"Mari Kimura has performed astounding explorations of new sonic territories on the violin, extending its range to The World Below G and Beyond : this indispensable historic recording retraces her instrumental and compositional inventions."

Jean-Claude Risset

MARI KIMURA
THE WORLD BELOW G AND BEYOND
WORKS FOR VIOLIN SUBHARMONICS AND INTERACTIVE COMPUTER

Track 1. Subharmonic Partita (2005) - 02:45
Track 2. Gemini for solo violin (1995) - 04:50
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Tracks 5-10. Six Caprices for Subharmonics (1997-1998)
5/04:26 - 6/01:45 - 7/02:40 - 8/02:18 - 9/01:17 - 10/02:43
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Track 12. Izquierda y Derecha for violin and MIDI piano (1998) - 06:21
Tracks 13-15. ALT: Three Movements for violin solo (1992)
13/03:35 - 14/01:31 - 15/02:19
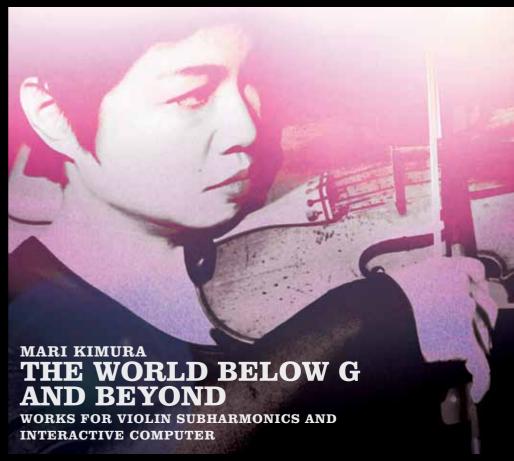Track 16. Bucknerian for voice, violin and computer (2002) - 08:52

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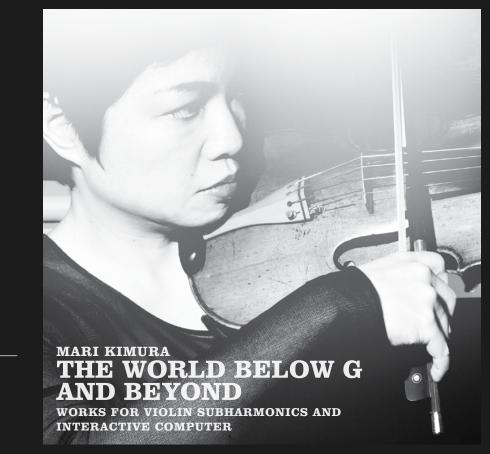
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THE WORLD BELOW G AND BEYOND

I recognize myself as a creative violinist carrying on the tradition of renovation and transformation of my instrument by composing for myself, using the media that is available in my lifetime. This album includes two kinds of works: solo violin works using "subharmonics", an extended bowing technique I developed, and works for violin and interactive computer.

In April 1994, at a solo recital in New York City, I introduced subharmonics as a musical element to extend the range of the violin by a full octave below the open G string without changing the tuning. Playing subharmonics takes precise control of bow pressure and speed, reliably and repeatedly on demand, which is extremely hard especially in real time performance situations. My introduction of subharmonics was widely praised by Edward Rothstein, the chief critic of The New York Times who described it as, "revolutionary technique" for the violin.

I first discovered the technique from an age-old bowing exercise, a modified version of "Son Filé", drawing the bow very slowly but applying slightly more pressure. The exercise was to make the sound steady on the upper E string notes while listening to a scratchy pitch generated one octave below, which I decided by chance to apply to the notes on the G string. Eventually I managed to eliminate most of the "scratchy" transient noise, thus achieving solid low sounds one octave below on the G string.

I took these obscure sounds and developed them further; the technique has been known among violinists as an exercise or some say even as a quirky 'joke'. I created compositions using subharmonics not for the sake of novelty but to use them as a new element for the musical language for the violin. This album contains many of my early works using subharmonics controlling different subharmonic intervals, such as subharmonic octave, third and second.

Since the early 1990s, I have also been a violinist/composer specializing in interactive computer music composition and performance. I have created many works for the violin using an interactive computer music program MaxMSP. In

strange. From the realization that "technique" in art cannot exist without the cultural, philosophical and environmental background, I wanted to free myself from the boundaries of Western musical idiom usually associated with traditional violin literature, and to reflect my own heritage in my composition. I wanted to let my violin play the non-Western sounds, sounds of the ancient instrument from the East, which I naturally have in my ears being brought up in that part of the world.

