
Sunday Night Multimedia Series
"The Democratic Composition Project"

Montana State University Department of Music
Reynolds Recital Hall, Howard Hall
October 18, 2009 - 7:30 PM

PROGRAM

Built Environment

Daniel Blinkhorn

Aerial Boundaries

x+Asiny, y+ Asinx
Pack (x,y,z)

Jonathan Hallstrom

Through the Eyes of a Child

Hannah Gilmour

Liquid Amber

Maggi Payne

S

Maurice Wright

Opus -3

Jude Weirmeir

Laurel Yost, piano

The Democratic Composition Project

Composers/Artists listed in program notes
Audio: Kristi McGarity
Video: Brian Christiansen

Built Environment refers to the ever changing urban landscapes that provide settings for human activity, ranging from comprehensive public superstructures to personal and intimate places and spaces.

By situating all manner of kinetic and gestural material within an evolving, at times densely populated environment, I hoped to provide a composition that harnesses some of the energy and vitality of various built environments in which we live.

At times I sought to build interrupted or episodic trajectories that felt almost incomplete, in an attempt to convey a feeling of that which is unfinished, as with the flux of our many built environments.

Programmatically, there are two halves to the work. The first presents a macroscopic reflection of the built environment, whilst the second focuses on some of the more detailed sonic components found within a variety of built environments.

Daniel Blinkhorn is a composer and digital media artist currently residing in Sydney, Australia. His works have been performed, exhibited, and presented internationally at numerous festivals, concert halls, conferences and loci, and his citations/selections between 2006 and 2008 include: Winner - 8e Concours Luc Ferrari International d'art radiophonique pour sons fixés et Instrument, Winner - 9th International Electroacoustic Composition Competition Música Viva, 2nd Prize Diffusion 2008 and Diffusion 2006 International Electroacoustic Composition Competition. He has studied at a number of universities including the University of New England, University of Griffith, Australian Institute of Music, College of Fine Arts University of New South Wales, and the University of Wollongong - where he received his doctoral degree. Other degrees include a B. Mus (honors), M.Mus, and a MA(r). More information about Daniel, as well as recent events and samples of his work, can be found at www.bookofsand.com.au.

Aerial Boudaries consists of two videos that are to be part of a larger series of works based on manipulations of a single source video clip. Those familiar with the program Artmatic know that it's possible to generate random video sequences within the program. In wandering around in the random preset combinations I hit upon an interesting sequence of images that I have subjected to various processing in Artmatic, Final Cut Pro and some "home grown" video manipulation software written by a colleague here at Colby. My intent is to use my original "found object" to create a series of collage-like works, unified by subtle elements from the source (which never appears in its original form)... hopefully without being too blatant with the connections!

Jonathan Hallstrom teaches music theory and composition, conducts the Colby Symphony Orchestra and directs the department's Digital Media Studio. He has received grants and fellowships from the Rockefeller, Exxon, Seaver and Sloan Foundations and has been a visiting composer at the University of Keele's Center for Music Technology, The University of Lancaster (England), Marshall University, and Colgate University. His works have been featured at many national and international conferences and festivals, including SEAMUS, SCI, ICMC, The Florida Electroacoustic Music Festival, The New Music America Festival, The Bourges "Sonneries Utopiques" festival, The 3rd Practice Electroacoustic Music Festival, and IRCAM's Portes Overtes series. As a conductor, Mr. Hallstrom has appeared with the the Keele (England) Symphony Orchestra, Juilliard Symphony Orchestra, L'orchestre du Dixième (Paris), The Bangor Symphony Orchestra, The Midcoast Symphony, The University of Iowa and University of Wisconsin New Music Ensembles and The Oregon State University Symphony Orchestra. He is also active as a conductor/clinician at high school and regional orchestra festivals throughout the United States.

Through the Eyes of a Child is based on the quote "within every elderly person there's a younger person wondering what happened." I first read this in one of Jane Seabrook's *Furry Logic* books in late 2007. In the composition, I have drawn on sound-scape, electro-acoustic, and radio-phonetic traditions to tell a story and develop the idea of "the young child."

To do this, I first recorded a conversation I had with my Grandmother while we were looking through an old photograph album she had. From the stories she told me, I chose four which I felt reflected the themes of love, grief, and hope. These three themes were selected to provide a contrasting structure to join the four individual stories.

Once the stories were selected, I recorded my 10 year-old sister repeating some of the lines spoken by my Grandmother, and also her own ideas on what the three themes meant to her. A music box tune plays an important part in this composition, creating a link between the past and the present - the elderly woman and the young child. It is used as a symbol of innocence and ties in with the idea of memories. Val Morton gave me permission to record her music box, the tune of which is the 18th variation from Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*.

Hannah Gilmour recently completed her Bachelor of Music with Honours in Composition at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. In 2007, she won the electro-acoustic award at the Douglas Lilburn Composition Competition held yearly at the University of Waikato for her short film *Shadow*. In 2008 her orchestral work *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?* was rehearsed and recorded by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra at the Todd Young/NZSO Young Composer Awards workshop, receiving a merit award as recognition. In the 2008 Douglas Lilburn Composition Competition she won the electro-acoustic section with her work *Through the Eyes of a Child* and also received a Merit award for her solo trumpet piece *The Voice*. She was also awarded the Niklas Werner Memorial Prize 2008 for electro-acoustic composition studies and received one of the a University of Waikato's most prestigious awards, a Creative and Performing Arts Blue. In January 2009, *Through the Eyes of a Child*

was played as part of the Arts NOW Series at North Carolina State University with reviews stating it as "accessible, beautiful and at the same time, adventuresome." After receiving a Masters Research Scholarship in 2009 from the University of Waikato, she intends to continue her studies there and develop her ability to compose using a wide range of medium with an emphasis on electro-acoustic music.

