

WEDNESDAYS@7

The Formalist Quartet

Wednesday 13 April 2011

7 pm

Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

UC San Diego Department of Music

The Formalist Quartet is an ensemble dedicated to the performance of adventurous repertoire focusing on contemporary pieces and world premiers as well as exploring a diverse spectrum of early music and the standard repertoire. The quartet was born on the 100th birthday of Dmitri Shostakovich (September 25th, 2006) and since then has been playing frequently across the United States and abroad in concert halls, festivals, art galleries, cafes, and homes, including the Reykjavik Arts Festival in Iceland, Roy O. Disney Hall at CalArts; REDCAT at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles; the Wulf, Los Angeles; University of California, San Diego; Stanford University; University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; the Flatfile Galleries, Chicago; University of Nevada, Reno; Cornelia Street Cafe, New York; MOSA Concert Series, New York; Princeton University; the Eagle Rock Center for the Arts; the Villa Aurora, Pacific Palisades; University of Maryland, Baltimore County; LISTEN/SPACE, New York; Hamiltonian Gallery, Washington DC; ArtSpace Herndon, Virginia; and the Et Cetera New Music Festival. Their recordings include the epic 100 Cadences of Arthur Jarvinen, music for several small films and pop records, and Kristian Ireland's Clearing on the -541- series through Innova records. Since the Fall of 2009 the Formalists have been the Quartet-in-Residence at the Villa Aurora presenting concerts of Villa Aurora fellows and Southern California composers. The quartet is about to embark on recording and releasing all of the string quartets by Leo Wadada Smith.

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Initiale [streichquartett]

Daniel Tacke

String Quartet No. 5

Ishmael Wadada Leo Smith

Intermission

...for every day is another view of the tentative past

Nicholas Deyoe

Andrew McIntosh - violin, viola

Mark Menzies - violin, viola

Andrew Tholl - violin

Ashley Walters - cello

Initiale [streichquartett]

Clinically speaking, one can define an “expressive musical experience” as the ability to track the inherent energy of various components of a sonorous entity—including the envelopes of gestures and phrases, the visceral qualities of textures, and the invocation of memory in repetitive or reminiscent structures—in a context of differentiation. Such an engagement necessarily entails making predictions about the expressive differentiation of these domains, and a final musical experience exists as something of a mediated entity between the projections of an individual auditor and the sonic realities of a given piece, balancing moments of recognition, confusion, and discovery into a meaningful whole.

But what if you're wrong?

(Daniel Tacke)

Initiale

Aus unendlichen Sehnsüchten steigen
endliche Taten wie schwache Fontänen,
die sich zeitig und zitternd neigen.
Aber, die sich uns sonst verschweigen,
unsere fröhlichen Kräfte—zeigen
sich in diesen tanzenden Tränen.

-Rainer Maria Rilke

Ein Dröhnen: es ist
die Wahrheit selbst
unter die Menschen
getreten,
mitten ins
Metapherngestöber.

-Paul Celan

Initial

Out of infinite longings rise
finite deeds like weak fountains,
which soon tremble and collapse.
But, those which remain hidden within us,
our joyous strengths—show through
in these dancing tears.

-Translated by Daniel Tacke

A clamor: it is
truth itself
among humankind,
stepping into
the very midst of their
metaphor-flurry.

-Translated by Daniel Tacke

String Quartet No. 5

Ishmael Wadada Leo Smith's String Quartet No. 5, is one of many quartets written by this composer. As a trumpeter, composer, and improviser, Smith's own search for spontaneous sound and the ex-

ploration of color has led to an output of string quartets, which challenge the conventions of this instrumentation. Smith has developed a notation which allows the ensemble to function both as one rhythmic and melodic voice and as a collection of four individuals connected only by the passing of time. Spontaneity in the form of improvisation is balanced with detailed written structure creating a work that suspends time through grand energetic gestures. (Ashley Walters)

...for every day is another view of the tentative past

This piece is inspired by memory and the fear of losing a memory. I am touched, but also saddened by the notion that no memory is perfect. We must interpret our own memories just as we decipher a faint text, a quiet voice, or an image. The attempt to relive a happy memory can never recreate that it as it was when it was created. The attempt to remove a bad memory can never be successful. All memories, good and bad, are parts of ourselves. Always changing, but always us. (Nicholas Deyoe)

From Death – Frank O’Hara

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how much greater danger
from occasion and pain is my vitality
yielding, like a tree on fire! –
for every day is another view
of the tentative past
grown secure in its foundry of shimmering
that’s not even historical; it’s just me.

4

is that me who accepts betrayal
in the abstract as if it were insight?
and draws its knuckles
across the much-lined eyes
in the most knowing manner of our time?

6

I’m not dead. Nothing remains, let alone “to be said,”
except that when I fall backwards
I am trying something new and shall succeed, as in the past.

