



Jorge Liderman, 1957-2008

February 4th, 2008 · Contemporary Classical, Deaths

The composer Jorge Liderman died Sunday morning after reportedly jumping in front of an oncoming BART train in the Berkeley, CA area. I had initially heard of him after coming across his name on a bulletin board in the early 80's at the U of Chicago, and when I saw the news item about his untimely death at the age of 50, it caught my attention. Of Argentine descent, Liderman was being increasingly performed, although I regret that I actually never have heard a note of his music. The circumstances of his death are currently under investigation. (Update: a newer and fuller article from the San Francisco Chronicle.)

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1 davidcoll // Feb 4, 2008 at 12:46 pm

Jorge was an inspiration for many Berkeley students. This is a shock. There is a San Francisco Contemporary Music Players concert tonight with a premiere of his. Though it's a very untimely and tragic moment, I think that it would be the best tribute to his life and legacy, to hear where he was heading musically.

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2 zeno // Feb 4, 2008 at 12:51 pm

Thank you for reporting this, David. I liked the guitar and chamber music of his that I heard in Berkeley.

With deep sympathy to Mr. Liderman's wife, family, colleagues, and friends.

Berkeley-based composer John Thow, whose works I also admired — perhaps a bit more — died, also prematurely, almost one year ago:

<http://music.berkeley.edu/Thow.html>

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3 Reynold Tharp // Feb 4, 2008 at 1:22 pm

This is immensely sad news and came as a complete shock. Jorge was not just an excellent composer who was greatly respected by his colleagues and by so many performers. He was such a generous, committed, and serious composition teacher as well. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and worked with him over the years.

4 Richard Friedman // Feb 4, 2008 at 2:16 pm

I was hoping to see Jorge tonight at the world premiere of his *Furthermore...* for solo violin (with Carla Kihlstedt). This came as a total shock. I don't know how to respond. I'd met Jorge a number of times, had him on my radio program on KPFA many years ago when he came to UC Berkeley. And featured his recent CDs on my current *Music from Other Minds* radio programs. I'm still planning to go to the SF Contemporary Music Players concert tonight. It will probably be a very sad affair.

The SF Chronicle article by Josh Kosman is at <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/02/04/BAFGURL71.DTL>

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5 phil fried // Feb 4, 2008 at 2:18 pm

This is a shock—It seems as if it was only yesterday that we were working together at the U of C. My deepest sympathy to all.

Phil Fried

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6 Cary Boyce // Feb 5, 2008 at 1:47 am

This is such terrible news. It points up the fragility of the human spirit. My sympathies to all who knew him.

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7 eitan steinberg // Feb 5, 2008 at 6:42 am

devastating news. jorge, one of my very best and closest friends, is gone. listen to his music, and remember his big amd loving heart.

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8 Brian Kane // Feb 5, 2008 at 10:18 am

This is horribly sad news. I wish the best to all the composers who studied with him and knew him as a friend, to his colleagues who will miss him terribly, and especially to his wife Mimi.

When I was a much younger composer, Jorge was a tremendous beacon of support, who encouraged me in ways that, without exaggeration, simply changed my life. While being so generous, he was also so incredibly reserved. I doubt that anyone realized the depths of his sorrow. Without cliché, Jorge truly let his music speak for him.

That music often retrieved from the musical past ideas and structures to be re-thought and re-invented. I'm thinking not only of Hoquetus or Ut Re Me Fa Sol La but also his use of formal structures like chaconnes, or setting of traditional materials like separdic songs or even the Song of Songs. I always felt that this demonstrated more than simply musical intelligence but rather a tremendous love of the musical past and present.

Jorge, we'll miss you.

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9 Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez // Feb 5, 2008 at 11:25 am

Jorge was a dear friend and an extraordinary composer. few people could claim to possess the same sincerity and authenticity that made Jorge's music so enjoyable. May his music, full of spark and imagination live forever.

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10 Georg Hajdu // Feb 5, 2008 at 7:09 pm

I studied with Jorge in the early to mid 90s. We were on as friendly terms as a professor and a graduate student could be, paying racket ball on a regular basis, going out for beers and even once sharing a locker when I forget my UC Berkeley student card. While he was generally a private person, I wouldn't say that he was distant to me. He was an extremely sincere person and artist, who would tell you his opinion even if it hurt. This way, he was a rare species, in "I loved your piece" country. His music became better and better over the years, distancing himself from the more dry and academic style of his earlier works. I once met him by chance in Mexico City in 2002 at a performance of one of his pieces, which I found very impressive in his personal adaptation of the current minimalist style.

I regret that I stopped communicating with him after he didn't show up for a talk I had set up for him in Hamburg (where I live and teach now). I suppose that this might have been a symptom of his increasing psychological trouble. But, I had just decided to call him again in March, on a trip to Northern California. Very sad that I won't have the chance anymore.

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