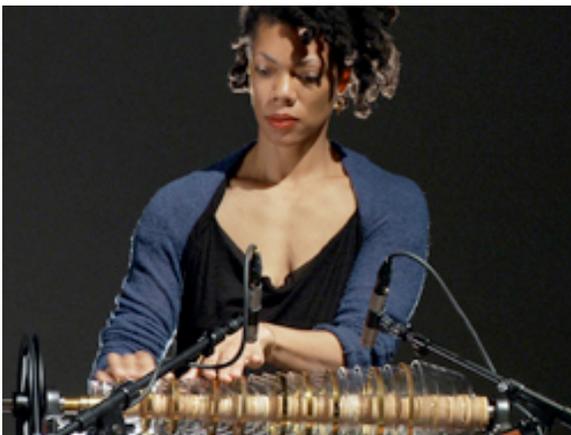


Review**Camille Norment at CMA's
Transformer Station (December 15)**

by Mike Telin



In last week's ClevelandClassical concert preview, multi-media artist Camille Norment said that her artistic goal is to push limits and to create something new. On Sunday, December 15 during her concert on the CMA at Transformer Station series, she and her trio colleagues did exactly that during their fifty minute set of four hauntingly beautiful sound installations that live in the blurred area between composition and improvisation.

Performing on the exotic glass armonica and singing bowls, Camille Norment's trio includes Håvard Skaset, electric guitar, and Vegar Vårdal, hardanger (Norwegian fiddle). Individually they are fine musicians — Vegar Vårdal possesses a great bow arm. But it is in the collective that the group shines brightest. Founded in 2010 in Norway to “explore the instruments' paradoxical relationships to notions of beauty, noise, tension and harmony as a musical experience.” The trio gave their debut performance at the Ultima New Music Festival in Oslo on September 11, 2011.

Toll, the title track from the group's first album, began the evening. Inspired by Arvo Pärt's *Fratres*, *Toll* takes its name from the concept of the bell toll or life and death. Musically the work is powerful: the sheer noise was amazing. Moving into the quiet realm, the glass armonica turned the work into something from another world: the amplified pitches and vibrations the instruments produced penetrated your soul.

The second work, *Glare*, gave each member a chance to take a solo before joining together and separating again only to reunite in different instrumental combinations and musical motives.

The third and fourth works were firmly grounded in early music. The performance of *Blue Line*, with recorded voice and text by Bessie award winning actor and dancer Okwui Okpokwasili, was utterly captivating. The poignant and sometimes disturbing text, artfully delivered by Okpokwasili, was deftly embellished by Norment, Skaset and Vårdal. Each created musical lines that perfectly mirrored the rhythm of the poetry and heightening the work's intensity.

Then, seamlessly, the music transitioned from the jagged rhythm of *Blue Line* into the ostinato of *Lyst*, the evening's final piece. Placing the work last on the program was an inspired move. After nearly forty minutes of musical soundscapes, the slow-moving bass line literally had a profound physical effect on the performers and the audience: bodies were moving to the beat as if headed for home following an intense journey into another world.

Perhaps we all need a little steadiness in our lives. This was a fascinating concert and I hope the Camille Norment trio will return to Cleveland soon, maybe with Ms. Okpokwasili as well.

CMA concerts at Transformer Station continue on January 19 with a performance by Third Coast Percussion.

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