



HIROYUKI ITO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

From left, Alex Sopp, Steven Beck, Sumire Kudo and Jessica Meyer at Merkin Concert Hall on Monday evening.

## Opening a Cabinet of Curiosities to Savor Its Sounds

To the naked eye, counter)induction looks like a straightforward new-music chamber ensemble, a peculiarly constituted quartet (violinist, violist, cellist and clarinetist) that takes in guest players as needed. But it also includes three nonperforming composers, and it describes itself as a "composer-performer collective."

All three resident composers — Douglas Boyce, Kyle Bartlett and Ryan Streber — were represented in the ensemble's 10th-anniversary program on Monday evening at Merkin Concert Hall. But counter)induction is hardly a closed shop: it holds a biennial composers' competition, and a work by one of its winners, Carl Schimmel, was included, as were a piece commissioned for the occasion from Eric Moe and older

counter)induction  
Merkin Concert Hall

works by Lee Hyla and Salvatore Sciarrino.

Mr. Streber's contribution, "Partita" (2007), for solo cello, is couched in a single, continuous movement, with changes in tempo and spirit that suggest a sequence of short dances, like those of a Baroque partita. Not that Mr. Streber's musical language or the shapes of those sections refer overtly to Baroque conventions or dance forms. Tempo and character are varied, but what changes most from section to section is the music's inner tensions.

Sumire Kudo, the group's cellist (and a member of the New York Philharmonic) moved with ease and assurance through its

flighty passages and with a magnetic solemnity in its slower ones.

Mr. Boyce composed "Deixo [Sonata]" (2009) for the ensemble's violist, Jessica Meyer, supported here by the pianist Steven Beck. It is an unabashed showpiece, if a brainy one, that pays homage to the traditional sonata layout: the outer movements are hard-driven and sharply rhythmic, and have an acerbic modernist edge, and the central slow movement is built on an arching theme, with sighing, descending slides. Ms. Meyer and Mr. Beck played the piece with the kind of polish, focus and excitement that you would expect in a firmly settled repertory piece.

Ms. Bartlett's "Adagio Sostenuto" (2009), scored for the full ensemble and piano, seemed on first hearing to be mainly a study in texture, with pianissimo trills expanding to a full-bodied, celebratory wall of sound, then pulling back to a quiet shimmer.

Mr. Moe's "Dead Cat Bounce" (2009), for the same instru-

*A new-music chamber ensemble celebrates its 10th anniversary.*

ments, was its polar opposite, a visceral score built on a Bartokian rhythm and packed with rough-and-tumble interplay.

The group is onto something with its contest winner, Mr. Schimmel. The nine colorful movements of "The Pismirist's Congeries" (2006), for flute (Alex Sopp), violin, cello and piano, describe items in a collection of curiosities, among them a bird-training whistle, an ancient Greek censer and a pianist's finger-exercising machine. Mr. Schimmel's writing is energetic, inviting and, most crucial for a piece of this kind, picturesque, and these musicians gave it the fully engaged performance it deserved.

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