

Contemporary Players Artist Chats

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This is Artist Chats brought to you by San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. You'll hear contemporary music's most inspired personalities share insight into their art, their life, and their upcoming performance with the Contemporary Music Players.

Season 1 Episode 6

Shiver Lung 2: the Performer's Perspective

Artistic Director Eric Dudley speaks with percussionist William Winant about what it's like to perform Ash Fure's *Shiver Lung 2*.

Eric Dudley: And with us now is William Winant, a percussionist with the Contemporary players since almost the beginning, right? When was it that you first signed on with the group?

William Winant: I first started playing the the group as an extra in 1981 and officially joined the group, I think in the '87-'88 season

Eric: Right, so from the early '80s you were active-(**William:** right,) with us and playing

William: almost forty years.

Eric: Yeah, so a very sizable chunk of this fifty years that this group has been in existence. So, we were just talking with composer Ash Fure about *Shiver Lung 2*; this amazing piece for some very unconventional kinds of percussion instruments, right? Talk to us about your experience in learning this piece and putting it together, what are some of the challenges that are involved in performing a piece like this?

William: Well, it was the first time that I ever worked with a piece where the loudspeakers were the actual generator of the percussion sounds that we were going to make. (**Eric:** right.) So that was uh, a kind of unusual challenge, also, a lot of the instruments that I used were instruments that I used for the first time, making things like, um, Mardi Gras beads and metal chains, different kinds of Mardi Gras and party beads (**Eric:** mmhm) is one way to make (*sounds of beads being used percussively*) to make sounds using the loudest subwoofers with these things, using and then there are other things, like, here I have sort of a *voodoo*-type rattle. (**Eric:** mmhm) and um, she also came up with these, um, wind flaps, which vibrate, the paper vibrates as you bring them down and up and down, closer and further away from the

subwoofers **(Eric: Mmhm)** and the interesting thing is that the audience for most of the piece doesn't hear the subwoofers they're vibrating below the threshold of hearing, so they're vibrate, I don't they could be vibrating at sixty cycles or thirty cycles or twenty cycles per second so you don't really hear, um, the actual sound of the speakers that you only start to hear the speakers when you put objects on the speakers and then they start to vibrate at twenty cycles or fifteen cycles per second, things like that.

Eric: Right, so there's this this this background the entire time of of a sort of lower level of sound that we don't hear and then the objects place on the instruments are then creating the timbral shift

William: exactly, or within proximity of those other subwoofers then you start to hear -it activates the percussion sound, or the sounds that Ashley, or Ash is having us use. **(Eric: right)** so it's a really nice concept, um very unusual, I totally love it!