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Mobius/Boston

David Moss & Richard Lerman: Sound Art

Sound Art at Mobius offers one of the few opportunities in the area to see and hear the New Music/Sound Art fringe. As part of this long-running series, Mobius Sound Art curator Richard Lerman brought Vermont multi-percussionist David Moss to town for two solo concerts and one collaborative performance. Moss works with unusual percussive instruments, many of his own invention and some more closely resembling "traditional" types. He has worked in several different idioms, from rock to jazz to sound sculpture. Lerman's stated interest is in the "amplification" of little sounds into big ones." He sees the microphone as an "audio microscope."

With the assistance of a few looping devices and a slew of homemade "instruments," Moss and Lerman took their audience on a romp through a sonic fun house. Heads turned and strained in efforts to determine the origin of the sounds on stage. Moss used a hot pink vibrator to play a steel drum; Lerman played a variety of devices, most of which were "wired" with some sort of microphone. Computer floppydisks, filmstrips, and sheets of metal tape were among the objects in Lerman's unusual audio vocabulary. He played sheets of metal with a blowtorch and played plastic drinking straws by cutting them down bit by bit; as the "wired" plastic straw decreased in size, the sounds it emitted climbed the musical scale. Moss worked with a similar variety of homemades, but worked best when he used his unusual vocal style—somewhere between scat and sound poetry—to weave the disparate textures together. Using a headset microphone and a standard vocal mike, he alternately sang live and through a digital-delay setup, sounding as much like television's Latka (*Taxi*) as he did a Dada sound poet. By the end of the show, cymbals had been flung across the room, and flaming sparklers had been "played" through their bizarre sound system. Seeing how these sounds are made is half the fun. Moss and Lerman have taken baby's busy box into the adult realm, and in doing so, restored the too-often forgotten joys of discovery.

Kevin Concannon

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