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The University of Iowa Electronic Music Studios present

# Spring Concert II 2015

*Lawrence Fritts, Director*

May 9th, 2015
Becker Communications Building
Room 101, Lecture Hall
7:30 PM

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***Concret PH II*** — Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001)
*stereo, fixed media*

***Dresses*** — Paul Duffy and Joseph Norman
*stereo, fixed media*

***No River like Craving*** — Jonah Elrod
*stereo, fixed media*

***Translations*** — Reid Ronnander
*stereo, fixed media*

***Bare*** — Genevieve Decker
*stereo, fixed media*

***Estuary*** — Paul Duffy and Joseph Norman
*8-channel, fixed media*

***Rotations*** — Jonathan Wilson
*8-channel, fixed media*

***Piéce Électronique Nr. 3*** — György Ligeti (1923-2006)
*stereo, fixed media*

***Phase*** — Bernard Short
*8-channel, fixed media*

***Piéce Électronique Nr. 3***

After completing Artikulation (for fixed media) in 1958 Ligeti directed his attention to a new electronic work called Piéce Électronique Nr. 3. Originally called *Atmosphères*, it was intended to incorporate his ideas of micropolyphony using large masses of sine tones. While Ligeti had completed a score for the work, the technological limitations imposed upon the composer prevented him from realizing these large masses of sine tones. It was not until 1996 when Kees Tazelaar and Johan van Kreij, Dutch composers working at the Institute of Sonology in Utrecht, Netherlands, were able to realize Ligeti's ideas. What you will hear is the realization created by Kees Tazelaar and Johan van Kreij.

**György Sándor Ligeti** (1923-2006), a composer of Hungarian birth, was one of the most important avant-garde composers of the twentieth century. He was greatly interested in micropolyphony, a compositional technique that focuses on timbral and textural development through cluster chords without the conventional application of melody, pitch, or rhythm. His most well-known works include *Atmosphères*, *Lontano*, *Aventures*, *Chamber Concerto*, *Poeme symphonique*, *Lux aeterna*, and *Le Grande Macabre*.

***Phase***

This piece was inspired by Steve Reich's Violin Phase, a piece which used different techniques to bring the violins used both into and out of phase with each other. Phase by Mr. Short uses various techniques that are extremely different than anything Mr. Reich would use to try to bring about the same phasing effect through a variety of different sounds. The sounds used for this piece were mined from a collection of recordings done in the Anechoic Sound Chamber, sound distortions created in the Electronic Music Studios, & a 24oz Under Armour Thermos filled with water.

**Bernard Short** is a PhD in Music Composition student at the University of Iowa. Born in Harlem, NY and raised in FarRockaway Queens, NY, he earned a BA in Music with a Composition focus at Morehouse College in 2007, and a Masters in Music Education at The University of Georgia in 2012. From 2008-2014 he was the Director of Bands and Orchestra Director at Cross Keys High School in Atlanta, GA. To Mr. Short, music is the expression of a person's soul that is best used as a way to communicate with someone without allowing words to obliterate the message.

***Rotations*** is a work in progress. When completed, this work will consist of three major sections: section 1 for fixed media, section 2 for performer and live electronics, and section 3 for performer, live electronics, and fixed media. In this work I am exploring how rotation can be conceived in a musical context. Many possibilities arise, and my intention is to interact with as many of these as I can. My investigation begins with spatialization, where sound travels in a counter-clockwise direction. This exploration of sonic counterclockwise motion was inspired by my visit to the Cube in March 2015 for the SEAMUS National Conference. The Cube, an experimental lab for audio and visual installations at Virginia Tech, contained 124 speakers with 31 speakers mounted to each side of the cube. One concert featured the entire set of speakers. As I was listening to various pieces that utilized them, I perceived an overall direction in which these sounds travelled. The overall direction, in particular, was counterclockwise. Intrigued by this observation, my investigation began by determining how to obscure this counterclockwise motion while using multiple speakers. However, the parameters of this experiment have expanded to include other aspects in music that could be manipulated similarly (at least, metaphorically, if not literally), including the rotation of sounds and, eventually, the role of the electronics in its relationship to the performer.

**Jonathan Wilson** is a candidate for the doctorate in music composition at the University of Iowa. He is the winner of the 2014 Iowa Music Teachers Association Composition Competition and a runner-up for the 2014 Donald Sinta Saxophone Quartet National Composition Competition. Receiving his Master of Music and Bachelor of Music degrees in music composition from Western Illinois University, Jonathan has studied composition with David Gompper, Lawrence Fritts, James Romig, James Caldwell, Paul Paccione, and John Cooper. In addition to composition, Jonathan has studied conducting under Richard Hughey and Mike Fansler. His compositional process is concept-oriented, and each concept, in turn, generates the structural ideas that unify his works. His future plans are to complete his doctoral program in music composition and to teach at a university. Jonathan is a member of the Society of Composers, Inc., SEAMUS, the Iowa Composers Forum, and the American Composers Forum.

