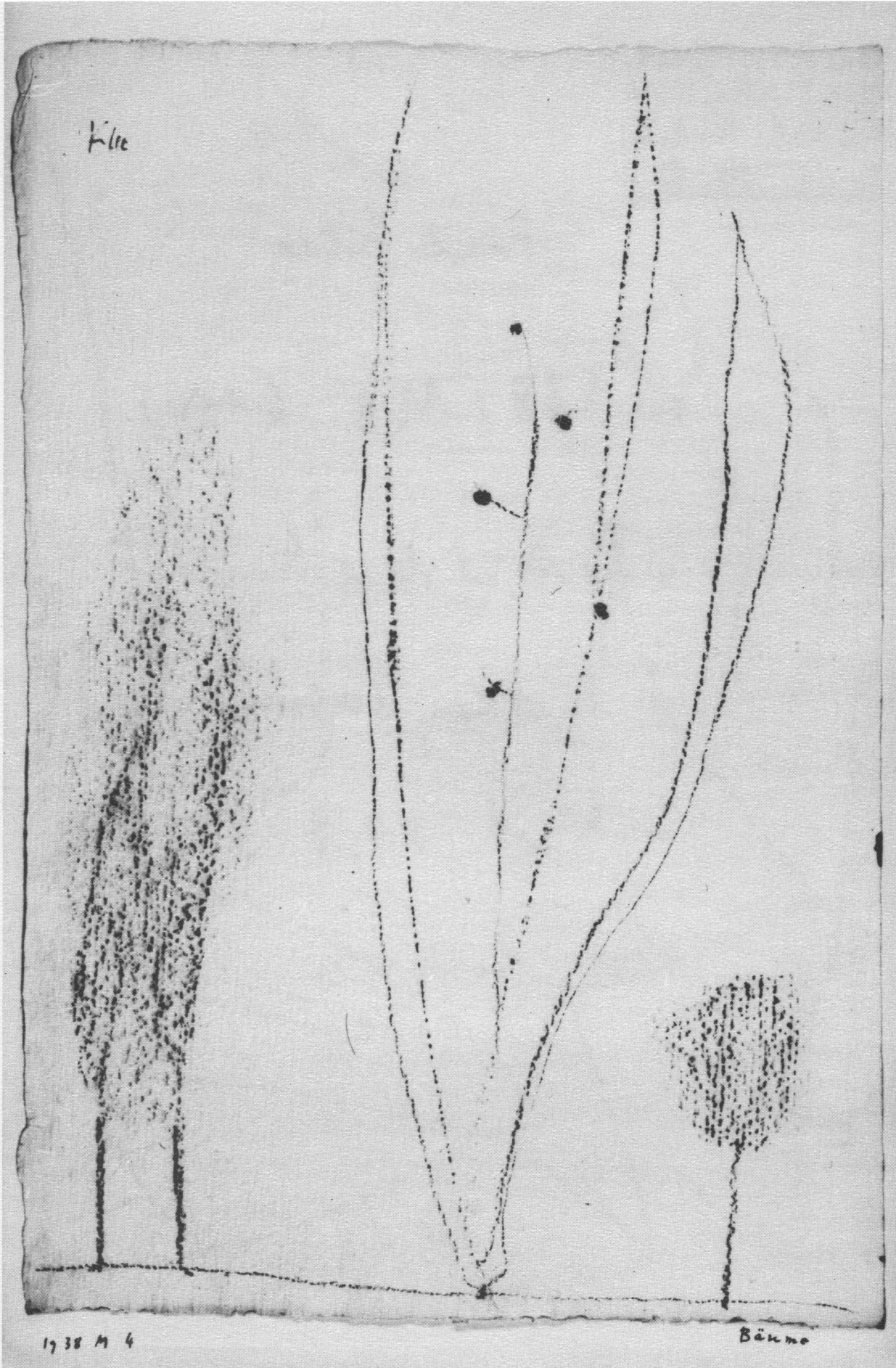


Wendy Reid

Tree Pieces



William Winant  
percussion

WENDY REID

TREE PIECES

TREE PIECE #34 ‘FROG OSTINATO’

