Bruce Adolphe

SELF COMES TO MIND

Based on a text by Antonio Damasio

Commissioned with support from Joan and Allan Fisch

World Premiere Performance at Lefrak Theater
American Museum of Natural History
May 3, 2009

Yo-Yo Ma, cello
Ayano Kataoka, Percussion
John Ferrari, Percussion

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SELF COMES TO MIND

Duration: Approximately 21 minutes

I. When Mind First in the Body Bloomed 1
II. Self Came to Mind 20
III. Discovery 39

Instrumentation:
Solo Cello
Percussion I: chimes, gong, vibraphone, marimba
Percussion II: chromatic crotales, suspended cymbal, four tom-toms, marimba

Text by Antonio Damasio available upon request

Interactive visual images of brain scans available upon request
SELF COMES TO MIND

Notes on the collaboration with neuroscientist Antonio Damasio

*Self Comes to Mind* is the third work I have composed based on Antonio Damasio’s writing. The first two – *Body Loops* for piano and chamber orchestra and *Memories of a Possible Future* for piano and string quartet – were inspired by ideas in his book *Descartes’ Error*. *Self Comes to Mind* differs in that it was a collaboration with Antonio.

I had been considering some passages from *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, but could not resist asking Antonio if he would write something specifically for me. He agreed, and asked me about the musical instruments that would play the work, how it would represent mind or consciousness, and suggested that we get a great musician who could be the “protagonist” of the work. We agreed that Yo-Yo Ma would be a great choice for this role. Yo-Yo and I discussed the project, and he suggested that I use percussion, and he also encouraged Antonio and me to explore a visualization of the music and text.

Antonio’s wife and colleague Hanna Damasio is renowned for her brain scan images, and her book of scans is regarded as an international standard by neuroscientists. It was a no brainer (sorry) to use her images.

Antonio sent me several versions of his text on the evolution of the mind, which eventually he titled *Self Comes to Mind*. The text is profoundly poetic, as anyone who has read his books would expect it to be. While the ideas behind the text are rooted in scientific thought, the language is simple, vivid, unforgettable. Antonio’s most recent book, due out in 2010, will be called *Self Comes to Mind*.

In composing the music for *Self Comes to Mind*, I followed closely the qualities of the text, namely its narrative energy, rhythm of images, emotional texture, and the articulation of specific biological concepts that suggested musical parallels. The cello serves as the focus of the narrative and the percussion instruments are employed to amplify and modulate ideas, textures, and colors.

Because I conceived the music in rich, multi-layered harmonies and contrapuntal melodic patterns, it was necessary to have two percussionists rather than one. In addition, with two percussionists, the players can surround the solo cello, giving the cello more acoustic and visual focus as the protagonist/mind of the work.

Even though I have composed many works that seem to have a program – including music "about" abstract expressionist paintings, Shakespearian characters, Gauguin’s journals, and even dinosaurs – I am fully aware that in music it is impossible to separate technique and expression. For me, it is never a matter of musical illustration but rather finding technical and expressive parallels to extra-musical ideas.

Science is particularly inspiring and provocative for composition because it uses terms and images that embrace musical action. But more specifically, neuroscience for me has opened up a world of musical ideas because I have come to suspect that music itself is an expression of our physical minds, or the way our minds work. It has long been accepted that much musical rhythm stems obviously from our pulse, our circulatory system and also from our breathing patterns. It seems likely that some aspects of music reflect how our memories work, how we retrieve, organize, reconstitute, and recognize what we know from the past or imagine for the future. Antonio Damasio’s words are a wonderful combination of poetic elegance and scientific brilliance. His science writing gives me, as a composer, images that provoke structural consequences in the music, and his poetic nature allows for the ambiguity necessary to abstraction and musical expression.

BRUCE ADOLPHE, 2009
Bruce Adolphe (b. 1955) is a renowned composer whose music is performed throughout the world, as well as the author several books on music, an innovative educator, and a versatile performer. His multifaceted career in music is obvious from the positions he holds concurrently: Resident Lecturer and Director of Family Concerts for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, founding creative director of PollyRhythm Productions, and comic keyboard quiz-master of NPR’s weekly radio program Piano Puzzlers.

As a composer, Adolphe has been written works for many of the world’s most renowned artists, including Itzhak Perlman, Sylvia McNair, the Beaux Arts Trio, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the National Symphony, the Caramoor Festival, St. Luke’s Orchestra, the New York Chamber Symphony, the Metropolitan Opera Guild, the Brentano String Quartet, the Miami Quartet, The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Chicago Chamber Musicians, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and many others. His many compositions include four operas and several theater pieces, all of which have been produced throughout the United States. He has been composer-in-residence at many festivals and institutions, including the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Chamber Music Northwest, Music from Angel Fire, Bravo! Colorado, the Grand Canyon Festival, the Moab Festival, the Virginia Arts Festival, the Folger Shakespeare Theater in Washington, D.C., the Perlman Music Program, the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, Chamber Music Virginia, the O.K. Mozart Festival and SummerFest La Jolla. Adolphe served as the Distinguished Composer-in-Residence at the Mannes College of Music for the 2003-04 term.

