

ANNA CLYNE ON <<REWIND>>



Anna Clyne, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Mead Composer-in-Residence, talks about her piece <<rewind>> and her work as a composer.

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I wrote <<rewind>> in 2005. It was my first serious attempt at orchestral writing. The entire work is about seven minutes for orchestra and tape. At the end, you'll hear a literal rewind of the music itself, prerecorded and then triggered by a laptop.

There were three sources of inspiration for the piece. I'm especially inspired by collaborations with other artists outside of music, especially choreography. While I was writing the piece, I had in mind the work of Kitty McNamee, the artistic director of Hysterica Dance Company in Los Angeles. I love her use of repetitive physical gestures to create a structure for her work. So, throughout <<rewind>> there are some very stark percussive hits that recur throughout the piece, which were written with Kitty's choreography in mind.

Another inspiration for <<rewind>> is a visual image of analog tape actually rewinding – scrolling backwards, skipping, and freezing – suggesting the chaotic, frenetic quality to the piece, which moves very fast.

I wrote the piece when I was living in New York City. I would work during the day and did most of the writing at night. And New York is certainly a city that does not sleep. While working, I heard a bunch of sirens going by, and the pitches and textures sounded great. So, I took that sound and put it in a section where the horns have a slow glissandi and bending, sustaining tones. It's interesting how environment can influence a piece.

The work is demanding for the strings because there is a lot of repetition, which is physically quite challenging. The percussion parts also are very challenging because I only left just enough time for the musicians to switch instruments. But the players always find a way to do it.

Having the CSO perform <<rewind>> at Carnegie Hall (on tour in April) is so exciting. It feels like a completion of a circle for me: I lived in New York, wrote the piece there, and then came here to Chicago. It feels quite special.

It's a great honor to work with Maestro Muti. Of course, he is such a unique musician and human being. His vision of bringing music to communities of people, his real care for music and its ability to speak so directly to people regardless of background – those are such strong impressions. One of the lovely things about this residency is joining such a wonderful team – the administrative staff and the musicians themselves. Meeting the musicians has made it so much more personal. It's not just an orchestra performing the work, but individuals. And that's a very unusual position to be in. Usually, an orchestra is much more anonymous.

Totally relocating to a new city can be quite daunting, but I've just felt so welcome – not only by the CSO but by people in the community. And that outlook in the neighborhood and city creates a positive environment for creativity. It is a really fertile environment to be in, so I'm very excited to be here!

www.paulatsurutani.com