William Banovetz,oboe; William Winant, percussion

TREE PIECE #10

Wendy Reid, violin; William Winant, percussion;

George Tingley, piano; Larry Polansky, mandolin

TREE PIECE #8

William Winant, percussion

TREE PIECE #21 ‘BIRD MUSIC’

Mary Oliver, violin; William Winant, percussion

WENDY REID (b. Los Angeles, 1952) received degrees from Mills College (M.A.), the University of Southern California, School of Performing Arts (B.M.), and attended Stanford University, Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics. Between 1975-77, she was a private pupil of Nadia Boulanger in Paris and at Les Ecoles D’Art Americaines at Fontainebleau. Composers she has studied under include Terry Riley, Robert Ashley, Halsey Stevens, James Hopkins and film composer David Raksin. She is the recipient of numerous awards and grants including Meet The Composer/California, an ASMC grant and the Paul Merritt Henry Prize. Since 1981, she has taught at Holy Names College and is currently producer of the new music series NEW MUSIC WITH BIRDS, FROGS AND OTHER CREATURES sponsored by the Natural Sciences Department of the Oakland Museum and the San Francisco Art Institute. She writes: “TREE PIECES is an on-going set of musical processes which attempt to reflect nature’s manner of operations. Because the pattern or order of nature functions as a single process without division, contrary to the state of control in which there exists a duality (—one element commanding and the other obeying), control in the compositional process is removed to varying degrees from piece to piece. The processes are contextual in nature thus allowing the performers to act according to the unpredictable conditions and variables which arise from within the musical continuity. In this way, the compositions attempt to reflect the inter-connection of all things (including ourselves) in nature. In performance, an attempt is made at a spontaneous unforced and unblocked growing of sound and silence in which emphasis is placed on formation rather than pre-established form, as in the building and shaping of cell-like units in living processes. This approach ‘formation as process’ parallels that of the artist Paul Klee whose writings have influenced my work. Klee believed that “communication with nature remains the most essential condition” for the artist by the simple fact that he himself is part of nature.

TREE PIECE #34 creates a landscape in which live performers play with and against a background of two taped ostinati of croaking frogs. The oboe assumes the role of an ‘abstract frog’ playfully interacting with the taped ‘real frogs’, while the percussion is transformed throughout the work from reflector of the ‘abstract frog’ (—sounds seemingly ‘bouncing off’ the frog croakings) to imitator of the ‘abstract frog’ by use of various timbral techniques to finally breaking away and becoming an independent voice, —another frog which interacts with the others. Though pitches are determined, the composition is written in spatial notation allowing for a freedom of interplay between parts which would be impossible within the confines of traditional notation. As in other Tree Pieces, the Fibonacci series\* is used as a structural device . Most prominently, it can be heard in the oboe: the number of pitches in a phrase expands according to the Fibonacci number sequence. At that point where the percussion becomes an independent voice, the number of pitches of both oboe and percussion are taken into account in phrase groupings. The number series is also prevalent in the taped ‘real frogs’ where the number of croaks in a phrase again expands according to the sequence. The over-all effect is that of cell-like units of sound growing into seemingly endless phrases of frog-like communications. This work is dedicated to oboist William Banovetz and percussionist William Winant who gave the premiere performance on November 16, 1985 at New Langton Arts in San Francisco.

