

University of Iowa's Electronic Music Studio Presents:

Electronic Music from the Big 10

December 12th, 7:30 pm
Becker Communications Building
Lecture Hall, Room 101



Featuring music from University of Iowa students
as well as students from University of Illinois, Northwestern,
University of Michigan, and Indiana University.

University of Iowa Electronic Music Studios present
Electronic Music from the Big 10

Airborne

Leon Harrell
(University of Illinois)

Two Channel, Fixed Media

fragile beings

Sang Mi Ahn
(Indiana University)

Two Channel, Fixed Media

Happy Times Two

Jason Gregory
(University of Iowa)

Jason Gregory, Violin and Live Electronics

Awakening

David Biedenbender
(University of Michigan)

Two Channel, Fixed Media

Lunar Calligraphy 24

Steven Snethkamp
(Indiana University)

Video

untitleddedede

M. Anthony Reimer
(University of Illinois)

Two Channel, Fixed Media

Bent

Matthew Dotson
(University of Iowa)

Stephanie Willow Patterson, Bassoon and Two Channel, Fixed Media

mixtape

Ben Hjertmann
(Northwestern University)

8.1 Channel, Fixed Media

Triggers

Israel Neuman
(University of Iowa)

Nathan Bogart, Tenor Saxophone and Israel Neuman, Computer

The

Program Notes and Biographies

Airborne

As a composer of electroacoustic music I create pieces that take advantage of the stereo field and create a true sense of depth. *Airborne* is the second piece I have composed that is geared towards this idea.

The main goal of the piece was to create a piece centered around flying sounds, sounds that not only move left and right but all around you as you listen. This study in 2-channel environment building sets up a large environment, hones in on a single moving sound source and midway through the piece bursts apart at the seams. *Airborne* was composed at the historic EMS studio at the University of Illinois.

As winner of the NewMusic@ECU 2004 Composition Competition **Leon Harrell** holds among his awards the Bomhard Fellowship from the University of Louisville as well as the Mary Shannon Boyd Piano Scholarship and an SGA Outstanding Senior Award in the Area of Keyboard Music from East Carolina University.

Born in Wilson, NC in 1980, Harrell began his musical training at age five when he began playing the piano. He began composing at the age of thirteen and formal composition study during his undergraduate study at East Carolina University.

Harrell continued his education at the University of Louisville where he received a Masters of Music in music composition and is currently working on his doctoral degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

His primary composition teachers include Mark Taggart, Ed Jacobs, Steve Rouse, Reynold Tharp, Scott Wyatt, Stephen Taylor, and Erik Lund. Harrell has also had lessons with such composers as George Tsantakis, Shulamit Ran, and Juila Wolfe.

To learn more about Leon visit: LeonHarrell.com

fragile beings

There are many moments of sorrow in our life span; the most painful of which is the death of a loved one.

The five stages of grief have been outlined by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in her book (*Death and Dying*) as Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance. Although my piece also outlines the stages of grief, it contains four different parts instead. I begin with fear—the fear of someone’s inevitable death. The survivor fears the moment of a loved one’s death and is completely overwhelmed with sorrow when the other dies. Not being able to understand the sudden loss, she begins to feel anger, demanding to know why it had to happen. Even though she

recognizes the fact that her loved one is no longer with her, she still cannot get out of her grief. Her grief remains unresolved—a scar in her heart.

In the poem, the name “Judas Iscariot” is associated with fear. As a disciple who betrayed Jesus, Judas Iscariot represents the way we cannot control ourselves even as we betray our own emotions. When we lose control, we often feel as if we have been made a prey.

In our sorrow, we also feel completely isolated and trapped by our loneliness. In the piece, I used rolling sounds and panned them through the speakers to evoke the encircling desolation.

Before Jesus was betrayed, he told his disciples to remember him as he broke bread at the table. As Jesus said, “Take and eat; this is my body” (Matthew 26:26), he foresaw his own death. The person who is suffering grief; however, only sees the decay of the dead body. At this, the words of Jesus do not only become difficult to digest, their perplexing meaning further enrages the one grieving. For Jesus, however, the decay of the flesh/body is not the end of life.

The airport announcement reminds us that life goes on around us. While the two phrases “God is nowhere” and “God is now here” is created by inserting a space between “now” and “here,” the subsequent fragments have been generated by inserting pauses between the other letters and words. Although one may not feel that God is present, God may be present, just not to one who asks “where?” I used the clash between two pitches to reflect the perceived conflict, and their resolution to a single pitch to represent the unchanging presence of God.

Sang Mi Ahn (b. 1979) received her BM with top honors from Yonsei University, Korea and MM from Indiana University. She has studied with Claude Baker, David Dzubay, Don Freund, P.Q. Phan, Cheong Mook Kim, and Jie Sun Lim.

Sang Mi is a pianist and has performed in most of her composition recitals. She is currently a doctoral student in composition at Indiana, where she studies with Aaron Travers and serves as an Associate Instructor in Music Theory. She is also studying electronic music with Jeffrey Hass, John Gibson, and Alicyn Warren.