And that was my "uptown" explanation for the title ALT. In fact, I first came up with the title from the comments of the first person who listened to this work, Prof. Mario Davidovsky, at my composition lesson at Columbia University. After offering his rarely given (therefore meaningful) compliments, Prof. Davidovsky said, "I've never heard Anything Like This." So I discreetly decided to honor my piece with these words. There has been much interest from the scientific community on my technique since 1994, and I have been invited to give many demonstrations and lectures, including 1995 Acoustical Society of America, and International Conference ASVA '97 in Japan.

16. BUCKNERIAN FOR VOICE, VIOLIN AND COMPUTER (2002)

Bucknerian was written for baritone Thomas Buckner. Inspired by the wide range of Mr. Buckner's musical expression and his incredible extended vocal technique, I wanted to create musical situations where Mr. Buckner might start to get a little disoriented listening to himself and singing, then eventually become multiple-person singers, virtual and real, an ensemble of himself. I also use recordings from his previous work, which is processed by the computer, as well as his live voice. The violin accompanies him, circling around the multiple Buckners, bridging them. Bucknerian can be performed solo or by duo performers.

11. TWO CLOS

This is the only track on this album that is entirely improvised, but not without a twist. This violin duo was created by recording me improvising a first track. Then while listening to the first improvised track, I overdubbed myself improvising with it again, a situation that is different from other modes of interaction. I very much like the energy that created. "Clo" is a unit of thermal insulation, used when describing thermal comfort. I thought the title <u>Two Clos</u> (or a pun on "too close") would be appropriate for this track.

12. IZQUIERDA Y DERECHA FOR VIOLIN AND MIDI PIANO (1998)

Many of my previous works have been with signal processors or electronic sounds, which I used in order to extend and enhance the texture of the violin sounds. In <u>Izquierda y Derecha</u>, I use MIDI piano or Yamaha Disklavier, controlled by the violin. The interactive computer system MaxMSP creates the dialog between the violin and the piano in realtime, without having either of them as a dominating musical character. In order to play two instruments at once, you have to somewhat detach yourself from the violin, and let the music develop on its own. There is some suggestion of "musical borrowing"; you might catch snippets of Chopin's "Revolutionary Etude", as well as a little parody of Kreisler/Pugnani's "Praeludium and Allegro". "Left and Right" in Spanish, <u>Izquierda y Derecha</u> is inspired by the rhythms and the energetic character of Latin music. These two words could also evoke diverse senses including position, politics, culture, and two hands or players.

13-15. ALT: THREE MOVEMENTS FOR VIOLIN SOLO (1992)

<u>ALT</u> stands for the words "alteration" or "alternative". In this piece (3rd movement), I introduced subharmonics in concert halls for the first time, at my New York solo debut recital in 1994, and resulted in the aforementioned New York Times review. I have been developing various extended techniques for the violin, but my purpose was never to create something new just for the sake of being new

this album I included my older works for violin and MaxMSP, as well as my recent works. After spending the past few years collaborating with the Real Time Musical Interactions Team at IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique) in Paris, France where MaxMSP was first developed, I was selected as a 2010 Composer in Residence in Musical Research at IRCAM. I have been working on extracting musical expression from bowing data for interactive composition. I have been using the "Augmented Violin", a device together with an analysis program that extracts bowing motions from 3D accelerometer, developed by the Real Time Musical Interactions Team. The gesture follower tracks, analyzes and combines both the bow strokes characteristics and the audio data together, allowing a violinist not only to control the computer, but also to extract expressions, 'clone' the performance, opening doors to new ways of musical listening and understanding, and to create new language for interactive composition and performance.

I would like to thank my formidable collaborators of IRCAM's Real Time Musical Interactions Team: Frédéric Bevilacqua, Norbert Schnell, Emmanuel Fléty, Nicolas Rasamimanana and Bruno Zamborlin.