Formerly on the faculties of the Juilliard School and New York University and a Visiting Lecturer at Yale, Adolphe has been the lecturer of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center since 1992, and has been featured in nationally broadcast Live from Lincoln Center television programs. In addition to his lecture series, Inside Chamber Music, now in its 15th season at Lincoln Center, Adolphe was a featured lecturer from 2001 to 2005 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where his series was called A Composer’s View. A much sought-after speaker and concert host, Adolphe has appeared at most of the major concert series in the United States, as well as at education conferences, festivals, and competitions.

Adolphe’s compositions for young people include Marita and Her Heart’s Desire, recorded on Telarc with Itzhak Perlman and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; Little Red Riding Hood and Goldilocks, recorded with Dr. Ruth Westheimer; The Amazing Adventure of Alvin Allegretto, a comic opera written for the Metropolitan Opera Guild; Urban Scènes for Kids and String Quartet; and many others. Adolphe’s works for young people have been performed throughout the world by such orchestras and ensembles as the Los Angeles and Orpheus Chamber Orchestras, the Saint Louis, Milwaukee, Orlando, and Louisville Symphonies, and ensembles and orchestras in Europe and Australia.

Commissions include What Dreams May Come?, celebrating Mr. Adolphe’s 50th Birthday in 2005 for the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia with Ignat Solzhenitsyn, music director, and The Tiger’s Ear: Listening to Abstract Paintings, for the Armstrong Chamber Concerts.

Adolphe’s music has been recorded on the Telarc, Naxos, CRI, Delos, Koch, Summit and PollyRhythm labels. The Milken Archive’s/Naxos “American Classics” CD of Adolphe’s music inspired by Jewish subjects was one of five recordings that won a Grammy for producer David Frost in 2005. Adolphe’s film scores include the permanent documentary at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.
for Antonio Damasio & Yo-Yo Ma

Self Comes To Mind

I. When Mind First in the Body Bloomed

Bruce Adolphe

Text by
Antonio Damasio

I. When Mind First in the Body Bloomed

Mysteriously, with wonder $j = 50$

Chimes

Gong

Vibraphone

Marimba

Violoncello

Crotale

Cymbals

Tom-toms

Marimba

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More flowing, \( \cdot \dot{=} \; 100 \)

More flowing, \( \cdot \dot{=} \; 100 \)

\( \text{PP with pedal, ad lib} \)

\( \text{espr.} \)

\( \text{mp} \)

\( \text{pp} \)
37
Vib.
\( \text{(with bow)} \)

38
rit.
Tempo primo

40
rit.
Tempo primo

\( \text{freely} \)
**Vib.**

51

\[ \text{hushed but intense} \]

52

**Vc.**

\[ \text{pp} \]

**Mar.**
Tempo primo $\frac{3}{4} = 50$

Vib. (with mallets)

Vc.

Cym.

Tempo primo $\frac{3}{4} = 50$

Crot.

Cym.
Gong

Vib.

Vc.

Crot.

Mar.

73

78

14

73

Vib. (vibes)

Vc.

Crot.

Mar.

78

Slower, dreamily

78

mp fade by end of measure

mp

ppp

Slower, dreamily

mp

pp

Vib.

Vc.

Crot.

Mar.

pp

ppp

pp
II. Self Came to Mind

Quickly, with energy $\frac{\text{d}}{\text{d}} = 158$

Vc. $\frac{\text{d}}{\text{d}} = 158$
Maestoso

Vib.

\[ \text{ff} \]

Vc.

\[ \text{ff} \]

Crot.

\[ \text{ff} \]

Cym.

\[ \text{ff} \]

Mar.

\[ \text{Maestoso} \]

Chim.

\[ \text{let ring, no tremolo} \]

Gong

\[ \text{ff} \]

Vc.

\[ \text{ff} \]

Mar.

\[ \text{ff} \]

(let ring, no tremolo)
III. Discovery

Passionately $\dot{=} 76$

A Tempo

Vib.

Vc.

Mar.

Passionately $\dot{=} 76$

slower, espr.

expansively

A Tempo

$\dot{=} 76$
285
Vib.

Vc.

Mar.

290
Vib.

Vc.

Mar.

295
Vib.

Vc.

Mar.
Perusal
Slower, expansively \( \frac{d}{\dd}=66 \)

\( \text{Vib.} \)

\( \text{Vc.} \)

\( \text{Mar.} \)