



YOU ARE HERE: LAT Home → Collections → Culture\_monster

## Review: Anne LeBaron's unexpected body of work can amaze at REDCAT

*A celebration of composer Anne LeBaron across two concerts at REDCAT also includes some works by her CalArts students.*

April 15, 2014 | Mark Swed | Los Angeles Times Music Critic

Anne LeBaron is a composer as transformer. She transforms instruments, such as putting objects on the strings of the harp to tease out hidden sounds. She transforms cultural contexts, be they Kazakh, Bach or Katrina.

She deals with what we know, with issues of our time and place. But her knack is for alternative realities, showing us the here and now from a point just slightly off the beaten track.



Lucy Shelton, left, and Anne LeBaron perform LeBaron's composition,... (Lawrence K. Ho, Los Angeles...)

Advertisement

## Discover #BMWstories

[bmw.com/bmwstories](http://bmw.com/bmwstories)

Tell us what #BMWstories means for you. Learn more about #BMWstories.

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

Critic's pick: Anne LeBaron portrait concerts

*April 10, 2014*

Review: Timur Bekbosunov rises above the 'Collapse' at...

*March 28, 2014*

Shelton adds luster to 'Philomel'

*November 18, 2002*

### MORE STORIES ABOUT

Culture\_monster

Culture

Not\_live\_web

Entertainment

AdChoices ▶

That, of course, makes it difficult to generalize about a two-part portrait of LeBaron in two concerts Saturday and Sunday at REDCAT. The programs were presented by CalArts, where LeBaron teaches exotic courses in hyperopera, music as surrealism and music as a contemplative process.

There were excerpts from her apocalyptic post-Katrina hyperopera, "Crescent City," and her opera-in-progress about LSD, "Psyche & Delia." There were pieces for her prepared harp. A post-Miles Davis trumpet was the instrument for Postmodern Peruvian shamanism, as was amplified flute. There is, in LeBaron's music, a leaving the body and a celebration of the body, meditations on death and breath.

### PHOTOS: Best classical concerts of 2013 | Mark Swed

The body, yes, but that doesn't mean you can put a finger on what LeBaron's music stands for. There is always another layer to uncover. But her work and her influence on that of others, always come back in some unexpected way to the body.

As one walked into REDCAT Saturday, a weightlifter was in the lobby huffing and puffing. The weights hit the floor with an amplified boom, part of James Klopffleisch's "Real Hard Work." LeBaron invited former students, many of whom are now the young new voices enlivening the L.A. music scene, to be part of her "portrait." They transform reality in their own ways. There is music at the gym if you listen.

Breath and the voice were behind most of the music heard over the two long concerts. In LeBaron's "Breathtails," a baritone (the cautious Ian Walker) finds a focus in yogic inhalation and exhalation and intones the texts of 13 short respiratory poems by Charles Bernstein to the accompaniment of string quartet and the breathy ancient Japanese flute, the shakuhachi (played with sustained elegance by Ralph Samuelson).

A short excerpt from the "Silent Steppe Cantata," which featured the versatile tenor Timur Bekbosunov and included Kazakh instruments mixed with Western ones, began with the lines "I was born with your sounds,/ with your sounds in my blood." Here folk music flowered into something slightly psychedelic.

### INTERACTIVE: High-earning conductors

In "The Good Man's Aria" from "Crescent City" — the worst-case operatic post-Katrina scenario was given its premiere two years ago by the experimental opera company the Industry — voodoo is evoked

in a powerful performance of spooked gospel by bass-baritone Cedric Berry. In Lucy Shelton's impassioned performance of "Transfiguration," based on a poem by Djuna Barnes, soprano Lucy Shelton raged against the flesh but was comforted by ritualistic interjections from harp, flute and percussion.

LeBaron's students have followed her by taking their own unpredictably diverse paths. Twisting all that is around him, Klopfleisch played off the drip of his shower and a bad joke heard on "Roseanne." Daniel Corral's "Comic Book" proved a string quartet of slippery snippets and sound effects. Two arias from Andrew McIntosh's opera-in-progress "Bonnie & Clyde" were moving meditations by others caught in the couple's wake.

## Fitness

[hammer.de/Stuttgart](http://hammer.de/Stuttgart)

Fitnessgeräte in Ihrer Nähe kaufen. Direkt vom Hersteller in Stuttgart!

AdChoices ▶

Chris Schunk's "Romance" was with the piano and it was a crazy, dark one. He walked on wearing a robe and singing, "I want your love, baby." He played romantic nonsense at the keyboard and then freaked out. His program note accuses the piano of being an instrument of sexual abuse. The instrument was a Yamaha, but no serial number given.

LeBaron's LSD opera, "Psyche & Delia," will revolve around the last day of writer Aldous Huxley's life, and she ended her program Sunday with a tantalizing preview. Shelton, as Laura Huxley and accompanied by LeBaron on harp, was her husband's ecstatically rapt guide toward a new light.

There was plenty of other light in LeBaron's portrait. Daniel Rosenboom's cool trumpet solo illuminated "Way of Light." Pianist Richard Valitutto was quietly dazzling in the meditative "Creación de las Aves." Camilla Hoytenga provided the spiritualist blaze in "Sachamama."

But that light of "Psyche & Delia" was like none other. Laura Huxley's aria was followed by a bassoon duet that, with the added benefit of electronics, mimicked the sounds of frogs and hysterical monkeys. It was amazing.

[mark.swed@latimes.com](mailto:mark.swed@latimes.com)

MORE



PHOTOS: Hollywood stars on stage



CHEAT SHEET: Spring arts preview 2014



PHOTOS: Arts and culture in pictures

## ReiseEcke im Kaufland

[reiseecke-pforzheim.de](http://reiseecke-pforzheim.de)

Musical-Tickets bei uns buchen. Besuchen Sie uns im Kaufland West.

AdChoices ▶

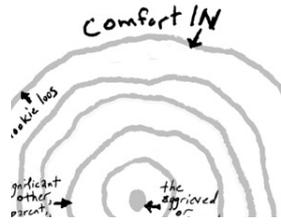
---

FEATURED

---



Death of Scott Sterling, son of Clippers owner, ruled accidental



How not to say the wrong thing



Bree Walker talks about her sobriety, her arrest, and that mug shot

**MORE:**

Mayor feels a 'sense of failure' in marital split

Seizure Led to FloJo's Death

His 104 scores make his case

Brutal Murder by Teen-Age Girls Adds to Britons' Shock