

An Evening of Premieres
Winter Composition Jury Concert

Featuring collaborations between first year composition and performance graduate students

Friday, January 26, 2018 - 7:00 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

After Escher (Emergence)
Alex Stephenson

Alexandria Smith, trumpet
Kathryn Schulmeister, double bass
Alex Stephenson, electronics

Humoresk
Sammi Jo Stone

Dimitris Paganos Koukakis, piano
Shaoai Ashley Zhang, piano

brief intermission

mother woke me (wake me)
Created by Alexandria Smith and Jasper Sussman

Jasper Sussman, voice
Alexandria Smith, trumpet

From Stillness
Anqi Liu

Alexandria Smith, trumpet
Kathryn Schulmeister, double bass
Shaoai Ashley Zhang, piano

**The discussion session for this concert will begin tomorrow morning:
Saturday, January 27th at 9:00 a.m. in CPMC 231.**

ALEX STEPHENSON

After Escher (Emergence) takes as its starting point the delicate dance between figure and canvas in a series of drawings by M.C. Escher entitled *Regular Division of the Plane*. My fascination with these drawings spurred the composition of a number of relationships between sound situations in the present piece: transforming in tandem, convolving one another and, especially, emerging and submerging relative to each other. Some of these scenarios have direct analogies in Escher's work; others do not. This composition would not have been possible without the artistry and guidance of Alexandria Smith and Kathryn Schulmeister, and I would like to dedicate it to them.

SAMMI JO STONE

This piece utilizes one piano with, and one without, sound-altering preparations. The hammer action of Dimitris's piano is utilized to play a variety of household objects, including a metal pan, a Tupperware box, and tin foil, all placed inside. This set-up was originally inspired by the immensely entertaining multi-percussion preset available on some electronic keyboards. In this acoustic realization, the sounds more closely resemble the built-in percussion sounds of orchestration music boxes and fairground organs, larger and older models of which often include a bass drum, snare, and cymbals played by automaton percussionists, or simply mechanized hammers and mallets. My sincere thanks to Ashley and Dimitris for working with me on this project and bringing the piece to life.

JASPER SUSSMAN

Common interests, goals, and camaraderie brought Alexandria and me together in the making and performance of *mother woke me (wake me)*, a piece featuring unusual and vulnerable sonic qualities on trumpet and voice within an electronically produced environment. Our goal in working together was to explore and discover a model of unconventional collaboration that reconstructed the roles of performer and creator and questioned the ideal environment in which excellent artistry occurs.

In the making of the piece, Alexandria and I chose to eliminate the roles of composer and performer, instead adopting a democratic system not dissimilar to a rock band's. Our creation process involved embodied improvisation, notational experiments, movement explorations and thoughtful communication around ideas of personal history and identity, aesthetics, and individualized working styles. Additionally, we drew from ideas of Affect Theory, a theory often applied to theatrical and visual art, Stanislavsky's Method (also theatrical), and the Japanese dance form *butoh* to foster an embodied performance practice rooted in emotional intensity. We found that discovering a clear emotional trajectory, aided by internalized stories and textual material, created an intensified experience of connection to each other and to our material. As Stanislavsky explains it, "Inside of you, parallel to the line of physical actions, you have an unbroken line of emotions verging on the subconscious. You cannot follow the line of external action sincerely and directly and not have the corresponding emotions" (1936, p. 329). This intensity of emotion, its vulnerability, is what led us to our unusual timbres, our graphic and instructional score, and our personalized story behind the piece built from experiences of pain and that pain's relationship to acceptance and personal power.

ANQI LIU

I was writing from a stillness vacuum, only allowing imaginations and conjectures guiding me. I am not sure where I am meandering to, at some points though, I feel I might land in some wonderlands or a real world, through experimentations, transitions, and imaginations. Huge thanks to those lovely and brilliant ladies, Alexandria Smith, Kathryn Schulmeister and Ashley Zhang for making this happen.

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