For further information please visit: **www.marikimura.com**

1. SUBHARMONIC PARTITA (2005)

<u>Subharmonic Partita</u> is my dedication to the first movement of Bach's E major Partita, "Prelude". I use the key melodies from "Prelude" as well as some structural progressions, adding extreme leaps and subharmonics as embellishments. "Prelude" has been used as a theme before by violinists/composers such as Eugene Ysayë (who was a teacher of one of my first teachers Armand Weisbord) in his "6 Sonatas", and this was something I wanted to do as a violinist/composer following the tradition. The goal of <u>Subharmonic Partita</u> is not to play only the most extreme violin techniques, such as very fast five octave arpeggios from subharmonic pitches and up, but to search for new sonorities; to use the low notes as a basis for harmony, supporting the upper sounds of the violin. Personally I enjoyed composing <u>Subharmonic Partita</u>, as well as practicing it; it is extremely challenging to play.

2. GEMINI FOR SOLO VIOLIN (1995)

This Tempo di Cadenza is written in a highly virtuosic manner; the solo violin plays predominantly on the G string and covers a range of four octaves. Throughout the movement, the violin leaps in and out of subharmonics. This technique extends the range of the violin by a full octave below the open G, without changing the tuning. There is also another new subharmonic technique which I am formally introducing for the first time in this piece: subharmonic 2nd and 3rds. This is a modified version of the technique described above, and it allows me to play 2nd and 3rd below the fundamental sounds. This movement was written after the death of Mrs. Sumiko Matsuda, the wife of Japanese composer (and my mentor) Toshi Ichiyanagi. Gemini is dedicated to Mrs. Matsuda who was very supportive of me.

3. VITESSIMO FOR AUGMENTED VIOLIN (2007)

Vitessimo (from the word 'vitesse'–speed in French) is a work for violin and interactive computer for IRCAM's Augmented Violin. In creating Vitessimo I focus on creating new kinds of violin expressions, rather than on the ensemble between violin and electronics. I am particularly interested in creating a work that uses all the subtle and precise bowing gestures, even when I am not playing but moving the bow silently in preparation of actually drawing the bow on the string to make sounds, consistent with the expression of the music I am making.

4. CLONE BARCAROLLE FOR AUGMENTED VIOLIN (2009)

Clone Barcarolle is my first attempt at using IRCAM's Augmented Violin system as a 'cloning' device. The system is able to 'clone' the movement of my bow with the sound of my playing together. At the beginning of Clone Barcarolle, I play a simple open-string crossing, just like Berg's Violin Concerto. The system 'clones' it and creates a kind of ostinato, as I repeat the same bowing motion but play other notes over it, creating a virtual duet with my own 'clone'. This is the newest musical feeling I have experienced since I started to play with simple 'delay', and I enjoy learning to understand it musically. Clone Barcarolle is dedicated to the loving memory of Suzanne Fiol, the founder of Issue Project Room, an experimental music venue in Brooklyn, New York, where it was premiered in her presence; it was the last time I saw Suzanne.

5-10. SIX CAPRICES FOR SUBHARMONICS (1997-1998)

Subharmonics are created with precise control of bow pressure and speed. As a result, it allows me to expand the range of the violin down a full octave below the normal lowest note, an open G, without changing the tuning of the instrument. During 1997 and 1998 I compiled a set of Caprices for Subharmonics. Each of these short pieces focuses on different technique, and the musical language incorporating them. No.1 focuses on subharmonic octave; subharmonics leap in and out to extreme intervals, and they are also used melodically, featuring ideo-synchricity of the sound. No. 2 focuses on playing subharmonics 2nd; a half step lower than open G: thus F#. The drone of these two pieces (G, F#) continues as the melody sings freely played on D string. There are many never-heard double-stop intervals on the violin without scordatura. One must control the bow very carefully in order to play subharmonics on the G string, while playing normally on the D string at the same time. No. 3 focuses on playing subharmonic 3rd. In No. 4 I explore multi-phonics as well as subharmonics, playing two notes on one string by drawing the bow in a specific way. As a result, playing also on the D string simultaneously, one could play chords such as triads with two strings. No. 5 is fast-moving subharmonics such as trills and arpeggios. Since the location of the bow on the string has direct effects on the pitches, it is quite difficult to play fast arpeggios; it is therefore necessary to slide the bow to or from the fingerboard while keeping the same bow pressure, fast. No. 6 is the summary of the previous 5 pieces. In Caprices No.1 and No. 6, one might find a slight suggestion of the traditional "melody borrowing", tunes from West Side Story ("Maria"), and "Take the A Train".