

"All the News  
That's Fit to Print"

# The New York Times

Late Edition

Today, sunshine yielding to clouds, mild, high 49. Tonight, turning colder, clearing, low 24. Tomorrow, cold, blustery and mostly sunny, high 32. Weather map appears on Page A16.

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## WEEKEND Arts MOVIES PERFORMANCES

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JULIETA CERVANTES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The guest artist Iva Bittova performed with members of the Bang on a Can All-Stars on Wednesday at Merkin Concert Hall.

### New Works That Employ Or Disregard Electronics

Bang on a Can's People's Commissioning Fund is a lovely idea. Concertgoers contribute whatever they can afford, and Bang on a Can, the new-music organization, commissions a few new works, usually from young composers. The scores are played by the Bang on a Can All-Stars at an annual concert and recorded for broadcast on WNYC-FM.

That's the theory, anyway, and it's mostly what happens. But the fine print in the program book shows that the grass-roots ideal is not easily reached. After the long list of contributors, the Greenwall Foundation and the Jerome Foundation are also thanked for their support. Not that there's any shame in that; it

#### Three pieces commissioned by Bang on a Can.

always seemed unlikely that a few hundred small contributions could yield decent commissioning fees.

This year's crop — works by Tristan Perich, Erdem Helvacioğlu and Ken Thomson — were performed on Wednesday evening at Merkin Concert Hall.

Mr. Perich and Mr. Helvacioğlu provided works that mixed electronic sound and standard (although amplified) instruments. Mr. Thomson, the saxophonist in the punk-jazz band Gutbucket, wrote a virtuoso piece for the ensemble itself, with no electronic overlay.

The commissioned works by Tristan Perich, Erdem Helvacioğlu and Ken Thomson will be broadcast on March 19 on "New Sounds," WNYC, 93.9 FM; [wnyc.org](http://wnyc.org).

#### Bang on a Can All-Stars Merkin Concert Hall

In Mr. Perich's "All Possible Paths," the electronic component had the sharp-edged, undulating quality of the Farfisa organ in Philip Glass's music from the 1970s, and the ensemble's moves were the insistently repeating figures that drove Mr. Glass's early music as well. Harmonic movement was glacial until a long coda in which everything stopped except a gentle electronic sound playing a chord progression rather than single-chord repetition.

Mr. Helvacioğlu built the electronic track for his "Lossada Taka" by processing recordings of the Bang on a Can players and adding other elements as well: at one point, a woman's voice. His writing was less overtly Minimalist than Mr. Perich's. Instead he created a hazy, atmospheric sound in which the ensemble wove guitar, clarinet, piano, percussion and bass lines in a stream of brief, varied and mostly disconnected episodes.

Mr. Thomson's "seasonal disorder" is a high-energy, angry work, inspired by reading the news every morning before composing. Mr. Thomson's alarm yielded a texture laced with power chords, screaming clarinet lines and cluster-laden piano writing. In the end it is sheer madness, in a good, thrillingly visceral way.

In the second half of the concert the Czech violinist and singer Iva Bittova offered an invitingly quirky vocal and violin improvisation, and was joined by the Bang on a Can players for her song cycle "Elida." Ms. Bittova gave the musicians plenty to do, but her riveting singing — which ranges from rough-hewn rusticity to eccentric leaping in the style of Kate Bush — remained the focus of the performance.

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