

First solo recital in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Doctorate of Musical Arts  
Department of Music: University of California, San Diego

# Samuel Ekkehardt Dunscombe

Clarinets, field recordings, electronics

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## Helmut Lachenmann

*Dal Niente* (Interieur III), for solo clarinet (1970)

## Luigi Nono

*A Pierre, Dell'Azzurro Silenzio, Inquietum*, for contrabass flute, contrabass clarinet, and electronics (1985)

## Alvin Lucier

*Still and Moving Lines of Silence in Families of Hyperbolas, Part II*, for clarinet and pure wave oscillator (1984)

## Samuel Dunscombe

*Poetic Cartography: Rainforest I*, for clarinet mouthpiece and field recorded sounds (2012)

With associate artists:

**Rachael Beetz** contrabass-flute

**Greg Surges** electronics

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## Articulating Space

This program is concerned with the articulation of space: internal, external, fictive, and embodied. Helmut Lachenmann's *Dal Niente*, an early exploration of instrumental musique concrète, maps the performer's physical relationship to their instrument. In Luigi Nono's *A Pierre, Dell'Azzurro Silenzio, Inquietum*, instruments and electronics unite in a sense of constant, restless mobility, activating the performance space to create an integrated "sonic universe." *Still and Moving Lines of Silence in Families of Hyperbolas* continually defines and redefines the performance space through spinning ripples of sound resulting from the interaction between clarinet and sine wave. The final work on this program, *Poetic Cartography: Rainforest I* employs field recordings, multi-tracked clarinet mouthpiece, and multi-channel diffusion to map a fictive aural environment onto the performance venue.

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## Helmut Lachenmann

*Dal Niente* (Interieur III) (1970)

for solo clarinet

*Dal Niente* was composed as part of a set of three works for solo instruments, the other two being *Pression* (cello) and *Guero* (piano), in which Lachenmann outlines a radical new compositional style, which he describes as *Musique Concrète Instrumentale*. In his notes for *Pression*, Lachenmann writes: "In this sort of piece it is common for sound phenomena to be so refined and organised that they are not so much the results of musical experiences as of their own acoustic attributes ... The result is aesthetic provocation: beauty denying habit." The emptying out of musical experience implied by this statement is further explored in *Dal Niente*. In this piece, musical and cultural knowledge that exists around the clarinet (the clarinet of Mozart, Brahms, Benny Goodman, Naftule Brandwein) is stripped away through rigorous compositional method. What remains is simply the clarinet as object, the performer as body, and we see the space that exists around and between these two revealed.

It is this space, the relationship between object, body, and the union of these two to produce a sounding body, that Lachenmann then painstakingly maps over the course of *Dal Niente*. By treating the sounds produced by direct physical engagement with the clarinet as "sound objects," parsing the individual physical movements that constitute these sound objects out into streams, and then subjecting these streams to individualised treatment, Lachenmann thoroughly deconstructs and then rebuilds our view of the clarinet, and reveals the complexity of the physical relationship between performer and instrument. The result is true concrete music: sound and action manipulated as objects, directly experience as acoustic information.

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**Luigi Nono**

A Pierre, Dell'Azzurro Silenzio, Inquietum (1985)  
for contrabass flute, contrabass clarinet, and electronics

Developed in close collaboration with clarinetist Ciro Scarponi, flautist Roberto Frabricciani, and engineer André Richard, this piece (composed in honour of Pierre Boulez's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday) explores the real time electronic manipulation of instrumental sound. The score functions as a guide for a performance event, rather than an inviolable set of commands, which is the departure point for a collaborative process that explores both the internal space of the instruments (through the use of extended techniques), and the external space of the concert hall (through the use of multi-channel sound and delayed feedback).

The processes employed in this piece both articulate and (re)define the performance space, and gradually construct a new, fictive sonic environment, which is mapped directly onto the space. The use of delay-lines, of different lengths, to create feedback continues this process, redefining and remapping the environment with every iteration. Before the first performance of this work, Nono stated: "*non si deve capire niente*" (one must not understand anything). This does not refer to a desire to confuse or confound the listener, but rather to Nono's desire to create a situation that encourages the listener to actively participate in making sense of the work. The environment he maps out becomes increasingly labyrinthine and murky, and the listener is encouraged to navigate their own way through the space.

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**Alvin Lucier**

Still and Moving Lines of Silence in Families of Hyperbolas, Part II (1984)  
for clarinet and pure wave oscillator

"My pieces are about exploring sound waves and the natural characteristics of sound waves ... and in order to do that in a beautiful way, in my opinion, is to let the waves do what they do normally without a lot of compositional interference."

In stark contrast to *A Pierre*, *Still and Moving Lines* concerns itself with "the activation and mobilization of hyperbolic patterns of sound and silence" that are created through the interaction of two sounding bodies (in this case, clarinet and loudspeaker), defining the performance venue with a series of peaks and troughs. As the instrument moves, step-by-step, closer to the pitch of the pure wave, the sound can be heard to shift around the room in beating rhythmic patterns. This presents a unique and highly immersive experience of sound, one that is only truly made available through the use of electronic equipment—only a sine wave, with its lack of overtones, is capable of producing this effect so palpably.

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**Samuel Dunscombe**

Poetic Cartography: Rainforest I (2012)  
for clarinet mouthpiece and field recorded sounds

Rainforest I is the first in a series of works exploring the idea of "poetic cartography." This series of works employ field recorded environmental sound, instrumental and vocal mimesis, and aural metaphor in a threefold process of "mapping." Instrumental sounds (in this case, produced by the clarinet mouthpiece) are mapped onto environmental recordings, mimicking aspects of the natural soundscape in both a direct and metaphorical way. A fictive, hyper-real environment is thus created, the topography of which is then mapped out over time (acoustic phenomena unique to the "region" unfold over the course of the work). These sounds are then physically mapped onto the performance space and the body of the performer(s) (where applicable). Through this process, these works aim to avoid the exploitation of environmental-sound-as-commodity, to be folded into the cultural framework of "music," instead working with environmental sound as a way to destabilize the concert experience, and challenge entrenched modes of listening.

Rainforest I was first conceived during the time I spent at Francisco López's *Mamori ArtLab* field recording residency in the Mamori region of the Brazilian state of Amazonas. It explores what Steven Feld has described as "...the seamlessly staggered alternations and overlaps that comprise the sensual experience of the rainforest soundscape." There are no unisons in the rainforest, but rather a great number of individual voices (almost always heard whilst remaining unseen) which may at times stand out individually before being quickly subsumed by the sound mass as a whole (Feld refers to this attribute as "echophony.") Rainforest I employs multi-tracked clarinet mouthpieces and multi-channel sound to recreate and comment on this effect. The performer of this piece must remain hidden from the audience, and her/his live sound should be diffused across all channels.