Ensemble Apparat

A Concert of New Works for Brass Quintet by:
Stephen de Filippo, William Kuo, Aaron Mencher, Douglas Osmun, Ni Zheng, & Michelle Lou

Thursday, October 10, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall | Experimental Theater

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a sequence of electronic moments that ultimately whisper away *	**Stephen De Filippo**
Article III *	**Aaron Mencher**
RASTRA *	**William Kuo**
hyperlung *	**Douglas Osmun**

pause

HER MIASMA *	**Ni Zheng**
lie beneath the grass (2022)	**Michelle Lou**

Ensemble Apparat
Mathilde Conley - trumpet
Paul Hübner - trumpet
Samuel Stoll - horn
Weston Olencki- trombone
Max Murray - tuba

**** Premiere performance***

UC San Diego
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Department of Music

Stephen De Filippo
a sequence of electronic moments that ultimately whisper away

PROGRAM NOTE:

This work is structured in sections, each presenting different combinations of brass instruments interacting with an electronic component. The familiar sound of the brass is deliberately destabilized—such as by inserting a toy squeaker into the horn or employing mutes that radically alter the instruments' timbre. These techniques create a dynamic interplay between the electronics and the acoustic elements. The piece evolves from harsher electronic textures toward a calmer atmosphere, gradually introducing the human voice and breath as compositional elements, lending an organic quality before fading away into a whisper.

BIOGRAPHY:

My name is Stephen de Filippo, and I am a composer and performer from Wardandi country in the remote southwest corner of Australia. While my primary medium is score-based concert music, in recent years, it has evolved into a more electro-acoustic form. My work emphasizes contemporary performance techniques, detailed musical notation, and the incorporation of dense, textured soundscapes centered on field recordings, environmental sounds, and live electronics. Thematically, my music often extends from my own experiences, with recent works reflecting on concepts like travel, place, and displacement—my transience, lack of grounding, and disconnection to place since leaving my home in Australia; love, its beauty, and its impermanence; and questions of identity, pondering what it truly means to be Australian.

In 2023, I was a visiting research fellow at Harvard University's Department of Music, supported by Harvard's Institute of Australian Studies and the Ian Potter Cultural Trust. Here, I researched how Australian classical music is born out of a history of cultural cringe—an inherent cultural inferiority complex felt by Australians by nature of being a British colonial state—and how the music and biography of composer Peter Sculthorpe reflects this colonial anxiety. Additionally, I was an artist-in-residence at the Kimmel Harding Nelson Foundation Center for the Arts, and also presented works at Harvard's ArtLab, the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, and the Manhattan International Composers Conference.

2024 sees me premiering several new works: my first string quartet titled "is my love just a fraught series of momentary alignments?", a new piece for Loadbang, a solo violin work for Sarah Saviet, and an EP of recordings extending from this project. I also premiered my open woodwind + electronics work "Spectral Breathing Apparatus" at the 2024 CampGround Festival in Florida, featuring flautist Julianna Eidle, with video adaptations being screened at the Resonance Film Festival and the Performing Media Festival. This coming Monday, after this concert, I will be travelling to Maine where I will be undertaking a month-long residency at Monson Arts, where I will be documenting sites around Lake Hebron which will then be organised into a sonic map and then processed into a new electro-acoustic work.

For more information, please visit: ***www.stephendefilippo.com***

Aaron Mencher
Article III

PROGRAM NOTE:

Article III takes its title from the portion of the Constitution that outlines the role of the Supreme Court. This piece aims to showcase the overwhelming power of the court and the powerlessness of the people to change it. While brass musicians can play exceptionally loudly, electronic sounds consistently overpower the performers in both volume and range. Extended performance techniques—such as split tones, half-valve techniques, playing range and mutes—further inhibit the musicians' ability to play loudly. The electronics also dictate the tempo of the performance and reduce the performers' agency to make musical decisions. The piece contains tightly controlled musical material that does not allow the ensemble to break from their subservient role in the piece.

Through both explicit reproduction of court proceedings and the underlying relationships defined by musical structures, *Article III* questions the authority of the Supreme Court to rule with minimal interference from dissenting civilians.

BIOGRAPHY:

Aaron Mencher writes "sophisticated and compelling" (Boston New Music Initiative) contemporary classical music. His practice explores the complex social relationships of music, art and technology. This fall, soprano Rachel Mink and the Ellery String Quartet will be premiering his song cycle *Atmospheres of Night* in Australia.

Recently, his installation *Displacement* was presented at both Project [Blank] and UC San Diego. Additionally, the Mivos Quartet premiered his piece *Articulate Particulate* for string quartet and generative score in collaboration with geologist Dr. Emily Chin. Previous collaborators include the St. Louis Symphony, Albany Symphony, Alarm Will Sound, violinist Patti Kilroy, cellist Dave Eggar, and many others.

Aaron has also received recognition from organizations such as ASCAP, The American Modern Ensemble, The Boston New Music Initiative, NAfME, the European-American Musical Alliance, the American Prize, and the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra of New York. In addition, he has worked on a variety of dramatic projects. He was the sound designer for Grippy Sock Vacation, a new play written by Beth Hyland, which premiered at the 2023 Wagner New Play Festival. Aaron has also scored a documentary directed by Katie Schnell, and the short film Maggephah directed by Atlanta-based filmmaker Brad McGaughey.

