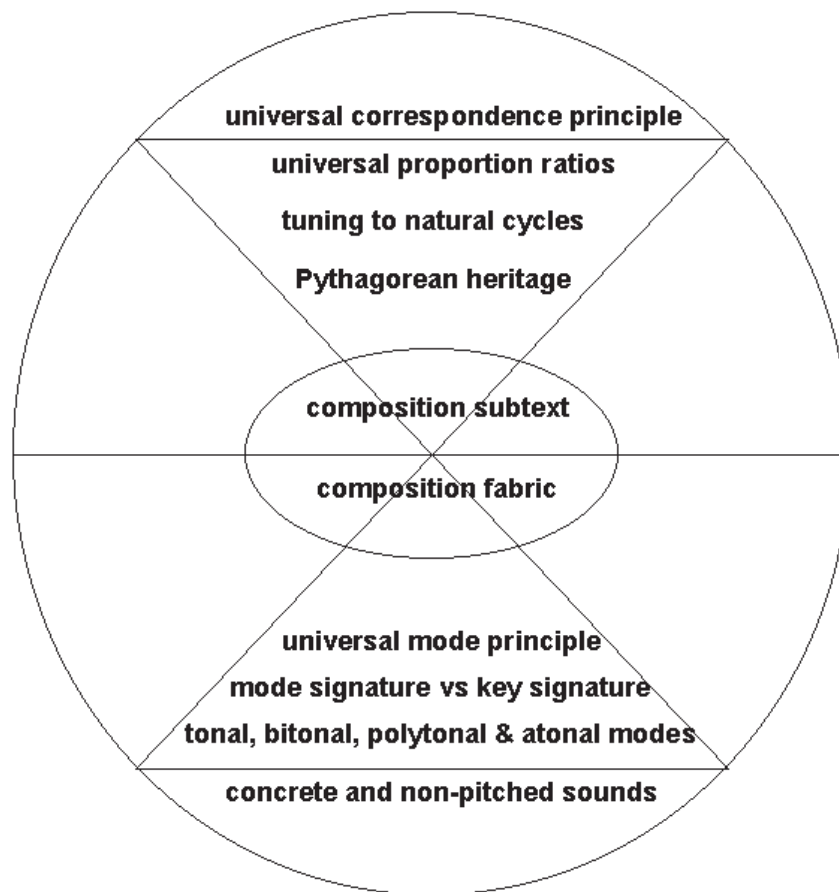


PITCH	CHAKRA	BODY	COLOR	ELEMENT	PROPERTY	MANTRA
Sa ( C )	Sahasrara	Crown of head	Raibow	Space	Bliss	Hamsah
Re ( D )	Ajna	Brow	Rose	Energy	Insight	Om
Ga ( E )	Vishudda	Throat	Blue-green	Ether	Communi- cation	Ham
Ma ( F )	Anahata	Heart	Gold	Air	Out-of-body experience	Yam
Pa ( G )	Manipura	Navel	Green-pink- orange	Fire	Joy	Ram
Dha ( A )	Swadhisthana	Spleen	Rainbow	Water	Love	Lam
Ni ( B )	Muladhara	Base of Spine	Red-orange	Earth	Knowledge	Vam

There are two levels in my composition work: the subtext and the fabric. The subtext is usually based on some type of universal correspondences matrix, as shown in the following examples. This provides my basic framework for sequences of events, key signatures, general structure.

The composition fabric or texture can be extremely varied. It can include concrete and “sounds” from everyday life, vocals in different languages or in a customized solfege, and a number of layers ranging from tonal, bitonal, polytonal or atonal modes, and sometimes in different temperaments. My key signatures can be deceiving because the flats or sharps indicate the alterations but they sometimes correspond to a different tonal center than expected in Western classical music. Example: C# minor with a natural D would be written as three sharps in the key signature, not four as expected in Western-style notation.

My approach to harmony can be best understood as a bitonal structure, with a steady tonal center at the bottom, whether stated or implied, and harmonic modes stacked above, and sometimes atonality, in combination with a drone. The way I understand Coltrane’s most free-form works is the presence is an actual implied tonal center which ties everything together harmonically.



*Concept Matrix*



Original set of seven grids

The seven grids are arranged in three rows. The first row contains grids 11 and 12. The second row contains grids 13 and 14. The third row contains grids 15 and 16. Grid 17 is positioned below grid 15. Each grid consists of a 4x4 matrix of letters and symbols. Some letters are bolded. Some cells contain musical notation like notes on a staff or rhythmic patterns. Some cells contain 'X' or 'Repeat!' symbols. The grids are numbered 11 through 17.

These seven grids form the complete matrix for *The Death of Don Juan. Overture, Vision, Despair, Insanity*, were composed using these various elements as a starting point, to create computer programs that would generate a variety of simultaneous tracks. But this was only the beginning of the creative work on the score. Other inspirations and methods went into the creation of *The Death of Don Juan*, from dream images to settings of lyrics to chance operations. The *Death as a Shadow* scene actually came to me in my sleep in a very strong dream which made me start the project. Some of the harmonic structures were a result of the construction of a triangular 21-string lyre, the Trine, to which I would apply certain custom tunings. Technology has a very important part in the composition process for this piece. In this practice, the computer is used to create musical structures and textures, but at the same time, the human element, the non-machine, is emphasized in the outcome, with the vocal parts and live instrumental improvisations.

Overture: The Death of Don Juan

Musical score for the Overture of *The Death of Don Juan*. It shows multiple staves for different instruments: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Contrabass. The score includes a tempo marking of quarter note = 100 and a conductor's name, Elodie Lanton.

## **Acknowledgements**

This project is made possible in part by a gift from the Argosy Foundation Contemporary Music Fund, and public funds from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, State Senator Daniel Squadron, the Fund for Creative Communities, supported by New York State Council on the Arts and administered by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Manhattan Community Arts Fund, supported by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and administered by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Materials for the Arts, and the support of Theater for the New City as a presenter. The Death of Don Juan is supported by Lower East Side Performing Arts, Inc. Special thanks: Jerry Bowles, Sequenza21, Carolyn Ratcliffe, Jeffrey James, Anna Thomford.

## **Lower East Side Performing Arts - Mission**

Lower East Side Performing Arts, Inc., a 501c3 nonprofit organization, L.E.S.P.A., aims to improve the quality of life in downtown New York City (Lower East Side, East and West Village, Soho and Tribeca) by organizing programs to preserve and develop culture in all of its forms, with special attention to women, minorities and ethnic diversity; to counteract the negative effects of rising real estate prices on communities and to prevent the current exodus of New York artists by encouraging new work; as an alternative to high-priced profit-driven entertainment, to offer free/low-cost cultural programs that are enlightening, educational and appealing, with a degree of depth that effectively addresses the complexity of our time.

[www.lesperformingarts.org](http://www.lesperformingarts.org)