



Sean Dowgray

D.M.A Recital

Thursday, October 10th, 2019 | 7pm

Conrad Prebys Music Center | Experimental Theater

Program

Preface: *The Grand Tour*

Shrinking world/expanding | Josh Levine

Interlude: sedimentation and Opportunity rover on Mars

Strata | Christopher Adler

Interlude: tam-tams and bell plate

Lengua Encubierto | Lewis Nielson

Interlude: Aurora

Vorrücken | Daniel Tacke

*please hold applause until the conclusion of the performance

Welcome to the UC San Diego Department of Music.

As a courtesy to the artists and your fellow audience members please take this opportunity to turn off all mobile devices. The use of cameras and all recording devices is strictly prohibited. Also, please take this time to look around you and locate the nearest exit. The nearest exit might not be the door from which you entered the auditorium. Thank you and enjoy the performance

Program Note

My final recital at UC San Diego engages the multitude of time. As a percussionist constantly engrossed in the labyrinths of time keeping, I can't help but think of myself to a certain degree as a *time machine*. Through the performance of musical works that explore the extremes of formal, measured, and experiential time, I have come to know intimately the conundrum of time as both a fundamental driving force and an unshakeable riddle. Like gravity in space, time seems to *pull* us. However, unlike time, we have (and continue to) overcome the force of gravity in our ventures beyond Earth's horizon. Time is, so far as we know, inescapable. Rather, our perceptions tell us that time emerges and submerges, it expands and contracts, it is granular yet it flows. Memory distorts time. Language colors time in expressive fashion. Through time we are aligned and divided as groups and individuals.

As you enter the the experimental theater, you enter a time capsule. Broad concepts of time frame local experience, both of which emerge in the metric, rhythmic, and cadential motions of each piece. Time and space are inseparable, so as you move throughout the space (or embark on a *space walk* as I like to think of it), think of yourself as moving between amorphous time zones. Each set-up acts as a clock waiting to be set in motion and in so projects distorted audio files alluding to the materials of each piece in performance.

Preface: The Grand Tour [12 minutes]

The opening media comprises video that ranges from the 1960's to today, including real photos in rapid cadence from the Voyager spacecrafts and Solar Dynamic Observatory, as well as selections of the sky from ground-based amateur astronomers. The audio comprises two distinct parts: continuous material sampled from the radio transmissions of our Solar System's gaseous planets as recorded by Voyager I & II during their trips beyond. As the video moves from Saturn to Jupiter, to Uranus, to Neptune, (each time looking back at the sun) so does the audio. Juxtaposed against these drones is Josh Levine's work, *Timepiece for Chaya* consisting of distinct twig snaps with considerable space in between. Together, the audio illustrates both the seeming flow of time against the demarcated time. Furthermore, the twig snaps in *Timepiece for Chaya* are the source of the temporal structure of the first performed work on the program, *Shrinking world/expanding*

Shrinking world/expanding - Josh Levine, west-coast premiere [13 minutes]

At the root of this piece's conception was noticing how my parents' worlds changed as they got old, how some things seemed to close in on them but time somehow opened up. Such thoughts manifest themselves in the piece through various interlaced processes of compression and rarefaction, and the changing weight of silence and resonance.

The piece unfolds in two distinct sections, the first (measures 1-137) implementing a set of diverse instruments and the second entirely on a Thai gong. The sections sound radically different from each other, but the second one is, in fact, a revisiting of the first, laying bare its predecessor's core temporal structure (formerly articulated by the crotales) in shrunken form. The second part uses different points and modes of attack in place of the original three layers of metal, stone, and wood sounds; it also echoes much of the first section's activity profile, albeit in extremely approximate ways. It is as if we have seen an image up close, but in memory can only imagine it at a great distance. - Josh Levine

Shrinking world/expanding was premiered in April 2019 at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Learning as part of Josh Levine's fellowship presentation, *Again, Not the Same River*.

Strata - Christopher Adler [14 minutes]

Strata is an homage to the artistic imagination of geological time and the inevitable accumulation of entropy and decay inspired in part by the works of artist Robert Smithson. His materials were of the Earth but his subject was the immensity of geologic time. His works are a hallucinatory meditation on the imagining the unimaginable. Here I have attempted musical composition as a geologic 'sedimentation of the mind'. Structures arrayed in crystalline perfection comprise an inclined basement overlaid by layers of derived materials. Musical crystals erode, conglomerate, and metamorphose under the pressure of surrounding materials and the relentless entropic forward progression of time. - Christopher Adler

...NO LONGER A FAITHFUL IMITATION OF ETERNITY, BUT A CONSTANT STATE OF EROSION
...LANGUAGE AND SOIL BLOWN AWAY
...SEA BUTTERFLIES FALL INTO A NAMELESS OCEAN
...MEMORY AT THE CHTHONIC LEVEL
...THE PILING UP OF DEBRIS
...STALE TIME
...THE PILING UP OF DEBRIS

From STRATA: A GEOPHOTOGRAPHIC FICTION, by Robert Smithson (1970)

Lengua Encubierto - Lewis Nielson [10 minutes]

Sobre Nuestra Moral Poética

No confundir, como poetas que escribimos
Desde la clandestinidad en que vivimos.

No somos, pues, cómodos e impunes anonimistas:
De cara estamos contra el enemigo
Y cabalgamos muy cerca de él, e la misma pista

Y al sistema y a los hombres
Que atacamos desde nuestra poesía
Con nuestra vida les damos la oportunidad de que se cobren,
Día tras día

Roque Dalton, *Poemas clandestinos*

Concerning our Poetic Morality

Not to be confusing, but we are poets who write
Clandestinely, being still alive.

We are not, then anonymously comfortable and unaffected
We are facing the enemy
And ride next to him on the same trail.

And the system and its creatures
We attack through our poetry.
With [through] our lives we give them the opportunity to convert,
Day after day.

(Lewis Nielson, trans.)

Vorrücken - Daniel Tacke, world premiere [9 minutes]

“Certain sounds, certain hums tell what ‘past’ is presently within us.”

-Pascal Quignard, *The Hatred of Music*

*Because truths we don't suspect have a hard time
making themselves felt, as when thirteen species
of whiptail lizards composed entirely of females
stay undiscovered due to bias
against such things existing,
we have to meet the universe halfway.
nothing will unfold for us unless we move toward what
looks to us like nothing: faith is a cascade.
the sky's high solid is anything
but, the sun going under hasn't
budded, and if death divests the self
it's the sole event in nature
that's exactly what it seems.*

-Alice Fulton, "Cascade Experiment"

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