Violinist, violist, and composer **Andrew McIntosh** focuses primarily on performing and expanding the repertoire of compelling and experimental music. However, he enjoys music from throughout the last 800 years and can sometimes be found playing baroque and renaissance music on period instruments as well. McIntosh is a member of the Formalist Quartet, which is also dedicated to adventurous and relevant repertoire and regularly performs around the country. He holds degrees in violin and composition from the University of Nevada, Reno and the California Institute of the Arts. As a chamber musician he has played in festivals, concerts, art spaces, and recordings around the US and Europe with the Formalist Quartet, Tholl/McIntosh duo, Quatuor Bozzini, Rohan de Saram, inauthentica, and many others. He has been a guest artist at the Other Minds Festival (San Francisco), Reykjavik Arts Festival (Iceland), Dartington Music Festival (England), Dilijan Concerts (Los Angeles), Sunriver Music Festival (Oregon), and the Mammoth Lakes Music Festival (California). As a solo artist he has appeared at venues such as Stanford University, REDCAT, the Wulf, Hamburger Klangwerktag (Hamburg), Zwielficht (Berlin), the Pianola Museum (Amsterdam), the Hammer Museum, and KPFK Pacifica Radio, as well as with the New Century Players, Santa Cecilia Orchestra, Reno Philharmonic, and inauthentica. He also recently was the viola soloist in the US premiere of Gérard Grisey's *Les Espaces Acoustiques*, for which performance the LA Times said he "played with commanding beauty". Upcoming engagements include performances on Monday Evening Concerts, the SoundOn Festival in San Diego, a festival of Sofia Gubaidulina's music at REDCAT and solo concerts at Unruly Music in Milwaukee and at UC San Diego. As a composer, McIntosh strives to write vibrant and compelling pieces while bringing a spirit of experimentalism to the music, usually through working with just intonation and frequency ratios. A native of rural Northern Nevada, McIntosh is currently based in the Los Angeles area where he teaches violin at Pomona College and enjoys a large and frequently unexpected variety of performing, recording, teaching, and composing activities.

Residing in the United States since 1991, **Mark Menzies** has established an important, world-wide reputation as a new music violist and violinist. He has been described in a *Los Angeles Times* review, as an 'extraordinary musician' and a 'riveting violinist.' His career as a viola and violin virtuoso, chamber musician and conductor and advocate of contemporary music, has seen performances in Europe, Brazil, Mexico, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and across the United States, including a series of appearances at New York's Carnegie Hall. As a conductor, Mark Menzies recently conducted the US premiere of Gérard Grisey's *Les Espaces Acoustiques* at redcat; he is featured on inauthentica recordings for the innova label, including Mark Applebaum's compositions, as well as a world premiere recording of Anne LeBaron's dance opera, *Pope Joan*. Mark Menzies is also a member of the Formalist Quartet; they recently added one of his compositions to their repertoire - as a composer, he writes mainly for friends and colleagues...he is currently viola and violin professor at the California Institute of the Arts where he also coordinates their chamber orchestra, new music ensembles and conducting studies.

Andrew Tholl is a violinist and composer from Phoenix, Arizona. As a soloist and chamber musician he is dedicated to the performance of new music as well as the collaborative process between composer and performer. Andrew is a member of the ensembles TempWerks, wildUp, and the formalist quartet, which he co-founded in 2006. Compositionally, his interest lies in the exploration of the passage of time, the physicality of making music, noise, nostalgia, memory, and the merging of diverse musical styles. Both his performances and compositions have been heard across the United States and Europe. He holds degrees from Arizona State University, the University of Michigan, and the California Institute of the Arts. Additionally, he maintains a second musical life as a drummer and improviser having played with the bands Paper Tiger Trio and The Teeth. He is currently pursuing a D.M.A in composition and performance at the California Institute of the Arts. Andrew lives in Los Angeles where he is involved with music for concert halls, art galleries, films, puppet shows, bars, garages, bedrooms, and coat closets.

Cellist **Ashley Walters** has gained attention as an interpreter of new music, a prodigious performer in chamber music, and a dedicated teacher. A native of Oak Hill, Virginia, she is pursuing her doctoral degree in Contemporary Cello Performance as a fellow at the University of California, San Diego where she has been twice awarded for excellence in teaching for her work with undergraduate students. She graduated from California Institute of the Arts with a Master of Fine Arts degree in Cello Performance. In 2005, Ashley graduated from Vanderbilt University, Magna Cum Laude. She had her solo debut in 2006 performing Sciarrino's 'Melencolia I' at the REDCAT hall in Los Angeles. In the summer of 2008, Ashley worked with the great Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho performing her work 'Spins and Spells' as part of the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. Ashley is a founding member of the Formalist Quartet, a new music based string quartet that tours in the U.S. and internationally and that focuses on adventurous contemporary repertoire. In addition, she is a member of inauthenita, a Los Angeles new music ensemble. Ashley has served on the cello faculty of the Oakwood School and the California State Summer School, and currently serves as faculty at the Academy of Creative Education, and as an Associate-in-Music at UCSD. Ashley's primary teachers have been Charles Curtis, Felix Wang, John Kochanowski, Erika Duke-Kirkpatrick, and Barbara VanPatten. Upcoming events include a solo recital featuring the music of Rachmaninoff and contemporary composers, a performance as part of the Monday Evening Concert series, the chamber music of Sofia Gubaidulina at REDCAT, and concerts with the Formalist Quartet at University of CA, San Diego, and the soundON Festival in La Jolla.