The *Happy Time* series began earlier this semester. They are works which delve into the realm of improvisation and computer manipulation through the medium of a Max 5 patcher. The second installment will be premiered tonight with several changes from the original Happy Time, but Happy Times Two maintains the same overall principle. Firstly, some of the sounds triggered by the violin's instantaneous amplitude will be pre-manufactured. However, a given sound will be played back by an ever changing pitch, duration, and amplitude envelope filter algorithm which is extracted from the violin's sound at any given instant. In addition, envelopes are recorded from the violin, and they are used in order to influence subsequent musical material. Nevertheless, the goal of Happy Times Two is to attempt to elicit feelings of happiness. It's

success or failure to do so is an element within the overall musical discourse. For example, these questions might be asked: this is an asserted happy time, but is it really a happy time? Moreover, is it mathematically equal to twice singular performance of Happy Time made earlier in the semester (Fall 2010)?

Jason Gregory is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in music composition at the University of Iowa under the instruction of Dr. Lawrence Fritts. He holds a research assistantship within the dance department as a composer and sound designer, and he is a violinist for the cause of new music. At Northern Illinois University, he obtained his Bachelor's degree in music composition.

Awakening

David Biedenbender (b. 1984) was born in 1984 in Waukesha, Wisconsin. His first musical collaborations were in rock and jazz bands as an electric bassist and in his high school music program as a euphonium and trombone player. David began writing music in his senior year and decided to pursue formal music education at Central Michigan University, where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree in composition and theory. He went on to earn a Master of Music degree in composition from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. In his music, he seeks to fuse the ebullience, energy, and clarity of his diverse musical influences with his own musical language. David has had the privilege of collaborating with many talented performers and ensembles, including Maestro Leonard Slatkin and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, eighth blackbird, and the University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra. Recently, his music was awarded the Third Millennium Ensemble's Composition Prize, regional winner of the SCI/ASCAP Student Composer Commission, honorable mention in the ASCAP/CBDNA Frederick Fennell Prize, and finalist for the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composers Award. In addition to composing, David is a member of the composition/theory faculty at Oakland University and the Interlochen Arts Camp; he also maintains a private studio of composition students. He is the composer-in-residence with the Vivo Sinfonietta for the 2009-2010 season. Current commissions and projects include works for the PRISM Saxophone Quartet, the Washington Kantorei, the percussion group line upon line, and saxophonist Robert Young. His musical mentors include Michael Daugherty, Bright Sheng, Evan Chambers, Stephen Rush, David R. Gillingham, José Luis-Maurtua, Mark Cox and John Williamson. He currently lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan with his wife, Angela.

Lunar Calligraphy 24 is my first project combining visual media with electronic music, and was designed to serve two primary purposes. The first was to become familiar with video editing software, such as Final Cut, and to explore visual art and its relationship to sound. The second was to serve as a practical method to realize 24-tone music in tempered quartertones.

The video is made entirely from still digital photographs, which I took. The central theme of the imagery is a series of nighttime pictures. The pictures were taken with a slow shutter speed to

create "calligraphy," using a lunar eclipse as the ink. By incorporating images that recall both cosmic and microscopic structures, this piece draws a connection between the micro and the macro. Other than the "Lunar Calligraphy" photos, none of the images that you see are actually on the macro or micro scale.

At the core of the music is a 24-tone composition that I realized using the software Absynth. A ring-modulated drum ostinato provides continuity to the work. At times the ring modulator is tuned in a successive series of frequencies, which is derived from the 24-tone row. The result is my own brand of popular music originating from another time and location in the universe.

Steven Snethkamp (b.) was born and raised in Lansing, Michigan. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree in composition from the College of Music at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and a Master of Music degree in composition from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University. His composition instructors have included Claude Baker, Don Freund, Sven-David Sandström, P.Q. Phan, Per Martensson, Daniel Kellogg, Andrew May, and Richard Toensing. He has also studied computer music and multimedia work with Jeffery Hass, John Gibson, and Alicyn Warren.

He has composed music for a wide variety of ensembles, and is particularly noted for his prominent use of microtonality, intuitive use of irrational meters, and influence from music of other times and cultures. His performance experience is wide-ranging, having worked with a variety of chamber ensembles, world music groups, choral groups, experimental 'rock' bands, folk music, and multimedia productions. In addition to composing concert music for both acoustic instruments and electronics, he also has a deep love for visual arts and working with video. Currently, Steven lives in Bloomington Indiana pursuing a Doctor of Music in composition from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University.

untitledededede

This work grew out of an exploration of the simple, and rather small, sounds created by striking and rubbing small pieces of wood, metal, and glass together. Beyond attempting to feature each material for an equal amount of time, the piece is driven solely by the sounds themselves. Their energy, their individuality, and their simple allure serve not only as content to be consumed, but also as sources of inspiration and instruction.