TREE PIECE #10 is based on a poem by Jeff Reid: *but/contradiction is/affirmation/of* The composition might be described as a ritual with no beginning and no end in which words and music play reversed roles—that is, words ‘sound’ and notes ‘speak’: the words of the poem are used (much like a text-sound composition) for their rhythmic and sonic qualities, while the musical materials, motivic and timbral in nature, act as symbols for the words and are frequently interchangeable with them. This inter-relationship of words and music (sound) attempts to achieve a coherent totality strangely expressing the connotative meaning of the poem through a peculiarly autonomous “syntax”. The work is comprised of various movements in which text and note symbols undergo contrasting processes working within the context of the larger process. Each word in the poem except for the last word

‘of’ has a corresponding ‘note symbol’ which is distinguishable by its own unique timbre as well as pitch. Once again, pitches are given within a spatially notated score. The composition has a microtonal dimension to it by the fact that the musical motivic material is echoed throughout the performance but never in perfectly pitched unisons. It parallels the textual motivic material in that the syllables are never repeated with the same exact intonation. In live performance, instrumentalists surround the audience, immersing them in sound, making them active participants in the ritual. TREE PIECE #10 is dedicated to the memory of my mother Charlotte B. Reid. It was commissioned by percussionist William Winant, who performed the premiere of the work together with the composer on March 31, 1982 at Mills College in Oakland, California.

TREE PIECE #8 is an intimate dialogue of sparse and delicate timbres selected by the solo percussionist within the restrictions given by the composer. Unlike many solo percussion works, the piece is introverted in character and requires an unusual combination of restraint with poetic spontaneity from the performer. Of all the Tree works, this composition probably encompasses the idea of growth or growing in the purest sense: sounds and silence are constantly growing from a source (the ‘root note’), ever-changing and expanding, but in subtle ways, sometimes barely perceptible. It might be compared to watching a tree grow from day to day. The Fibonacci series is not merely used as a compositional device as it is in other Tree Pieces, but is a visual as well as aural representation of the number sequence, and most aptly so considering the nature of the work. William Winant, for whom the piece was written, played the premiere performance May 29, 1984 at the New Performance Gallery in San Francisco.

TREE PIECE #21 is an environment in which taped sounds of a 19-minute improvisation by a bird (Pacific Parrotlet) interact with live performers playing a written score of bird-like motives to be sounded freely with great variety of expression and timing. The piece goes through various stages of notational transformation in which the performers acquire more freedom of improvisation along the way. In the beginning, all aspects of the music are strictly notated; then, the performers move into a section of spatially notated motives and pitches. Finally, a level of improvisation is arrived at in which the order, relationship and microtonal pitch alteration of motivic material can be manipulated by the performers so as to create music like birds. The performers have a challenge set before them in that they interact not only with each other but with a bird, the parrotlet whose life is but one long incredible improvisation. Violinist Mary Oliver commissioned the work and it is dedicated to her. She gave the premiere performance with William Winant September 13, 1985 at the New Performance Gallery in San Francisco.”

WILLIAM WINANT is a graduate of York University and Mills College. He studied with Robert Ashley and Lou Harrison, Western percussion with Bob Becker, John Bergamo and Karin Ervin, South Indian drumming with Trichy Sankaran, Balinese music with I. Wayan Suweca and I. Nyomann Sumandi, and Javanese music with K.R.J. Wasitodipuro. Winant is on the faculties of Mills College, U.C. Berkeley and U.C. Santa Cruz. He is known throughout the United States and Canada for his virtuosic and energetic performances.

\*The Fibonacci series is a summation sequence in which each number is the sum of the two preceding numbers, e.g., 1 1 2 3 5 8 13 etc. The series was introduced in the 13th century by the Italian monk Filius Bonacci, who derived it from plant and animal reproduction.

Recorded at Hyde Street Studios, San Francisco  
E.J. Emmons, engineer

Cover: PAUL KLEE: 1938, M4(184)  
“Trees”  
Drawing, Charcoal, Fabriano grob.  
43, 8: 29, 7 centimeters  
Private Swiss Collection  
©1988, copyright by COSMOPRESS, Geneva

©1988 Frog Recordings  
Copyright ©1988 Wendy Reid  
Published by Sound/Image Unlimited  
©©1988 Frog Recordings  
All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.  
Frog Recordings  
1326 Shattuck Avenue, No. 2  
Berkeley, California 94709

FR 1004 Stereo