

Catherine Christer Hennix – *Selected Early Keyboard Works*

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By Kevin Press



Swedish-American artist Catherine Christer Hennix has been something of an unsung hero for too long. The composer, philosopher, poet, mathematician and visual artist was an early experimenter in computer music in the 1960s, work that placed her alongside luminaries like La Monte Young and Henry Flynt, with whom she collaborated on numerous occasions.

Perhaps as a result of her multiple talents, she did not achieve real fame in any of her areas of expertise. She studied with Pandit Pran Nath, the raga master. She was a professor of math and computer science. She earned the Centenary Prize Fellow Award by the Clay Mathematics Institute in 2000 for her work with Alexander Esenin-Volpin, a respected Russian mathematician and poet.

Presumably, that mix of numbers and music contributed to her interest in just intonation composition. JI has to do with tunings; for example, a pair of tones at 300 Hz and 200 Hz are both whole number intervals of 100 Hz. That — in nosebleed high-level terms — is just intonation.

This double-LP release is the first of a planned series (it's also her first ever full-length recording on vinyl). and comes at something of a moment for the 70-year-old wearer of many hats.

She presented her first solo museum exhibition in more than 40 years at the Stedelijk in Amsterdam. She is publishing two volumes of her writing with Blank Forms, under the titles *Poësy Matters* and *Other Matters*. And she recently wrapped a retrospective of her visual art at the Empty Gallery in Hong Kong.

The early pieces presented here are mesmerizing. While they hearken back to a richly imaginative period in new music, there is a timelessness about them driven by innovation. It's a remarkable thing to be ahead of your time. It's another thing altogether to be ahead of your grandchildren's time.

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