

Preview

No Exit plans two concerts celebrating the life and work of Raymond Scott

by Mike Telin



“Like most of us, as a kid I watched the Warner Brothers cartoons. Of course I didn't know that was his music,” says No Exit new music ensemble artistic director, Timothy Beyer. “But when as a teenager I heard the proper jazz versions of these pieces I remember thinking, I've heard that before!” Whose music is Beyer speaking of? The one and only [Raymond Scott](#). On Friday, November 15 at Spaces Gallery and Monday, November 18 in Drinko Hall at Cleveland State University, No Exit begins their fifth season with a celebration of the life and work of the great Raymond Scott.

The concerts feature new arrangements of some of Scott's most recognizable works by Geoffrey Burleson (*Powerhouse Passacaglia*), Russ Gershon (*Snake Woman & Song of India*), Greg D'Alessio (*War Dance for Wooden Indians*), Christopher Auerbach-Brown (*The Man at the Typewriter*) and Eric Gonzalez (*Celebration On the Planet Mars*). The concerts also feature new compositions inspired by Scott's music by James Praznik (*Turkey in Twilight*) and Timothy Beyer (*Egyptian Barn Dance Meditation*).

Timothy Beyer says that “Scott was a truly brilliant guy whose genius couldn't be contained within a single medium. For instance, he was one of the early pioneers of electronic music — some of which will be featured on the program along with pieces inspired by his Quintette — and he developed many early devices for composing and creating electronic works. He really had his own unique sensibility, a very singular vision as to how music should be, and didn't seem too concerned with what everyone else was doing. Just a remarkable artist who throughout his rather prodigious career always seemed to be doing something all his own.”

Why did Beyer decide to look inside the music of Raymond Scott? “I've been a fan for a long time so there wasn't really one moment in time where I decided to figure it out. But it has been something we as a group had discussed for a long time.” And what does he find interesting about Scott's music? “Actually there's a lot of things, but the one thing that is a common thread about all of the composers who we choose to celebrate is that

they all have their own vision. They had their own ideas about music and they weren't bothered one way or the other about what the rest of the music world was doing."

"There has been a big resurgence of interest in Scott's music over the last decade or so, in great part due to the efforts of people like Irwin Chusid," remarks Beyer. "While Raymond Scott may still not be a household name, my guess is that most folks have heard his music whether they know it or not. I'm certain that there will be many people at the concerts thinking to themselves, 'I've heard that tune before!'"

Composer/Arranger Chris Auerbach-Brown says that he knew of Raymond Scott's work from watching and being connected to cartoon music. "I've known about his music on the periphery for a few years now. Then Tim Beyer gave me a collection of Scott's recordings and asked me to do an arrangement and it sounded like an interesting project."

While listened to the recordings, Auerbach-Brown stumbled across *The Girl with the Typewriter*, which he has re-titled *The Man with the Typewriter*. "Scott did interesting things in the score that were not entirely obvious. He wrote out all of the solos, although they sound improvised. I didn't discover that until I had done the arrangement."

In Scott's work, the typewriter was represented by woodblocks and a triangle while Auerbach-Brown has called for a manual typewriter and added solos for a couple of the instrumentalists and included an improvised solo for the typewriter.

Auerbach-Brown thinks that Scott had a unique perspective on music. "He was very much a tinkerer and experimentalist. His taste in jazz was a little more controlled and he was a little more like Frank Zappa who also wrote out a lot of the solos. It's not that Scott wasn't interested in improvisation but he was leery of jazz players who might not lay down a good solo and cause the piece to suffer."

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