Liquid Amber's images and sounds are about texture—images that compel me to physically reach out and touch them in real life and on-screen, just as I am drawn to reach up to try to touch a star in the desert's black velvet night sky. The sounds are physical, tactile, and visceral as well, produced by my touching various objects (skin, fabric, wood, metal, water, etc.). There are only a few exceptions, as when I used synchronized sound in the fast water sequences. When I shot those scenes the spray of the water on my face and tumultuous sound were so very physical that the images still conjure those sensations for me. There is a faint voice on occasion—vocal cords set into vibration by air.

This is not an attempt to add sound effects to the visuals, although certainly many sounds relate directly to the image. But the perspective is intentionally skewed, as these images have great depth with layers that change in texture, so certain sounds detail the surfaces, others reflect the image's deep interior.

The images are of nature or illustrate nature's effects on man-made objects such as a sheet of copper and an old ship. The title derives from the Liquid Amber tree that provided the ending for this work.

Maggi Payne is Co-director of the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College, in the San Francisco Bay Area (USA) where she teaches recording engineering, composition, and electronic music. She also freelances as a recording engineer/editor and historical remastering engineer.

She frequently incorporates visuals in her work, including videos she creates and live dancers with electroluminescent wire. She has composed music for dance, theatre, and video, including the music for Jordon Belson's video Bardo.

She received two Composer's Grants, an Interdisciplinary Arts Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, video grants from the Mellon Foundation and the Western States Regional Media Arts Fellowships Program, and has received several honorary mentions from Bourges and one from Prix Ars Electronica.

Her works are available on Starkland, Lovely Music, Music and Arts, Centaur, Ubuibi, MMC, CRI, Digital Narcis, Frog Peak, Asphodel, and/OAR, Ubuibi, and Mills College labels.
www.maggipayne.com

S is one of five short animations comprising an exploration of myths of creation and evolution. The five-movement video work treats themes of creation, awareness, restriction, tension, and release.

Maurice Wright (www.mauricewright.org) was born in 1949 in Front Royal, Virginia, a small town situated between the forks of the Shenandoah River near the Blue Ridge Mountains. His work has been described by critics as “forthright and witty, a rarity in ‘serious’ music...fresh and completely natural but concealing a good deal of compositional craft.” Wright is Laura H. Carnell Professor of Music Composition and Director of Graduate Studies at Temple University’s Boyer College of Music and Dance.

Op. -3 (for solo piano) is a reinvention of silent movies. The musical score exists only as a video and the pianist performs from the video while it is projected onstage. It places interpretation as the primary compositional concern and allows the audience to see first hand how the pianist realizes the moving images. No instructions of any kind are provided for the notations in the video. Some music elements are standard with a defined or clear historical approach to their realization, while others are graphic and aleatoric with unclear or open possibilities. Often the clear/unclear musical materials will occur within the same frame, juxtaposed in a dynamic interplay. The visual and musical elements also have a dynamic relationship that intertwines producing an indistinguishable inter-media. Music and thematic gestures provide formal clarity in an imaginary world that is loaded with irrepressible mischief and overt playfulness. Food is an important image and a musical structural device. Sections of the video score include music that was written on a grapefruit and photographed over four months. The images of decay are presented in a non-linear random pattern in a quasi-homage to Yoko Ono. Despite the nonlinear time inflection, the food theme (oddly) provides a traditional grounding of an overall form of a Grapefruit Rondo.

Jude Weirmeir a guitarist, conductor, educator and composer, received his Ph.D. from the University of California, San Diego. Previously he studied at the University of Texas at Austin and Arizona State University. As an educator, Dr. Weirmeir has taught in a broad and diverse collection of musical traditions ranging from music of Africa and Asia, popular culture and film, music theory, musicianship, and guitar performance. As a composer, Dr. Weirmeir has won many international honors and awards and critics have described his music as “beguiling,” “delicate, rich, and colorful,” with a “wonderful mastery of orchestral color.” Dr. Weirmeir has taught private guitar lessons in San Diego for the past eight years and has enjoyed directing the Villa Musica Guitar Ensemble since its inception.

The Democratic Composition Project - The concept for the Democratic Composition Project is borrowed from an essay by Eastman School of Music student Leah Goldstein. Music critic Greg Sandow highlighted this idea on his artsjournal.com blog on the future of classical music.

Historically, due to the cost of equipment, creation of electronic music was limited to a small number of composers at universities and pioneering studios. Today, in the age of GarageBand and YouTube, a great composer might come from any background imaginable. MSU Director of Music Technology Kristi McGarity has decided to enlist aspiring and accomplished composers, video artists, authors, and photographers from within the Sunday Night Multimedia Series audience community, to provide a wide variety of source material for MSU's first audience-originated electronic music.

"Poetics" text by A.R. Ammons, read by Michal Madeline.

Audio and video source material by:

Callie Benjamin
Heather Bentz
David Charles
Ethan Cayko
Ryan Collick
Dave Dahlie
Jeff Evans
Dustin Fuchs
Barrett Golding
Mickey Guida
Chase Hanebrink
Sam Haugestuen
Dan Haywood
Andrew Keller
Nate Norberg
Lucas Reddinger
Garrett Rhinard
Jake Schreuder

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