

The University of Iowa Electronic Music Studios present
Works out of Iowa



May 5th, 2013
Becker Communications Building
Room 101, Lecture Hall
7:30 PM

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Works out of Iowa

Situational Resonance

Rachel Foote

Stereo, Fixed Media

Constantine

Will Huff

Stereo, Fixed Media

Shards

Justin Comer

Max/MSP

Metra

Lawrence Fritts

Stereo, Fixed Media

Paranoia

Genevieve Decker

Stereo, Fixed Media

Three Keyboards and a Keyboard

Mo Xu

Piano and Laptop Ensemble

Mo Xu, piano

Justin Comer, Daniel Frantz, and Jason Palamara, laptops

Paranoia

A mind once healthy and blissful, recently endured a traumatic event. This experience poised the mind into an inescapable state of paranoia and fear.

Genevieve Decker is currently a sophomore pre-nursing undergrad. She attended Interlochen arts camp for music composition and has written numerous pieces since that which have been performed and recorded. This is her first electronic piece, which was written for Electronic Media I in fall 2012. In this piece she recorded various string instruments; ukulele, piano and cello; along with everyday objects such as water and paper. These sounds were later processed in Peak and Pro Tools.

Three Keyboards and a Keyboard

This piece is a collaboration between pianist Mo Xu and composers Daniel Frantz, Jason Palamara, and Justin Comer. The group's aim was independence of timbre, resulting in several unique sound entities; acoustic piano, processed acoustic saxophone, synthesized pipe organ, and MIDI-generated sounds, as well as live recordings taken of each performance.

Mo Xu started piano playing at the age of 9. She came to the United States in 2010. She has a Masters degree in piano performance from Illinois State University, and is currently a first-year Doctoral student in the University of Iowa.

Composers and Musicians invite you to an informal Q&A following the concert

Program Notes and Composer Biographies

Situational Resonance

Situational Resonance is an exploration of the soundscape genre in electro-acoustic music. It is also an escape from reality into an illusory environment centered on trains, birds, and water. The water sounds were recorded by the composer. The birds were drawn from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Macaulay Library free bird sound collection (www.birds.cornell.edu/macaulaylibrary/search/freesounds.html). The train sounds were drawn from multiple websites: www.grsites.com, www.railwaystation.com, and www.streamsounds.org.uk. The sounds were manipulated and combined with Bias Peak Pro and Digidesign Pro Tools software.

Rachel Foote is an officer in the United States Coast Guard. She is currently a Law Enforcement Duty Officer at the Pacific Area/District 11 Command Center. Previously she was a Deck Watch Officer and Plankowner on Coast Guard Cutter WAESCHE. She holds an MA in composition and an MFA in oboe performance from the University of Iowa, and a BA in music from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. She has studied electronic music composition with Lawrence Fritts and Antonio Barata, and oboe with Mark Weiger, Stuart Horn and Steve Halbe. Her compositions have been performed throughout the United States and in Australia.

Constantine

I created *Constantine* for the *Aurora Project*, a play written by University of Iowa student Bella Poynton in the style of a sci-fi epic. Director Rachel Howell asked if I would write a song for the Gatekeeper, who is “regal, creepy and unfeeling on the surface, yet full of feeling that has been pushed so far down it is entirely irretrievable.” The piece was constructed in Max, Peak, and Pro Tools and makes use of the Little Boy Blue synthesizer built by Flower Electronics.

Will Huff's music draws its inspiration from as divergent sources as American and European minimalism to gamelan to indie rock. Recent focus has been devoted to collaboration where he has enjoyed interdisciplinary work with choreographers and playwrights. He has participated in new music ensembles including the JCFA Composer's Orchestra, Ensemble 48, the Outside Orchestra based out of Indianapolis and Bricklayer's Foundation in Chicago. Will Huff is currently pursuing a doctorate at the University of Iowa where he holds a TA in Theory/Composition as well as graduate assistant to the Electronic Music Studios directed by Lawrence Fritts. His composition teachers include Robert Mueller, Frank Felice, Michael Schelle, Lawrence Fritts, and David Gompper.

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Shards

Shards is an open form tape piece, inspired by Henri Pousseur's *Scambi*. Sixteen, 30-second tape segments were composed based on four parameters: pitch, speed, reverberation, and continuity. Using a Max/MSP patch, a performer can create a live realization of the piece using as many segments as they please in any order they please (without repetition). Form can be created through the parameters (low to high, fast-slow-fast, etc.) or ignored for an entirely spontaneous realization.

Justin Comer graduated in 2012 from Coe College with a B.M. in composition and Saxophone Performance. He is currently pursuing a M.A. at the University of Iowa. His composition teachers have included Joseph Dangerfield and David Gompper.

Metra

Metra was composed in two stages. The first stage was realized at shipping yard in Portland, Oregon called Metra Steel. I worked there on the night shift as a security guard. I learned the fastest routes between locations, which left me with 30-40 minutes every hour to compose. To understand the time period, I received a memo one night saying that a film crew was going to film some scenes for a movie about a robot from the future. The second stage was the realization of the work on a Buchla 200 Series voltage-controlled synthesizer, in the Computer Music Studio at the University of Chicago, where I was a grad student. Every sound in the composition was created by patching several modules together and setting the knobs to produce the desired pitch, loudness envelope, filter envelope, and vibrato. A 16-stage sequencer allowed me to compose a series of 16 notes at a time. The Buchla synthesizer was built at the same time as the Moog synthesizer, in 1964-65. Its inventor, Don Buchla, told me that Bob Moog and he could not determine whose synthesizer was built first, so they decided to share the credit. Having worked on both synthesizers, I have always felt that the Buchla was the more expressive instrument. *Metra* was completed in 1987.

Lawrence Fritts is an Associate Professor of Composition and Theory at the University of Iowa, where he has directed the Electronic Music Studios since 1994. His music for instruments and electronics appear on the Albany, SEAMUS, Frog Peak, Tempo Primo, and Innova labels. His writings appear in Music Theory Spectrum, Computer Music Journal, Proceedings of the International Computer Music Conference, and published by Centerstream Publications. He is a founding editorial board member of the Journal of Mathematics and Music.

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