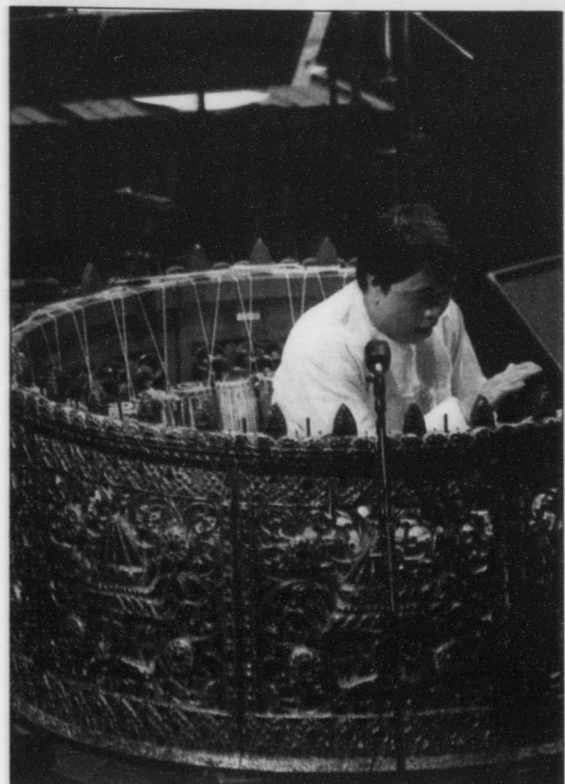


Bang on a Can brings modern global sound



Burmese drummer Kyaw Kyaw Naing plays the pat wang, a traditional Burmese drum, during the Bang on a Can All-Stars show Saturday.

Members of Wilco, Sonic Youth play

BY NASH ROBERTS
STAFF WRITER

A genre-defying blend of musical compositions by the Bang on a Can All-Stars challenged audience members' perceptions of musical form Saturday at Memorial Hall.

The show was highlighted by original compositions from guest performers such as Burmese pat wang master Kyaw Kyaw Naing, Sonic Youth guitarist Lee Ranaldo and Glenn Kotche, drummer for rock group Wilco.

"We're not trying to do a sampler," said Evan Ziporyn, clarinetist with the group. "We believe in all the music we do, and in this case, the music traveled about as wide as music can travel — from a Burmese drummer to Wilco's drummer."

The first half of the show featured traditional Burmese pieces and original compositions from Naing played on the pat wang. The pat wang is a traditional Burmese percussion instrument constructed with rows of

drums tuned to different pitches that produce a sound unlike anything heard in Western traditional music. The sound can best be described as a xylophone made of drums but played with the hands.

"He's this incredibly gentle and meek person, but he knows exactly how he wants his music to go, and he doesn't settle for less in any way," Ziporyn said of Naing.

Naing's performance as a whole was intensely orchestrated and intricate, each piece demanding the utmost skill and musicianship.

The second half featured the world premiere of compositions from Ranaldo and Kotche.

"Ranaldo's piece was really in-your-face intense noise, but the guitar provided unique direction," said Grace Kennerly, who attended the performance.

The composition featured Ranaldo playing guitar with both a bow and a screwdriver and was reminiscent of his dissonant sound

found in Sonic Youth's music.

Ranaldo screamed above the din of the band to keep the musicians on beat as he attacked his guitar without mercy.

"I think it was some of the thickest, most intense music I've heard in a while," said audience member Tripp Gobble.

The sound even drove some unprepared for his furious and brooding music out of the auditorium.

But others in attendance, such as Brian White, said they were willing to give the abrasive music a chance.

"It was a little challenging at times but a nice mixture of Southeast Asian music and noise," he said.

And while some were critical of the avant-garde nature of the performance, Ziporyn had his own thoughts on how to make the music easier for audience members to digest.

"I would have ended with Lee's piece because it's so overwhelming," he said.

Kotche's pieces featured intricate

rhythmic exchanges between Kotche and Bryce Dessner, another drummer. The pieces' melodies seemed to cautiously tread between the broken and fluctuating beat of the drums.

In comparison to Ranaldo's performance, Kotche's pieces were warmer and more accessible.

"I thought it was a widely ranging concert," said Allen Anderson, professor of music composition at UNC who attended the performance. "It's interesting to hear musicians writing for completely different ensembles, so it was a very eclectic evening."

And that eclectic nature is what allows Bang on a Can All-Stars to push the limits of what people have come to expect from modern music.

"I enjoyed the program selections, both the ethnic and contemporary pieces," said audience member Kristin Blank. "I enjoyed the cacophonous noise of the contemporary compositions."

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