



5 MINUTES WITH MONICA GERMINO

Violinist **Monica Germino** put her stamp on the Andriessen at 75 festival in and around Washington, DC, earlier this year with a violin concerto named after Vivaldi's muse and lover Anna Giro, and a violin recital in a charged environment of electronics, art installations, and images with punk-rock bassist/

turned-sound-designer Frank van der Weij.

Armed with a Joannes Baptista Ceruti (Cremona, 1802), on permanent loan from the Elise Mathilde Foundation, and a custom-made electric "violectra," the Amsterdam-based American/Dutch musician played a major role in the 75th

birthday celebrations of Dutch composer Louis Andriessen, the 2010 Grawemeyer Award winner (and also her husband).

The concerts featured music by Andriessen, Julia Wolfe, Michael Gordon, Kate Moore, Donnacha Dennehy, and other friends and colleagues. The festival closed with

the Aeolus Quartet playing Andriessen's complete quartets (all 60 minutes' worth). Whether she was playing the violin, electric violin, adapted violin, whispering, talking, or singing, Germino conveyed her passion with tour de force virtuosity and burning vulnerability.

—Laurence Vittes



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AUDITION DATES 2014/15

December 6, 2014 • January 23–24, 2015
February 6–7 • February 20–21, 2015

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The Blair String Quartet: (l-r) Felix Wang, cello; John Kochanowski, viola; Cornelia Heard, violin; Stephen Miahky, violin.

What's the one thing everyone should know about Louis Andriessen?

His music! Everyone should know his music. He writes riveting, powerful pieces with depth and irony and humor, music that packs a punch yet can turn on a dime and win listeners over with terrifyingly beautiful writing. He is a craftsman and a self-confessed thief—in the positive sense of the word, of course—stealing from those he admires who are often clever thieves themselves, like Bach, Stravinsky, Ravel, Miles Davis.

What's the one thing everyone should know about Monica Germino?

I have always been open to new sounds, new collaborations, and new techniques. I'm not afraid of trying almost anything, from running across a stage while sustaining long notes to playing on scaffolding 50 feet high.

One of the highest compliments I ever received was from a colleague who said, "You've never stopped studying." For me, that's part of being open, never feeling finished with anything, always learning.

How did these new violin recital shows you are doing with Frank van der Weij come about?

It started with the idea of turning the conventional violin recital upside down, reexamining preconceptions and expectations. A research grant gave us a flying start so we could try out all kinds of new techniques and build a substantial, wonderful—and still growing!—collection of new pieces.

We continue to seek out like-minded composers and feel incredibly lucky and honored to have such an amazing repertoire at our fingertips. Frank and I also work hard to put on a seamless show. For example, between each piece, we show videos of the composers talking about their work.

What do you like about performing with Frank van der Weij?

With Frank, I am in control of everything from A to Z. I have a hundred different things to think about—the lineup of pieces, transitions, timing, and the choreography of various changes of instruments and gear. At the same time, I have to pace myself through several wildly different pieces by various composers, allow for spontaneity,

and decide when to take a moment to speak to the audience.

What do you like about performing "La Girò?"

It's a huge challenge: I sing and play, speak, scream, whisper, and, of course, play the violin. This is all done from memory, which I love—I feel more free without the barrier of a music stand between me and the audience.

What was it like in the hall?

The atmosphere was charged. The audience

at the duo show was just incredible—people wouldn't stop clapping and many stayed around afterwards asking questions. A few people talked about tearing up during a piece by Kate Moore, which I found really touching. One piece in particular—Michael Gordon's "Industry"—has many, many fans.

So people are getting it.

People don't always understand what I'm doing right away.

"You play in a duo with a ... sound engineer?" they say. But once they hear the results, it's all clear. It just works. ■

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— Robert McDuffie



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