## Program Notes and Composer Biographies

***Concret PH II***
This short two-minute piece was written in 1958 and premiered at the Philips pavilion in Brussels; a pavilion designed largely by Xenakis himself. The piece was performed on 425 loudspeakers as a way of controlling the spatial dimension of the work.

**Iannis Xenakis** (1922-2001) was one of the most influential composers of the mid-twentieth century. Born in Greece, he worked in France during the 1950s as an engineer and architect. His later architectural designs began to serve as spaces for musical performances, with the *Diatope* (1978) being built as a space for sound-and-light experiences. During his time in France, Xenakis studied music with Honegger, Mihaud, and Messiaen. One of his most pivotal compositions was *Metastaseis*, a piece for orchestra that was a realization of his early experiments in sound masses. The use of sound masses in his later works were controlled by stochastic processes, which are ways of using probability to randomly determine the placement of musical events.

***Dresses***
With text drawn from Charles Bukowski's poem Freedom, ***Dresses*** explores the transfiguration of Bukowski's male character. Two voices were recorded reading the poem, and these recordings provided much of the source material for the piece. Coupled with the poetry readings are samples taken from live instruments; over the course of the piece, the "instrumentation" of these samples changes to emphasize the theme of transfiguration.

**Joseph Norman** is currently in the process of completing his PhD in composition at the University of Iowa while studying with Dr. Lawrence Fritts. Previously, he completed his Master's Degree in composition at University of Maryland under the instruction of Dr. Thomas Delio and Dr. Lawrence Moss. Prior to that he earned is Bachelor's Degree in composition and classical guitar performance at St. Mary's College of Maryland where he was instructed in composition by Dr. David Froom and Dr. John Leupold, and in guitar by Dr. Orlando Roman.

**Paul Duffy** (b. 1989) is a graduate student of composition at the University of Iowa. He has studied privately with Lawrence Fritts, Craig Weston, and David Gompper, and has attended master classes with Louis Karchin, Josh Levine, Augusta Read Thomas, and Michael Fiday. His recent works include *Wood Metal Hair* for double bass and fixed media, *Floor Exercise* for fixed media (selected for performance at the 2015 International Computer Music Conference), a *Duet for Prepared Piano & MIDI Keyboard*, and a choir piece selected for performance at the 2014 Midwest Composers Symposium in Cincinnati. He is currently interested in composing for solo instruments with fixed media.

***No River like Craving***
The title is taken from a verse found in the Dhammapada, a collection of sayings from the Buddha. A stream of sound gestures steadily flows through twists and turns while surface features float on ripples and waves. Like desires can distract and clog our minds, our literal rivers can be choked by the pollution of human activity surrounding them; the industries providing for our collective and almost limitless craving.

**Jonah Elrod** is a PhD candidate in music composition at the University of Iowa. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree in music education from the University of Arizona, and a Master of Music degree in theory and composition from the University of New Mexico. Jonah is currently an associate director of the University of Iowa Electronic Music Studios, a teaching assistant for music theory, and is a board member of the Iowa Composers Forum. He is currently studying composition with David Gompper and Lawrence Fritts. His work *A Spotless Moon* was the winner of the 2013 Scott Wilkinson Composition Contest, and *Twin Dreams* was selected for performance at the 2014 Midwest Composers Symposium. Jonah's *The Vulture*, a piece for solo mezzo-soprano, was selected as a winner of the One Voice Project, and will be performed by Lisa Neher during her 2015-2016 concert season.

***Translations*** was composed with the help and influence of data and probability. The vast majority of the work was algorithmic composed using different methods of transformations based on data sets and probability distributions. The piece invokes the question of whether or not these translations from data and theory to sound and textures hold true to the original trends and properties.

**Reid Ronnander** is a masters student in the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Sciences. Throughout his life he has been highly involved in music, including having studied conducting under the direction of Simon Tillier and composition under Lawrence Fritts. Highly interested on the intersections of mathematics and music, he has conducted research on algorithmic composition, corpus analysis, and data sonification/audiolyzation.

***Bare***
Similar to the title, the sound files within the piece are barely manipulated. The goal is to create a more natural and organic environment for the listener.

**Genevieve Decker** is a senior in the College of Nursing. She has studied music composition under William Cooper, Robert Mueller and Lawrence Fritts.

***Estuary*** —where river meets sea and worlds collide, can take the form of a bay or a sound. Low biodiversity, but among the most productive natural habitats in the world.

Saline water mixes ceaselessly with riverine water. One is sourced by the ocean, the other by atmospheric precipitation. These distinct solutions—two siblings—create a large-scale water potential, forcing diffusion and spawning an immeasurable variety of concentrations.

Everything that a river picks up and carries is resisted and churned at the estuary. These traveling materials, from rich soil to hazardous pollution, contribute to a heterogeneous aqueous mixture that is often unique to a single estuary and unseen in other ecosystems.

As an estuary is a container for diverse water purities, this piece is a container for diverse water-derived timbres. Water provided nearly all of this piece’s source material, but aside from the very first sound, this sonic origin is obscured by a high degree of transformation.