

An Evening of Premieres

First Year Graduate Composition Jury

Featuring collaborations between the first year composers and performers

Friday, January 24th, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Manual

Erin Graham

Mariana Flores Bucio, mezzo-soprano and prepared piano
Alex Taylor, baritone voice and prepared piano
Peter Ko, cello

Between Breaths

Janet Sit

Mariana Flores Bucio, mezzo-soprano
Miguel Zazueta, tenor
Peter Ko, cello



Douglas Osmun

Peter Ko, amplified cello

La invasión de la noche

Jonny Stallings

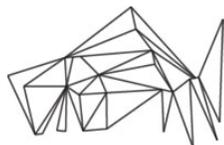
Mariana Flores Bucio, mezzo-soprano
Miguel Zazueta, tenor
Alex Taylor, viola

Poema de La Siguiriya Gitana

Alex Taylor
Text by Federico García Lorca

- I. Paisaje
- II. La Guitarra
- III. El Grito
- IV. El Silencio
- V. El Paso de La Siguiriya
- VI. Después de Pasar
- VII. Y Después

Miguel Zazueta, tenor
Peter Ko, cello
Erin Graham, percussion



UC San Diego
ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Music

Program Notes

Manual – Erin Graham

Manual is a reaction against approaching text-setting as a completely prescriptive procedure. I’ve grown tired of the process of seeking out a poem in the public domain, meticulously diagramming its rhythmic structure, researching and analyzing the particularities and subtleties of its meaning, and writing music which politely – even reverentially – steps aside to allow thee pre-existing entities to stand in relief. There are, of course, many ways o approach this topic, but I was intrigued with the idea of using antiquated reapi manuals as a template for abstraction. I noticed that many of the texts I found featured a form of dated, almost comedic impartiality which is a massive contrast to they typically dry and factual nature of modern instructional manuals. I sought to amplify these qualities by exaggerating the onomatopoeic elements of each excerpt and by giving each of the performers a variety of unconventional roles.

Between Breaths – Janet Sit

Inspired by a 2016 Scripps article about the daily migration of massive communities of fish, shrimp, jellyfish, and squid up and down the water column, *Between Breaths* explores the various textural changes when transitioning from one state to another, passing from one physical and metaphorical breath to another. The vocalizations are derived from the words “mesopelagic siphonophores”, a subgroup of this marine community.

– Douglas Osmun

“I regard my work as diaristic; the city can be read as a palimpsest, of layers of erasure and overwriting.... I was drifting through a London haunted by traces and remnants of rave, anarcho-punk scenes and hybrid subcultures at a time when all these incongruous urban regeneration schemes were happening. The idea that I was moving through a spectral city was really strong, it was as if everything prosaic and dull about the New Labour version of the city was being resisted by these ghosts of brutalist architecture, of ‘90s convoy culture, rave scenes, ‘80s political movements, and a virulent black economy of scavengers, peddlers, and shoplifters. I think [Savage Messiah] could be seen in the context of the aftermath of an era, where residues and traces of euphoric moments haunt a melancholy landscape.”

~Laura Oldfield Ford on her *Savage Messiah*, as told in Mark Fisher’s *Ghosts of My Life*

Oldfield Ford here presents an aesthetic philosophy of art invoking Derrida’s theorization of hauntology, in which the past persists as specter (often in tandem with the specter of the incipient perceived future). I have begun to reformulate my personal aesthetic philosophy as an elaboration of these notions that I am compelled to explore. This piece for cello is my first attempt.

La invasión de la noche – Jonny Stallings

*Pyramidal, funesta, de la tierra
nacida sombra, al cielo encaminaba
de vanos obeliscos punta altiva,
escalar pretendiendo las estrellas...*

Pyramidal, lugubrious,
a shadow born of earth
pushed heavenward its towering tips
like vacuous obelisks bent on scaling stars...

-Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, from First Dream,
trans. by Alan S. Trueblood

Poema de La Siguiriya Gitana – Alex Taylor

This cycle of seven songs is a setting of Lorca’s *Poema de La Siguiriya Gitana* (Poem of the Gypsy Siguiriya), written in 1921 but not published until 1931 in the collection *Poema del Cante Jondo* (Poem of the Deep Song). In striking and sometimes disjunct imagery, Lorca’s poems reflect an elemental musical event, a gypsy singer sweeping through a small rural settlement in Andalusia. There are elements of narrative and sonic clarity, but the poems place the *cante jondo* (an ancestor of flamenco music) in a rich network of symbols connected to landscape, pain and memory.