M. Anthony Reimer

Originally an orchestral French Horn player hailing from Indiana, Tony has spent most of the last 20 years freelancing in live theatre as a composer and sound designer. His work has been heard on stages and at festivals across the country and internationally. He completed his undergraduate work at Ball State University, received a Master's in Computer Music and New Media from Northern Illinois University and is currently pursuing a doctorate in Music Composition at the

University of Illinois.

The electronic material in *Bent* is derived entirely from circuit-bent children's toys. Circuit-bending is a means of short-circuiting low-voltage electronics for artistic effect. Although this technique is often used to create "new" instruments to be used in performance, in my work I was interested in separating these sounds from their source and placing them in a more abstract context. This idea of short-circuiting normal operating conditions did carry over into my bassoon writing, however. The instrument is both literally taken apart in the separation of reed, bocal and bell and it is melodically "cracked-open" via microtones and multiphonics. It was my intention that the bassoon sound as broken and deranged as its electronic counterpart. The character of the work is light with somewhat violent undertones: the bassoon is ultimately a kind of clown in an electronically distorted playhouse.

Matthew Dotson (b. 1981) recently received a PhD in Composition from the University of Iowa where he studied with Lawrence Fritts, John Eaton and David Gompper in addition to assisting in the operations of the Electronic Music Studios. His dissertation *Erosion* for 15 instruments was recently toured throughout the Midwest. Other recent performances of his music include: Stony Brook (International Computer Music Conference), Leicester, UK (Sound, Sight Space and Play), Indianapolis (Indianapolis Intermedia Festival), New York City (New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival), Evanston, Illinois (Midwest Graduate Music Consortium), Cambridge, Massachusetts (Wired for Sound), Belgrade, Serbia (Art of Sounds Festival), Mexico City (Circuito Electrovisiones), and Santiago, Chile (Festival Ai-Maako).

mixtape (2009) explores the boundary between pitch and noise. When consonant sounds become too dense and fill up the vertical sound-space of the spectrum we begin to perceive them as noise. Similarly, when rhythmic sounds become too dense in horizontal space (i.e. too close together in time) we also hear them as noise. Conversely, when noise is filtered vertically and horizontally it becomes music. The source material for this piece comes from hundreds of <0.5s samples of pop music too which I applied the same effects as in the pop music studio (filters, reverb, compression, and autotune), except I use far too much. By analogy, imagine that you begin to apply make-up to a well-proportioned face. Eventually, the face ceases to become more beautiful and begins to approach the grotesque. Stare deep into the horrifying face of commercial music for the next 9 minutes, and eventually try to see beauty in it again.

Ben Hjertmann is a Chicago-based composer, performer, and genre vagabond. He serves as Artistic Director for The Sissy-Eared Mollycoddles in addition to performing as a vocalist with the group. Ben also moonlights in non-concert-music under the pseudonym Kong Must Dead.

His recent work has been performed and/or recorded by The Anubis Quartet, The International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), The Callithumpian Consort, and The Sissy-Eared Mollycoddles. Hjertmann also premiered an unfixed piece for digital sound which was performed in collaboration with Zephyr Dance Company in 2009. Ben is currently a Doctoral Fellow in Composition at Northwestern University. His principal composition teachers have been Hans Thomalla, Jay Alan Yim, Lee Hyla, and David Vayo.

Triggers

Granular synthesis is a technique of sound synthesis that generates complex sounds from many microsounds, also known as grains. A typical granular synthesis system receives three main modifiers – a carrier signal, a grain-triggering signal and a grain-shaping envelope. In *Triggers*, I have used the granular synthesis method to provoke an interaction between the saxophone and the computer. Yet, causality also transpires in this piece as pre-composed material promotes improvisations performed both by the saxophonist and the computer.

Israel Neuman

Composer and bassist Israel Neuman is captivated by dynamic compositions. Using mathematically-based systems of composition, free improvisation and real-time computational algorithms he creates musical entities that evolve with each performance. Mr. Neuman received a Ph.D. in composition and a M.A. in jazz studies at the University of Iowa, and a B.Mus in jazz studies at the University of Hartford. He studied composition with Lawrence Fritts, John Eaton, David Gompper and John Rapson. He studied bass with Gary Karr, Michael Klinghoffer, Diana Gannett, Volkan Orhon, and Anthony Cox. He served as the instructor of the electronic composition class and as the studio assistant for the Electronic Music Studios at the University of Iowa. He performed and recorded with Robert Paredes, John Rapson, Brent Sandy, Jimmy Greene, Wayne Escoffery, and Steve Davis. His composition *Turnarounds* for horn and tape received an Honorable Mention Award from the International Horn Society and was selected for inclusion in the CD series of the Society of Composers Inc. His compositions were performed at the 2010 SEAMUS National Conference (Minnesota), 2008 Electronic Music Midwest Festival (Illinois), and at the 2007 (Indiana) and 2008 (Iowa) Midwest Composers Symposium.