



THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC PRESENTS

New Music Ensemble Concert
VUNUMU and ValpLork

Monday, May 2, 2022, 7:30 p.m.
Duesenberg Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Jargon (2022, ca. 9'00") Navid Bargrizan
Stereo fixed media

"C" World (2022, ca. 7'00") Zac Flasch
Flexible instrumental ensemble and stereo fixed media

Three Sayings (2022, ca. 5'00") Kate Eisenhutt
Piano and percussion

Launch (2021 ca. 6'00") Joseph Bognar and Navid Bargrizan
ValpLork, laptop ensemble

Break (20 minutes)

Not in C: Homage to Terry Riley (2022, ca. 23'00") Composed by Terry Riley in 1964
Solo harpsichord Reconceptualized by Joseph Bognar and Navid Bargrizan
Flexible instrumental and laptop ensemble

New Music Ensemble: Ricky Paz, percussion; Adam Lindemer, trombone; Kurt Metzger, trumpet;
Genevieve Brown, flute; Logan Albright, piano

ValpLork: Matthew Yee, Graham Butler, Kate Eisenhutt

The New Music Ensemble is conducted by Navid Bargrizan; ValpLork is conducted by Joseph Bognar

PROGRAM NOTES

Jargon

Oxford English Dictionary explains the term “Jargon” as “unintelligible or meaningless talk or writing; nonsense, gibberish,” or “a medley or ‘babel’ of sounds.” In this sonic *Jargon* composed for stereo fixed media, field recordings, as well as recorded acoustic keyboards and percussion, join a variety of electronic samples, resulting in a 8-minute musical structure. The composer uses different techniques of digital sound manipulation, mixing, and mastering, processed in a digital audio work-station environment, to create a meaningless and gibberish, but at the same time coherent, medley or babel of sounds.

“C” World

“C” World is a conceptual piece of music for a flexible ensemble of players and fixed media consisting of electronics and optional video playback. In 2017, I was experimenting with Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) and seeing what kind of sonic landscapes can possibly be created when combining different sounds together. Around this time, I was exposed to Terry Riley’s “In C” for the first time, and I thought it would be fun to create a sort of ocean soundscape, coupled with some ambient, colorful harmonies that reflect around C major, hence the punny title, “C” World. I am equally amazed and terrified of nature, especially the ocean. With this interesting blend of awe and terror, I aim to create a soundscape that both captures the dichotomy of the beauty of our ocean and the various aspects of aquatic life that frighten us to our core. The recorded audio takes care of the former, and the role of the ensemble is to create a series of aquatic sounds in an improvisatory manner that counter the gentle, soothing nature of the audio track. This can be done with any group of instrumentalists, and could even be performed with a solo instrument or voice. Feel free to explore this concept liberally as it relates to sounds and colors that are available on each instrument as it relates to the character of the piece. Follow the contour of the dynamics of the track in relationship to how intense and loud the sounds with your instruments become. The track only lasts for about five minutes, and reaches its maximum dynamic about halfway through.

Three Sayings

Three Sayings is a process piece inspired by Arnold Schoenberg’s serialist method of composing. After breaking three nursery rhymes into syllables—“Peter piper picked...,” “Sally sells sea shells,” and “How much wood could a woodchuck chuck?”—each syllable was assigned a tone. The end result is an atonal recitation of each of the three rhymes, each with dynamics and articulation corresponding to the saying.

Launch

Launch is an original composition and the first piece ever conceived for and played by ValpLork, Valpo’s laptop orchestra. The title is taken from the theme of this year’s TedX event on campus, where the orchestra debuted as an ensemble. The performance consists of electronically-generated sounds that are manipulated by the performers in a programming language known as Chuck. Although there are elements of randomness to the performance of *Launch*, the structure of the piece is predetermined and led by a conductor. The piece consists of four short interconnected movements. The first movement features a landscape of overlapping low drone-like sounds; the second movement includes abrupt attacks that move from left to right throughout the ensemble; the third section features random short sounds that build-up to a dense, kinetic cloud that gradually dissipates. The final section of the piece features Tibetan bowl sounds that begin in the low register of the orchestra and eventually climb to create an angelic halo effect at the end.

Not in C: Homage to Terry Riley

An early piece of minimal music, Terry Riley’s “In C” (1964) challenged the structuralist-serial compositional approach commonly taken by the generation of post-war composers. While our version pays tribute to Riley’s iconic masterpiece, it combines micro-tuning, and a broader intonational palette beyond the scope of the half- and whole-tones, with real-time sound manipulation executed by the laptop ensemble. Furthermore, the solo harpsichord not only reinforces the micro-tuned soundscape that transforms gradually over twenty-three minutes, but it also refers to the traditional concerto genre. “Not in C” aims to synthesize analogue and digital techniques of sound production across various genres, intonational practices, and styles.