About the Composers

Erin Graham is a composer of contemporary classical music and an active percussionist. A first-year PhD student in Composition at UC San Diego, Erin has worked with highly regarded performers such as Amy Williams, Robert Black, Nunc, Deviant Septet, Escape Ten percussion duo, and a members of the Houston Symphony. Erin received Rice University’s Paul and Christiane Cooper Prize in Music Composition for her orchestra piece, *Increase*, in 2019. In 2018, Erin was commissioned to write a piece for soprano Julie Moore and members of the Houston Symphony in collaboration with Interfaith Ministries Case Worker Salemu Alimasi and poet Stalina Villarreal as part of the Houston Symphony’s *Resilient Sounds* project. In 2015, Erin won and ASCAP Morton Gould young Composer Award for her chamber work, *Five Poems of Edward Lear*. She was also the recipient of Eastman School of Music’s Louis Lane Prize and a finalist in the BMI Student Composer Awards.

Janet Sit is a Hong Kong-born Canadian composer, who moved from Toronto, Canada to begin her doctoral studies at UC San Diego. Her compositions have been performed in Beijing, Berlin, Toronto, Vancouver, and Victoria. She holds a B.Sc. in Zoology, B. Mus. in Composition from the University of Toronto and a M.Mus. from University of Victoria. Janet has been commissioned by the Caution Tape Sound Collective, the Gray/Constant Duo, Dave Riedstra for his cross-Canada tour Topography: new music for solo bass, and the Art Song Collaborative Project. She is a founding member of the Victoria Composers’ Collective and was an organizing member of the Toronto Creative Music Lab (TCML) for the past 3 years. Her research interests at UC San Diego incorporate her love for music, marine biology and conservation, and acoustics in interdisciplinary collaborations between the School of Music and Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

Douglas Osmun is a composer of acoustic and electronic music, and whose acoustic works are informed by electroacoustic aesthetic frameworks. He is primarily concerned with the phenomenological elements of performative physicality, approaching the physical gesture/sound relationship as a structural element to be manipulated and recontextualized. In consideration of these interests, he conceptualizes the sound ideas at every level in his pieces as spatial objects to be sculpted and arranged, blending materials into an array that perhaps expresses something simultaneously both unfamiliar and familiar.

Jonny Stallings is a pianist, clarinetist, improviser, and composer whose compositions have been premiered in Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, Salamanca, and Amsterdam. His background in jazz, salsa, and free improvisation intersects with experimental approaches to composition of the 20th and 21st centuries. Such intersections culminate in scholarly writings and musical compositions such as his article, “Open Instrumentation and Nonhierarchical Forms of Social Organization: Christian Wolff’s Exercises 1-14 (1973-74),” forthcoming in *Perspectives of New Music*, as well as his opera, *Los Enemigos* (2018). DExO (Deseret Experimental Opera Company), produced and premiered his Master’s thesis, *Los Enemigos*, a full-length, multimedia opera based on the short story “El milagro secreto” by Jorge Luis Borges with text by Natalie K. Stallings, costuming by Rachel Stallings, and video by Steven Stallings. As a frequent collaborator with his wife, Natalie, Jonny plays keyboard in the avant-rock band *Pigimichi*, led by Natalie as singer/songwriter and accompanied by Steven Stallings as drummer. Jonny and Natalie reside in La Jolla, CA with their two little ones.

Alex Taylor (b. 1988) has been commissioned and performed by prominent artists and ensembles in his native New Zealand and abroad, including the NZTrio (NZ), Enso Quartet (US), Ensemble Proton (CH), Ensemble U (EE), and the Tanglewood Music Center. His work often explores interactions between seemingly disparate materials, especially between ideas of the ‘canon’ and the avant-garde. As well as composing, Alex is also a multi-instrumentalist, poet, critic and music educator. Recent commissions include a flute concerto for Abigail Sperling, a double bass septet, and a violin trio for the Adam Chamber Music Festival. His violin-piano duo *Three Endings* is featured on Sarah Watkins and Andrew Beer’s 2019 Rattle release *11 Frames*.

First Year Graduate Jury Discussion

Saturday, January 25, 2020

9:00 a.m. CPMC 231

9:00 a.m. – 9:40 a.m. Erin Graham

9:45 a.m. – 10:25 a.m. Janet Sit

10:30 a.m. – 11:10 a.m. Douglas Osmun

11:15 a.m. – 11:55 a.m. Jonny Stallings

12:00 p.m. – 12:40 p.m. Alex Taylor

Production Credits:

Production Coordinator – David J. Espiritu

Theatrical Production Specialist – Jeremy Olson

Production Technicians – Bobby Bray, Mark Geddes, Pablo Ochoa, and Aaron Sum

Recording Engineers – Andrew Munsey & Mike Butler

Recording Assistants – Xochilt Khoury, Christopher Robinson, Jeffrey Xing, Hailey Brown, Mason Davis

122 GSR – Gabriel Zalles

Program Associate – Madison Greenstone

Audience members are reminded to please silence all phones and noise-generating devices before the performance. As a matter of courtesy and copyright law, no unauthorized recording or photography is allowed in the hall. UC San Diego is a non-smoking campus.

CONTACT US

For information on upcoming concerts:

Music Box Office: (858) 534-3448 | <http://music.ucsd.edu/concerts>