William Kuo
RASTRA

PROGRAM NOTE:

RASTRA is open-ended by design, allowing space for collaborative decision-making. Its premise allows the composition to occupy a fluid state, such that by the end of the collaboration, it may either shift towards greater indeterminacy or greater control. As such, the composition presents itself in a state of becoming, inviting its creators to encounter glimpses of possible futures.

BIOGRAPHY:

William Kuo's practice infuses sound-making with cross-disciplinary investigation, questioning how the "sounding" and "un-sounding" co-exist to imply alternative forms of listening and timekeeping. Drawing attention to the sensing-self hearing itself from within, he seeks to invoke asynchronous experiences of time arising from encounters with unfamiliar pasts and unformed futures.

His works take shape over long periods of experimentation. Elements of a work often empty into another, remolding themselves into the contours of future projects. As such, notions of multiplicity and recursivity echo throughout his creations.

William was a finalist of the 2018 Gaudeamus Award and the artist-in-residence for the 2021 Creators Sound-Off Residency at the Taiwan Sound Lab. His work *geht auf wie eine Blume* was selected for the 2021 ISCM World New Music Days representing the Canadian section. He also performs electronics collaboratively, sharing the stage with Cube Band at the 2024 Wandering Sound Festival. In 2020, he performed with Karen Yu for the premiere of *Augmented Aurality* in Hong Kong as part of the 02022020. SPACE project. An hour-long recording of *Augmented Aurality* was released in 2022 under the Vintage Vinyl HK label.

Douglas Osmun
hyperlung

PROGRAM NOTE:

hyperlung hybridizes the incidental bodily sounds of the performing brass musician with the hypergestural sound world of digital excess. The process of creating this piece entailed sampling, electronic improvisation, and then a re-mapping of the improvisation back onto the ensemble members, an abundance of approximations.

BIOGRAPHY:

Douglas Osmun is a composer and improviser working largely in the domain of digital media, exploring how contingency shapes musical structure and performer interpretation, as well as how it blurs boundaries between composer, performer, and machine intelligence. His compositional work is permeated by recurring themes of digital materiality, electronic mediation, cybernetic subjectivity, and the sublimity of entropy and excess.

Ni Zheng
HER MIASMA

BIOGRAPHY:

Ni Zheng is a sound artist and composer of electroacoustic music, creating sonic rituals that conjure the erotic and poetics of the body and muse on the carnality and grotesque of the flesh. Her practice calls for a descent into untamed territory, dwelling in and listening intently to the swampy pool of undead, uncivilized feelings and emotions she considers her reserve, and exorcising raw impulses, negativity, rage, messiness as a libation and a tactic against all forms of domestication.

Ni is devoted to celebrating and catalyzing mystical state of ecstatic communication with both fellow humans and non-humans, she surrenders herself unconditionally to deviant and altered states of knowledge — intimate, sensual, relational, and immanent — in encounters with the other, the sacred, occulted, and chthonic realms of nature and the land she inhabits. Her mediums of communication includes vocal performance that is visceral, feral, and atavistic, as well as sounds gathered through field recordings during visits to desolate and ravaged locations, and a fusion of electronic and acoustic instruments.

Michelle Lou
lie beneath the grass (2022)

PROGRAM NOTE:

The title of this piece, "lie beneath the grass," is borrowed from a line in a poem called, "Dirge," by Thomas Lovell Beddoes, a 19th century English writer and physician who had "a constant preoccupation with death." Beddoes was said to have studied medicine in the hope of finding physical evidence of the human spirit that survives beyond the death of the body. And so, my piece ends with a dirge amongst the ratcheting sounds of cicadas.

Dirge by T.L. Beddoes
We do lie beneath the grass
In the moonlight, in the shade
Of the yew-tree. They that pass
Hear us not. We are afraid
They would envy our delight,
In our graves by glow-worm night.
Come follow us, and smile as we;
We sail to the rock in the ancient waves,
Where the snow falls by thousands into the sea,
And the drown'd and the shipwreck'd have happy graves.

ENSEMBLE APPARAT

The focus of Apparat is on expanding the horizons of brass instruments in the context of new music and sound art. The members of Ensemble Apparat have already gained extensive experience in well-known new music ensembles (including Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Modern, MusikFabrik Köln, Collegium Novum Zürich, Ensemble Tzara), played at the most important festivals on the scene (Donaueschinger Musiktage, Wittener Tage für Neue Musik, Huddersfield New Music Festival, Warschauer Herbst, Wien Modern) and participated in important academies (Ensemble Modern Academy, Lucerne Festival Academy, Impuls Graz and Darmstadt Days for New Music). Since then, they have tried out a wide variety of styles and working approaches in collaboration with numerous composers in the context of premieres of solo and ensemble works. This wealth of experience only comes together in Ensemble Apparat.

In recent years, the ensemble has presented programs at the rainy days festival of the Philharmonie Luxembourg, at the Akademie der Künste Berlin, and at the Klangwerkstatt Berlin festival. As part of the Ensemblekollektiv Berlin, the Ensemble Apparat has performed at many important Berlin festivals for contemporary music, including Musikfest and MärzMusik of the Berliner Festspiele and Ultraschall.

While rooted in the core four-person lineup, Apparat's current goal is to evolve into a more dynamic ensemble that changes its lineup depending on the scope of a particular project.

Production Credits:
Theatrical Production Specialist: Jeremy Olson

Stage Crew:
Enya Pineda and Eduardo Fausto

Recording and Video Assistants:
Mana Khalvati, Nicholas Abaunza, and Katrina Goshay

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.

For information on upcoming concerts:
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